

## DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY

### MINUTES OF THE 123<sup>rd</sup> MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

HELD ON THURSDAY 18 FEBRUARY 2016

**Present:**

Mr Ian Blatchford (Chair)	Mr Mike Kapur
Professor Dominic Shellard (Vice-Chancellor)	Ms Suzanne Overton-Edwards
Ms Sally Bowie	Mr Oliver Mishcon
Dr Hilary Cass	Dr Vijay Patel
Ms Amie Chapman	Ms Marcia Saunders
Ms Ann Ewing	Mr Tony Stockdale
Professor Robert Harris	

**In attendance:**

Professor Andy Collop, Deputy Vice-Chancellor  
Mr Simon Ambrose, Vice-Chancellor's Chief of Staff  
Mrs Katie Skilton, Clerk to the Board of Governors  
Ms Sally Finlinson, Assistant Clerk to the Board of Governors (Secretary)

Mr Leo Smith, #DMUglobal Manager, and students who had participated in the #DMUglobal programme (*item 2196 only*)

Mrs Hannah Cooke, Executive Officer to the Chief Operating Officer (*item 2198 only*)

Mrs Sarah Setchell, Executive Director of People and Organisational Development (*items 2198 and 2199 only*)

**2189 Apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received from board members Dr Hilary Carty, Mr Alan Charlton, Mrs Doreen Crawford and Mr Nick Wilson.

Mr Ben Browne, Chief Operating Officer, had also sent apologies for the meeting.

**2190 Declaration of any pecuniary, family or other personal interests**

Other than the standing declarations relating to Ms Ewing, Ms Saunders and Mrs Crawford, no other interests were declared.

**2191 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the Board of Governors' meeting held on the 19 November 2015 were approved as a correct record.

**2192 Matters arising from the minutes**

All matters arising had been addressed or had been included on the agenda.

**2193 Chairman's update**

The chair expressed thanks, on behalf of the university, to Dr Vijay Patel, who had pledged to make a significant financial donation to the university, which would be announced formally in due course.

## 2194 Report by the Vice-Chancellor

Governors received an update from the Vice-Chancellor (VC) on recent developments.

### a) Investiture of The Baroness Lawrence of Clarendon OBE

Governors watched a video of the investiture of The Baroness Lawrence of Clarendon OBE as DMU's new chancellor, which had generated significant local, national and international attention for the university. The De Montfort Students' Union Deputy President for Education noted that the investiture had resonated particularly strongly with the student body.

It was reported that Baroness Lawrence had visited Leicester on 16 and 17 February 2016 to discuss a number of initiatives and ways in which she could engage with the university and the student body.

The Chancellor was also engaged in discussions with the university to address the attainment gap for black and ethnic minority (BME) students at DMU. Although attainment of BME students at the university was broadly representative of the wider HE sector, DMU was committed to identifying approaches to close this gap. The Chancellor would lead a number of workshop sessions with students to explore this issue.

The university was also keen to support Baroness Lawrence in creating a 'Stephen Lawrence Centre', an archive to celebrate his life and a centre for the academic study of diversity and justice. Depending on the progress of negotiations, the centre would be launched prior to the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death, in 2018.

It was agreed that Baroness Lawrence would be invited to attend the next Board of Governors' away day in September 2016.

### b) Recent developments

#### *Leicester City Football Club*

The VC and the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Strategic and International Partnerships had visited Thailand between 25 and 28 February 2016 to explore areas for closer collaboration with The King Power International Group and Leicester City Football Club (LCFC). A new partnership agreement had been signed with LCFC, which would offer a number of benefits to DMU, including a greater strategic presence for the university in Thailand, the opening of an office, internships for DMU with King Power and engagement between the King Power Foundation and the Square Mile.

#### *Green Paper on Higher Education*

DMU had submitted its response to the Government's consultation on the Green Paper on 14 January 2016. Due to the high number of submissions to the consultation received by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, a delay may be expected in the Government's response, unless the Government moved immediately to a Higher Education Bill on 18 May.

