

APPROVED

MINUTES OF THE 218TH MEETING OF THE COURT OF GOVERNORS HELD ON WEDNESDAY 1 JUNE 2016 IN ROOM MG28 MARYLEBONE BUILDING, UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER, 35 MARYLEBONE ROAD.

PRESENT:	Mr P Kyle (Chair) Mr D Batchelor Mr J Begg Mr D Cheeseman Mr A Ganguli Mr S Hart (item 218.3 onwards)	Mr J Hirschmann (UWSU) Professor G Megson Mr G Morley Mr P Murphy Ms L Neil Professor G Petts
IN ATTENDANCE:	Ms S Enright (Secretary) Ms K Hayes Mrs E McMillan (Clerk)	Mr R Lee (item 218.3 and 218.4) Ms F Thompson (observer)
APOLOGIES:	Mr C Barnes Mrs R Bellamy-James Dr S Courtenage Professor R Dannreuther (attendee) Dame K Dunnell Dame M Hogg Mr T Hope	Professor A Hughes (attendee) Mr M Smith Mr J Wates Mr M Webb (attendee) Mr A Woods Mrs D Yeo

Clerk's note: The meeting was not quorate at the outset, however a quorum was present from item 218.3 below and therefore for all agenda items requiring a decision.

218.1. ANNOUNCEMENTS

218.1.1. Apologies were noted as listed above.

218.1.1.1. ACTION: Clerk to send a note to all governors emphasising the importance of attending Court meetings.

218.1.2. The Chair welcomed Ms F Thompson, UWSU President-elect, as an observer at this meeting of the Court prior to her appointment as a governor from July 2016.

218.1.3. The Chair thanked Mr J Hirschmann for all the work he has done as a member of the Court during the past year. The Chair informed that an exit interview will take place with the retiring student governor after the meeting.

218.1.4. No interests were declared.

218.1.5. The Chair confirmed that there were no requests from members to un-star items provided for information (Minutes 218.9 to 218.15).

218.2. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

- 218.2.1. Members received and noted a report from the Vice-Chancellor (Document COG 160601A) including updates on the Higher Education white paper, league table positions, University Executive Board review and development, and the potential impact of the EU referendum.
- 218.2.2. Members received and noted a tabled addendum listing recent senior academic appointments (Document COG 160601P). Appointments include Professor Malcolm Kirkup as Pro-Vice Chancellor and Dean of the Westminster Business School and eight senior professorial appointments who will provide leadership, mentoring and support for academic staff.
- 218.2.3. Members heard that the University is discussing with other institutions the technical consultation on 'Teaching Excellence Framework: year 2'¹ and a call for evidence on 'Accelerated courses and switching university or degree'².
- 218.2.4. Members requested a report from the Vice-Chancellor on the degree to which Westminster 2015, the University's corporate strategy for the period 2010-15 has been achieved.
- 218.2.4.1. ACTION: Vice-Chancellor** to present a summary report to a future meeting of the Court.
- 218.2.5. Members expressed considerable disappointment at the fall in the University's league table position. The VC repeated that the University Executive Board (UEB) is aware of the urgency of the issue and regularly considers the matter, identifying both strengths and areas for development. Members noted that actions are also addressed through the newly established integrated planning process. The Court encouraged the University and the Students' Union to communicate good news stories and the strengths of the institution, which are not reflected in the league table position. Members recognised that this needs to be balanced with activities to address the messages from students where these express dissatisfaction.
- 218.2.6. Reflecting on the presentation from the Director, Communications, Recruitment and Marketing prior to the formal meeting of the Court, members discussed marketing and recruitment activities and applications. Members heard that the department is already improving and increasing communications that are student-specific, University-wide, internal and external and that this is done within the challenging environment of multiple media channels and the transitory nature of students' engagement with such information.
- 218.2.7. The Chair reminded governors that they too have a significant role to play as ambassadors for the University and offered the support and the engagement of the Court to the Director, Communications, Recruitment and Admissions in such activities.
- 218.2.8. Members noted the new operating framework for quality assessment and that as the University was due to undergo a QAA Higher Education Review in 2016-17 it will be subject to the transitional arrangements outlined by HEFCE (refer to Document COG 160601L).
- 218.2.9. Members heard that the league table metrics in relation to research are fixed and will not change until the next Research Excellence Framework exercise; however, there is still work to do, particularly in terms of academic enterprise and entrepreneurship for students that will contribute to metrics such as student satisfaction and employability.
- 218.2.10. Members noted University news and achievements since the last meeting.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/teaching-excellence-framework-year-2-technical-consultation>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/accelerated-courses-and-switching-university-or-degree-call-for-evidence>

