

NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

HELD ON 11 FEBRUARY 2020

Present

Mr N Goulden, Pro-Chancellor (Chair)	Mr G Love
Ms A Brown	Miss J Nelson
Ms C Brown	Sir D Nicholson
Mr S Denton	Professor E W Peck
Mr N Ebbs	Mrs S Walker-Smith
Mrs S Fish	Baroness D Warwick
Mr B Fox	Mr D Williams
Mrs L Holder	Mr O Woodley

In Attendance

Mrs R C Jenkyn, Clerk to the Board of Governors
J McNeil, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality and Development)
Professor N Wright, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)
Miss J A Clews, Governance Services Manager (Minute Secretary)

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr N Collard, Mr I Ellis and Mr J Maier.

20.01 Welcomes and Membership Matters

The Pro-Chancellor welcomed Sir David Nicholson and Angela Brown (Academic Board Member) to their first meeting of the Board of Governors. The interim Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality and Development) was also welcomed to her first Board meeting.

The Pro-Chancellor reported that Nick Collard would be stepping down from membership of the Board of Governors on 31 March 2020 due to business commitments. The appointment of a new Deputy Chair for the Strategy, Policy, Finance and Resources Committee would be progressed.

Upon the above retirement, a vacancy would arise in the independent membership category of the Board of Governors. As was customary, it was approved that the external governor currently within the co-opted category of Board membership, Sir David Nicholson, be transferred to the independent category of membership with effect from 1 April 2020 (at which time a new three-year term of office would commence).

20.02 Declarations of Interests Relating to Items on the Agenda

Members present were asked to declare any potential conflicts of interest they held in the agenda items to be considered. No conflicts of interests were declared.

20.03 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

(a) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 November 2019 (Document A) were approved and accepted as a true record.

(b) Matters Arising

Members received a report (Document B) in relation to matters arising from its previous meeting. All action points had been progressed and resolved. Updates would be given as appropriate under the relevant agenda item.

20.04 Pro-Chancellor's Update

The Board received a report (Document C) from the Pro-Chancellor which set out a proposal to adjust the structure of the meeting cycle for the 2020/21 academic year in order to achieve a better balance of business and coverage across the year.

Members supported the proposal to hold Board meetings in September, November, March and June, with a Workshop and Dinner held in January.

The Pro-Chancellor advised the Board that the dates listed in the report were indicative only at this stage. The calendar of meetings would be finalised by the Pro-Chancellor and the Clerk to the Board and confirmed meeting dates would be shared with the Board shortly.

IT WAS RESOLVED

- (i) that the report be received and endorsed; and
- (ii) that the Pro-Chancellor and Clerk to the Board finalise the schedule of meetings for the 2020/21 academic year and circulate the same to the Board.

20.05 Vice-Chancellor's Update

[Some of the detail of this minute has been withdrawn due to its confidential nature.]

The Vice-Chancellor presented a report (Document D) updating the Board on a number of matters and sharing some recent successes. The following matters were highlighted during discussion:

- The Board viewed a short video prepared for the Universities for Nottingham launch event held at BioCity on 20 January 2020. The event had been well attended and welcomed by local and civic partners. The report produced for the event which demonstrated the economic, social and cultural impact of both universities on the City had been shared with the Board. A number of areas for collaboration would be selected to progress with a range of stakeholders, and further details in this regard would be shared with the Board in July;
- The Chief Operating Officer and Registrar advised the Board on the actions being taken in relation to the Coronavirus outbreak. All NTU students in China on exchange/placement had either been repatriated to the UK or to their main domicile, if preferred. There were no staff or students currently in China on University-sanctioned business. All students of Chinese domicile in the UK had

also been contacted and support offered. A meeting of the University's Incident Management Team had taken place to determine actions in the light of the latest travel advice and to ensure that appropriate contingency plans were in place to deal with a range of potential scenarios;

- The University and College Union (UCU) had failed to secure a mandate for strike action or action short of a strike at NTU in the recent ballot. Industrial action over pay and/or pension disputes was scheduled to take place at 74 institutions across the country. It was noted that a number of factors were impacting the effectiveness of national pay bargaining in the sector, including financial challenges at some institutions; and
- NTU had hosted the Radio 4 Today Programme on 7 February 2020, which had included interviews with the Vice-Chancellor and the Nottingham Trent Students' Union President. The Vice-Chancellor had focused his contribution on social mobility and the use of its admissions policy to drive diversity of the student population.

IT WAS RESOLVED

- (i) that the report be received and endorsed.