#### *EU referendum*

DMU intended to support the Universities UK campaign to inform the public of the benefits of EU membership through the *100 ideas of Europe* project, an initiative aimed at engaging students with the European Union and producing ideas to inform debate ahead of the referendum. The final policy document was expected to be launched at a Westminster reception in spring 2016. Governors would receive invitations to attend the reception in due course.

#### *Comprehensive spending review*

Governors discussed the proposed move from grants to loans for nursing students from 2017/18, which would likely impact the number of students recruited to nursing programmes.

It was noted that nursing students were generally mature students and, as such, were typically debt adverse. The average age of a nursing student at DMU was 28. The VC reported that the university was exploring ways in which to support nursing recruitment with local healthcare providers.

It was reported that forecast cuts to DMU were broadly in line with what had been assumed in financial forecasts.

#### *DMU Square Mile India*

The VC reported that the university was looking to expand on its DMU Square Mile success with the launch of DMU Square Mile India. The initiative was intended to provide support the Dalit community in Ahmedabad, India, through a number of areas of collaboration.

A number of student trips had already taken place prior to the launch of the initiative on 11 February 2016. Governors were shown a video highlighting the work of the project and were invited to participate in trips to the region.

#### *De Montfort Students' Union (DSU)*

The VC reported that Adil Waraich had resigned as President of DSU. The VC noted that, in the absence of a president, the remaining sabbatical officers had performed admirably in representing the union and its interests.

The Students' Union and the university had commissioned David Fletcher Consulting Ltd to undertake a governance review of DSU, which would be completed by the end of March 2016.

#### *Staff engagement survey 2015*

The VC presented early results of the university's staff engagement survey, which had been conducted by Capita in November and December 2015.

Initial results indicated significant improvements on previous surveys undertaken in 2010 and 2012, with 88% of staff agreeing that DMU was a good place to work and 89% agreeing that they were proud to work at DMU, up from 59% and 75% respectively. The results indicated that DMU had scored better than the sector benchmark against 14 out of 19 key survey criteria and below benchmark against only one.

A breakdown of the data would be presented to the Executive Board on 1 March 2016 and subsequently to the Finance and HR Committee at its meeting on 15 April 2016.

#### *Student recruitment*



#### **2195 Items for receipt**

No requests for clarification had been received for the following items, which were formally received by the board:

- a) Recruitment and Admissions Report, February 2016
- b) Update on the Campus Transformation Project
- c) Minutes of the Finance and HR Committee (November 2015)
- d) Minutes of the Audit Committee (November 2015)
- e) Minutes of the Academic Board (December 2015)
- f) Report from Remuneration Committee (November 2016)
- g) Constitution of the Remuneration Committee
- h) Bi-annual report on major academic partnerships  
– collaborative provision at De Montfort University
- i) A list of documents placed under university seal since the last meeting.

#### **2196 #DMUglobal**

Governors received a presentation on #DMUglobal led by the #DMUglobal Manager, and students who had participated in recent trips to Ahmedabad, India, and Louisville, Kentucky, USA.

Governors proposed that feedback from students following programme participation should be made compulsory to gain a more complete view of the levels of student satisfaction. It was also recommended that students be contacted six months after trips to complete a follow-up survey in order to ascertain the longer term benefits of participation.

The VC confirmed that the growth of #DMUglobal participation was partly due to it being embedded in academic programmes across the university, and that all trips must identify specific learning outcomes. Governors were reassured that processes to support #DMUglobal were being systematically embedded within the university, to ensure the programme's continuation and future sustainability.

Governors congratulated the team on their impactful, positive work.

#### **2197 Board effectiveness Review**

The Clerk to the Board of Governors presented a comprehensive work plan, outlining proposed actions intended to address recommendations made in the effectiveness review of the board's governance arrangements, conducted by David Fletcher Consulting Ltd in summer 2015. Governors discussed a number of proposals in detail.