218.3. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION PACK - MARCH 2016

218.3.1. Members received and noted the management information pack for March 2016 (Document COG 160601B), which is prepared in an abbreviated format due to activities to prepare the five-year forecast. Members noted that the March 2016 information has been considered and is recommended by the Finance and Property Committee.

218.3.2. The Interim Director, Corporate Planning and Performance informed the Court that the management information pack for April 2016, which includes the Quarter 3 forecast, has been produced. Members heard that increased collaboration between colleagues in Financial Services, Corporate Planning and Performance and the faculties enables the University to provide improved and enhanced information to the University Executive Board (UEB) and to governors.

218.3.2.1. ACTION Clerk to circulate the management information pack for April 2016 to the Court.

218.3.3. Members were informed that the Quarter 3 forecast includes a reduction in the forecast surplus and heard that in the view of the Interim Director the full budgeted surplus is unlikely to be achieved by the year end. The Interim Director suggested that the Quarter 4 performance, which in an expanding Higher Education sector can usually be expected to result in an end of year 'bounce-back', is not anticipated to result in a significant upturn.

218.3.4. Members registered their surprise that the information referred to in the verbal report from the Interim Director had not been circulated to the Court prior to the meeting, noting that the April 2016 report had not been available when the Finance and Property Committee met on 30 June. Members would also have expected the Chair, Clerk and Vice-Chancellor to be informed in advance of the information being reported to the Court in this way. Members noted their concern as to whether the report and views of the Interim Director were endorsed by the Director, Finance and Operations.

218.3.5. Members noted that the management information for April 2016 was reported to UEB only the day before and considered that receiving the report on the reforecast at the meeting, without opportunity for the executive to comment and governors to reflect, resulted in some uncertainty for the Court. Members were informed that UEB will be undertaking further analysis and that, whilst any reduction in the forecast surplus is of some concern, performance is at a level that is comfortably above HEFCE's key financial indicator of 6% and is expected to be favourable compared to the performance of the sector.

218.3.6. Members noted that the Finance and Property Committee meets on 30 June 2016 and will discuss the reforecast and the reasons for the variance in more detail at that meeting.

218.3.7. Members heard that the April 2016 management information provides evidence of a reduction in outstanding debt.

218.3.7.1. ACTION Director, Finance and Operations to produce a summary report outlining the variances in forecast surplus between Quarters 1, 2 and 3 and explaining the reasons behind them. Members asked for the report to be circulated to the Court directly after the meeting of Finance and Property Committee.

218.4. FIVE-YEAR FINANCIAL FORECAST UPDATE

218.4.1. Members received and considered a summary of key headlines from the emerging five-year forecast including an update on the draft University level budget for the Financial Year 2016-17 (Document COG 160601C), which has been considered and agreed by the Finance and Property Committee.

218.4.2. Members heard that the process to produce the five-year forecast is in progress and that calculations and assumptions in the draft figures are currently being tested following planning meetings with faculties to discuss and challenge student number projections etc.

Members heard due to factors such as changing national demographics the next years are going to be challenging and that the University will need to make savings against the 2015-2020 plan. Members were informed that the University has established an efficiency task force, with independent governor Mr D Cheeseman joining the group on behalf of the Court from September 2016. Members were informed that savings in staff costs referred to in the report regarding staff costs are not due to the University actively delaying recruitment.