20.06 Political Landscape

Members received a report (Document E) from the Vice-Chancellor in relation to developments in the political landscape and potential implications for the University. The following matters were highlighted during discussion:

[Some of the detail of this minute has been withdrawn due to its confidential nature.]

- The University was considered to be well placed to respond to the Government's priorities;
- It was considered unlikely that EU students would have access to the student loan book beyond the 2020 intake, although the introduction of post-study work visas could attract more international students;
- The Government was expected to continue to focus on addressing perceived low quality courses, grade inflation, and funding for further and technical education. The Office for Students (OfS) had advised that savings would be required in respect of the recurrent teaching grant in 2020/21;
- The OfS had recently launched a consultation on harassment and sexual misconduct in higher education in England. The outcome of the consultation was expected to be published in the summer and the University's current procedures would be reviewed in this context; and
- The University would continue to explore opportunities by which to maintain NTU's profile in respect of policy matters.

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and noted.

20.07 Nottingham Trent Students' Union President's Update

The Board received a report (Document F) from the President of Nottingham Trent Students' Union (NTSU) on academic matters and the wider student experience. The following matters were highlighted during discussion:

- The NTSU's relationship with the University of Nottingham Students' Union continued to develop positively, with opportunities for further collaboration being explored. The joint partnership with Marks out of Tenancy provided a platform for students to comment on residential properties, landlords and letting agents, and was considered to be a good initiative;
- Elections would commence shortly for the NTSU Executive Officers for the 2020/21 academic year. It was noted that a number of Officers had reached their two-year term limit, including the President;
- A range of activities were scheduled for Sustainability Action Week, driven largely by the student societies;
- The Black Leadership Programme had been launched on 27 January 2020, with an initial cohort of 40 students. This collaboration between the University and NTSU had been well received. The programme aimed to provide participants with the opportunity to develop a sense of community, empowerment and self-worth through workshops, exchange visits, and mentoring; and
- Following the publication of her report on Black Students' attainment, the NTU Vice-President Education had been working with schools and departments to identify measures to improve the experience of BAME students at NTU. The Vice-Chancellor noted that this report, alongside the outcomes from the recent student and employee Race Equality survey and the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) report on racial harassment in universities, would be used to identify the main challenges and areas of focus for the University in seeking to adopt the Advance HE Race Equality Charter (REC). This would form one of the topics for discussion with the Board of Governors on 31 March. It was also noted that selected Success for All metrics would be incorporated into the University's annual Size and Shape analysis of the performance of its course portfolio for the next academic year.

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

20.08 Creating the University of the Future: Deep Dive into Valuing ideas

The Board received and considered a report (Document G) and presentation from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation). Progress on the actions associated with the Valuing Ideas theme of the University's Strategic Plan was outlined.

[The remainder of this minute has been withdrawn due to its confidential nature.]

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

20.09 Research Excellence Framework 2021

The Board received a report (Document H) from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) in relation to the University's preparations for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021.

[The remainder of this minute has been withdrawn due to its confidential nature.]

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

20.10 *[This minute note has been withdrawn due to its confidential nature.]*

20.11 Access Agreement 2018-19 Monitoring Return

The Board received a report (Document J) in relation to the Access Agreement 2018-19 Monitoring Return due for submission to the Office for Students (OfS) by 28 February 2020.

The return demonstrated that the University had met the provisions within the Access Agreement, Student Premium funding had been accounted for and used appropriately, and ensured required transparency. It was confirmed that all costs had been attributed in accordance with previous reporting conventions.

The Board was advised that this was the final return in this regard under the previous regulatory framework. Guidance was awaited from the OfS in relation to future monitoring requirements.

IT WAS RESOLVED

- (i) that the report be received and endorsed; and
- (ii) that the Access Agreement 2018-19 Monitoring Return be approved for submission to the Office for Students.

20.12 Student Recruitment

The Board received and considered a report (Document K) from the Chief Operating Officer and Registrar in relation to student recruitment. This incorporated the latest position for 2019/20, an early indication of the undergraduate and postgraduate applications position for 2020/21 entry, and longer-term prospects and plans. The following matters were highlighted during discussion:

[Some of the detail of this minute has been withdrawn due to its confidential nature.]

- The overall position for the current year recruitment was positive, with year-on-year growth experienced across most student categories.

IT WAS RESOLVED

- (i) that the report be received and endorsed.

20.13 Financial Update: Current Year Forecast

The Board received a report (Document L) from the Chief Operating Officer and Registrar which provided an update on the current financial position of the University.