*Recommendation 3: Academic representation on the Board of Governors*

The next academic staff member of the Board of Governors would be nominated by the Academic Board would be in effect by July 2016. Governors agreed with the proposal on the basis that the process would ensure appropriate academic membership was representative of, and supported by, the Academic Board.

*Recommendation 7: Assurance on quality and standards*

Governors requested that the September 2016 Board of Governors' away day include an update on the management of academic quality and standards, in the context of the Green Paper's proposals, to ensure that appropriate consideration be given to the board's responsibilities.

*Recommendation 8: Lay member knowledge of academic affairs*

Governors discussed the ways in which individual governors could be supported to explore and understand academic governance issues.

*Recommendation 9: Development of a formal relationship agreement between De Montfort Students' Union (DSU) and De Montfort University*

The VC noted that the university's relationship with DSU was already under consideration through the review being undertaken by David Fletcher Consulting Ltd. The findings of the review would be presented to DMU and DSU toward the end of March 2016, and would be shared with the board thereafter.

The chair of the Finance and HR Committee noted that university governance structures had not previously considered in detail DSU performance or management, but that this would be addressed in the future by closer scrutiny through the Finance and HR Committee.

The DSU Deputy President Education informed the board that a number of improvements had already been made to the DSU constitution and online presence in order to adhere to requirements under s.22 of the Education Act 1994.

The board considered ways in which greater student participation in student officer elections could be encouraged. The Deputy President Education noted that the elections process (underway at the time of the meeting) included a much higher number of contested positions, and that election processes had been improved to encourage a greater diversity of candidates for both full, and part-time, positions. She acknowledged a need to review DSU management structures to ensure they were robust and fit for purpose, should a situation arise whereby elected post-holders were not performing to expected standards.

The board approved the action plan and the revision of the calendar for board and sub-committee dates with effect from the academic year 2016-17.

The Executive Director of People and Organisational Development and the Executive Officer to the Chief Operating Officer presented updated External Speakers and Freedom of Expression Policies, designed to ensure that the university complied with the provisions of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, and its 'prevent duty'. It was reported that both policies had been approved by the Prevent Project Group and endorsed by the Executive Board. The university, DSU and external organisations, including trade unions, had been consulted throughout the development of the policies.

a) External Speakers Policy

The External Speakers Policy was developed in response to provisions within the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. It was reported that the policy built on, and formalised, practices largely in place at the university, and introduced a procedure for considering requests for external speakers.

b) Freedom of Expression Policy

The Freedom of Expression Policy had been amended to ensure that the university remained compliant, and to align with the new External Speakers Policy.

The board considered the policies against its statutory duty to ensure that freedom of speech within the law is secured for members, students and employees of the university and for visiting speakers. It was noted that universities should encourage debate, exposing questionable views to rational examination, rather than refusing speakers routinely. Governors also noted that effective administration of the policies would be essential to ensuring their integrity, and that a clear procedure for appeals should be developed and communicated. It was agreed that the reconstituted Ethics Committee would provide some oversight in this area.

Governors requested that the university consider the balance between policy and procedure, and explore some areas that may be open to exploitation. The board also requested that the university make implicit, the application of both policies to speakers presenting via technology, as well as their application to existing IT policies.

[Mr Ambrose, Ms Chapman and Ms Finlinson left the meeting for the below item and did not re-join the meeting.]

**2199 Academic Contract Negotiations and Workload Agreement  
– Restricted item reserved for lay members of the board of governors**

The minutes for this item are contained within a separate record, restricted to lay members of the Board of Governors.

**2200 Any other business**

There were no other matters raised.

**2201 Date of the next meeting**

The next meeting of the board would take place at the St Pancras Renaissance Hotel in London on Thursday 5 May 2016.

Signed by the Chair of the Board of Governors:

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Date:

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