- 218.4.3. Members noted that UEB and the Finance and Property Committee will consider the priorities for investment in the University estates and major projects and a report will be submitted to the Court in due course around decisions on such investments. Members heard that the fundamental direction of the development plan remains unchanged.

218.5. INTERNATIONAL HOUSE

- 218.5.1. Members received an update on options for redevelopment of International House, a University owned student residence (Document COG 160601D).

- 218.5.2. Members noted that the Finance and Property Committee support the University's proposal to establish a professional team to design and implement a self-delivered redevelopment of the property and that a request for approval for the costs of the feasibility study will be considered by the Finance and Property Committee in June 2016.

- 218.5.3. **ENDORSED** Court supported the proposal to take this project to the next stage.

218.6. GOVERNANCE AND THE PREVENT AGENDA – THE NEXT STEPS

- 218.6.1. Members received an update from the Chair on the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education event considering implications of the recent Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, which Deputy Chair, Mrs R Bellamy-James attended in March 2016 on behalf of the Court.

- 218.6.2. Members heard that the Deputy Chair reported to the Chairs Group in May that the event was not well-attended and did not supplement her existing understanding of the issues.

- 218.6.3. Members considered the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) illustrative practice note on governing body responsibility for counter-terrorism and the Prevent agenda (Document COG 160601E).

- 218.6.4. Members noted that the Provost will report on the feedback from HEFCE on the University's monitoring submission at the July meeting of Court and that an annual monitoring return will be required each December commencing in 2016. Members heard that the University is progressing the planned actions and that the staff training has been launched recently.

- 218.6.5. The Chair, Audit Committee requested a discussion with the Provost should Audit Committee or the internal audit function take on additional responsibilities relating to monitoring or auditing activity in relation to the Prevent duty. Members noted that a review of the University's process for ongoing monitoring is included in the draft internal audit strategic plan for 2016-17.

218.7. STUDENT UNION MATTERS – SABBATICAL TEAM 2016-17

- 218.7.1. The UWSU President informed members that the new sabbatical team will start on 1 July 2016 following a two week handover period with the current team. Members heard that all members of the new team have been student leaders in some capacity prior to their election (e.g. sports team or society presidents) and that the Union expects there to be a good transition between the teams.

- 218.7.1.1. **ACTION Clerk** to arrange for the new sabbatical team to present their plans and views on the key strategic issues for University of Westminster students to the Court at the away day in October 2016.
- 218.7.2. The President noted that the informal meeting with the Chair and Deputy Chair of Court at the beginning of the year was helpful and that the incoming President would welcome a similar meeting.
- 218.7.2.1. **ACTION Clerk** to arrange a meeting for the Chair, Deputy Chairs, the incoming President and the UWSU Chief Executive Officer.
- 218.7.3. The President thanked the Court and the University for their support this year, the effect of which has been noticeable.
- 218.8. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING**
- 218.8.1. **AGREED** The minutes of the Court of Governors meeting held on 23 March 2016 (Document COG 160601F) were agreed as an accurate record.
- 218.8.2. Members received and noted the summary of actions and matters arising from the meeting held on 23 March 2016 and those actions not reported as complete between September 2014 and March 2015 (Document COG 160601G).
- 218.8.3. **Exchange fee waiver (Action 217.5.4.1)** Members noted that the Director, Communications, Marketing and Recruitment and Director, Finance and Operations are awaiting receipt of report later this week prior to taking a decision on the suggestion.
- 218.8.3.1. **ACTION Clerk** to request confirmation from the Directors and report to Court on the outcome at the next meeting.
- 218.8.4. **Summary of financial assistance (Action 217.5.5.1)** An update on this action was not available to the Court as the Director, Finance and Operations and Chair, Scholarships Committee were both absent from the meeting.
- 218.8.4.1. **ACTION Clerk** to request confirmation from the Director, Finance and Operations and report to Court at the next meeting.
- 218.8.5. **Architecture studio tour (Action 215.18.3.1)** Members noted that there was insufficient interest in a tour as many governors have seen the facility during other visits. Governors who would like to visit the studio are welcome to contact the Clerk to arrange a tour.
- 218.8.6. Members received an update on the Cinema Advisory Board from the Chair, on behalf of the Court's representative on the Advisory Board. Members noted that attendance at the Advisory Board had been impacted by issues with the timing of meetings and noted some operational issues the Board had discussed. Members discussed the possibility of capitalising on the frontage of the cinema for promotional purposes and were pleased to note the adventurous and international nature of the programme.
- 218.9. MINUTES FROM PRECEDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS**
- 218.9.1. Members received and noted a report on the business conducted at meetings of the committees of the Court since the last meeting (Document COG 160601H).
- 218.9.2. In addition to the summary of business, members received the following minutes (Document COG 160601I):