[The remainder of this minute has been withdrawn due to its confidential nature.]

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

20.14 Estates and Facilities Update

The Board received a report (Document M) from the Chief Operating Officer and Registrar in relation to campus developments. The following matters were highlighted during discussion:

[Some of the detail of this minute has been withdrawn due to its confidential nature.]

- A review of the overall estates plan, and individual campus plans, would be undertaken to ensure alignment with the ambitions and priorities arising from University, reimaged and future student growth plans;
- The first phase of the Lyth building at the Brackenhurst campus - the Teaching and Learning block - had now opened, with positive feedback received from students and colleagues. Construction continued in relation to the Refectory and Lecture Theatre;
- The design competition for the new development at 42 Shakespeare Street would commence shortly with the winning design to be selected by late February;
- The construction for the dual-site Medical Technologies Innovation Facility (MTIF) was progressing well at both the Clifton campus and the Boots Enterprise Zone; and
- The development of a Clinical Skills Hub at the Clifton campus was currently on programme and budget for completion by September 2021.

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

20.15 Report from the Academic Board

The Board received a report (Document N) from the Academic Board Member in relation to the meeting of the Academic Board held on 29 January 2020.

With regard to the Course Lifecycle Project, it was highlighted that the Academic Board had supported the introduction of a revised approach for strategic planning and selection of the University's course portfolio.

In response to a question raised concerning the level of debate and engagement of colleagues within discussions at Academic Board meetings, the Vice-Chancellor advised that the Academic Board membership was determined through the Articles

of Government and comprised senior colleagues, Deans of School and elected representatives from across the academy and professional services. Members were encouraged to seek feedback from their colleagues on matters being considered and to raise comments or concerns as appropriate. The Vice-Chancellor noted that he met termly with the Academic Heads of Department and this provided another useful mechanism by which to gain further feedback from the academy. Staff engagement through events in the development of University, reimagined and the biennial Staff Survey also provided opportunities to seek the views of a wide range of staff across the University.

The Pro-Chancellor noted that mechanisms by which the Board could gain assurance in relation to its responsibilities for oversight of academic governance would continue to be explored.

IT WAS RESOLVED

that the report be received and endorsed.

20.16 Business from Standing Committees

(a) Audit and Risk Management Committee

The Board noted the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Risk Management Committee held on 28 January 2020 (Document O). The Deputy Chair of the Committee highlighted that it had been a positive meeting, with sufficient time available to enable in-depth discussion of the agenda items. The Committee had been encouraged by the ongoing development of the University's risk management process, which should provide a tool for managers in the achievement of the strategy whilst also reducing bureaucracy.

(b) Strategy, Policy, Finance and Resources Committee

The Board noted the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Strategy, Policy, Finance and Resources Committee held on 28 January 2020 (Document P).

The Pro-Chancellor advised that many matters considered by the Committee had been reported earlier in the meeting, including student recruitment and the capital programme.

(c) Employment Policy Committee

The Chair of the Committee updated the Board on discussions at the meeting of the Employment Policy Committee held on 10 February 2020.

The Committee had received reports in relation to a number of matters including the University's gender and ethnicity pay gaps, equal pay, race equality, appraisals and workforce data. The Committee had agreed that, whilst not currently a statutory requirement, the University should publish its data relating to the ethnicity pay gap to demonstrate its commitment to addressing this.

20.17 Application of the Corporation Seal

Members received and noted a report (Document Q) summarising the documentation to which the University's Corporation Seal had been applied since the previous meeting of the Board.

20.18 Any Other Business

(a) University, reimagined

The Board was advised that the development of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the new strategy was progressing. The final KPIs were scheduled for submission to the Board in July 2020.

(b) Portfolio Analysis and Developments

The external analysis of the University's portfolio had been presented to the Board of Governors at the evening session on 10 February 2020. The presentation, together with the full data analysis, would be uploaded to the eGovernance SharePoint site.

The analysis would inform discussions across the University in relation to portfolio planning at a strategic level. It was noted that initial thoughts relating to the admissions strategy for the 2021 recruitment cycle (incorporating this analysis) would be presented to the Board in July 2020.

20.19 Dates of Next Meetings

It was noted that the next meeting of the Board of Governors would take place on Tuesday 31 March 2020, with a short formal meeting, followed by a workshop session and dinner.

The meeting scheduled for Tuesday 12 May 2020 would take place at the City campus. This would be preceded by presentations and dinner on Monday 11 May 2020.

Rebecca Jenkyn, Clerk to the Board
February 2020