- i. HR Committee – 6 April 2016 (tabled)
- ii. Audit Committee – 12 April 2016
- iii. Academic Council – 13 April 2016
- iv. Finance and Property Committee – 12 May 2016
- v. HR Committee (special meeting) – 13 May 2016

218.10. UWSU FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2014-15 AND THREE YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

- 218.10.1. Members received and noted the University of Westminster Students' Union (UWSU) financial statements 2014-15, subvention bid and strategic report (Document COG 160601J), which have been considered by the Finance and Property Committee.

218.11. PEOPLE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION REPORT – JULY TO DECEMBER 2015

- 218.11.1. Members received and noted the six-monthly report, which has been considered and agreed by the HR Committee (Document COG 160601K).

218.12. HEFCE QUALITY ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS UPDATE

- 218.12.1. Members received and noted an update on the revised operating model for HEFCE quality assessment to be implemented from 2017-18 (Document COG 160601L).

218.13. REGISTER OF PEOPLE WITH SIGNIFICANT CONTROL

- 218.13.1. Members received and noted the current register for the University of Westminster (Document COG 160601M).

218.14. HEFCE GRANT LETTER

- 218.14.1. Members received and noted the confirmed funding allocations to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) for the financial year 2016-17³.

218.15. INDICATIVE SCHEDULE OF BUSINESS 2015-16

- 218.15.1. Members received and noted the updated Court of Governors schedule of business for the current academic year (Document COG 160601N).

218.16. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Wednesday 20 July 2016 3.30pm at the Quintin Hogg Memorial Ground

* [This meeting will be followed by an informal social gathering](#) *

- 218.16.1. Members received and noted the schedule of meetings for the Court and its committees for 2016-17 (Document COG 160601O).

Court of Governors 2016-17

Wednesday 5 October 2016 12noon to 8pm (location tbc)

Wednesday 23 November 2016 3.30pm (location tbc)

Wednesday 22 March 2017 3.30pm (location tbc)

Wednesday 31 May 2017 3.30pm (location tbc)

Wednesday 19 July 2017 3.30pm (location tbc)

[Court meetings may be preceded by events such as site tours, presentations and briefings; where possible please be available from 3.00pm](#)

³ <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2016/Name,107598,en.html>

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218.16.2. **Graduation ceremonies**

Monday 11 July 2016
Tuesday 12 July 2016
Wednesday 13 July 2016
Monday 21 November 2016
Monday 28 November 2016

All ceremonies will take place at the Royal Festival Hall

218.17. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

218.17.1. **CUC plenary and the governors' away day:** Members heard that the Chair attended the most recent CUC plenary and referred to a presentation from the Director of External Relations at UCAS on applicants' expectations of quality and what attracts applicants to particular institutions and courses. Members supported the Chair's suggestion that this would be a useful presentation for the full Court.

218.17.1.1. **ACTION Clerk** to invite the Director of External Relations at UCAS to present at the Court away day in October.