

**MINUTES OF THE 251<sup>ST</sup> MEETING OF THE COURT OF GOVERNORS HELD ON WEDNESDAY 25 MAY 2022 IN ROOM M416 MARYLEBONE BUILDING AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

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PRESENT:	Professor L Berry (Chair)	Ms C Morgan
	Professor D Anand	Ms H Owen
	Mr J Bairamian <sup>1</sup>	Ms L Phillips (Deputy Chair)
	Dr P Bonfield	Ms J Robson
	Miss Z Butt, UWSU	Mr M Smith
	Ms V Foster	Canon D Stanton <sup>1</sup>
	Ms S Hafeez	Ms P Wales
	Professor A Hughes (to Minute 251.6)	Ms MX Wang
	Professor G Meikle (to Minute 251.14)	Mr S Wylie <sup>1</sup>
IN ATTENDANCE:	Mr H Bharna, Halpin (Observer)	Ms B McPeake (Minute 251.5)
	Mr J Cappock (Company Secretary) <sup>1</sup>	Mrs T Patki (Observer)
	Dr S Jarvis	Mrs E Standen (Minute 251.5)
	Mrs E McMillan (Clerk)	Mr I Wilmot (Minute 251.4)
APOLOGIES:	Miss O Ponsford, UWSU	Professor F Ross

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[Clerk's note: [Immediately prior to this meeting, governors participated in a one-hour development workshop](#)]

**251.1. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- 251.1.1. The Chair welcomed all governors and attendees to the meeting.
- 251.1.2. The Chair introduced Hanif Bharna from the Halpin Partnership who was observing the meeting as part of the governance effectiveness review, and Trishna Patki who has just joined the governance support team and was observing the meeting as part of her induction to the role.
- 251.1.3. Members noted apologies as recorded above.
- 251.1.4. Co-opted staff governor Graham Meikle, expressed an interest in the decision on his re-appointment. Professor Meikle was not involved in the discussion or decision for this item of business (see Minute 251.15).
- 251.1.5. The Chair confirmed there were no requests to discuss the starred items for this meeting.
- 251.1.6. The Chair informed members that co-opted governor appointments would be covered under 'Any other business' (see Minute 251.15).
- 251.1.7. The Chair informed members that graduation ceremony dates had been circulated earlier in the day and encouraged members to attend as many ceremonies as they could.
- 251.1.8. The Chair briefed members on the recent event celebrating projects funded by the Quintin Hogg Trust (QHT).
- 251.1.9. The Chair highlighted to members the University's success in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercise and on behalf of the Court thanked all colleagues involved in the submission.

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<sup>1</sup> Attended via Microsoft Teams

**251.2. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT**

**Vice-Chancellor's periodic report**

251.2.1. Members noted the Vice-Chancellor's report (Document COG 220525A).

**Vice-Chancellor's sector update**

251.2.2. The Vice-Chancellor highlighted to members the University's strong performance in the REF and the World University Sustainable Development rankings.

251.2.3. The Vice-Chancellor also spoke to members about the potential impact of Government policy suggestions on the higher education sector and the University; the launch of the refreshed Being Westminster Strategy and the intention to have a 'balanced scorecard' of KPIs for the refreshed Strategy; and employability and Graduate Outcomes results.

251.2.4. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Employability and Global Engagement) gave an update about international recruitment activities.

251.2.5. Members discussed with the executive contingency plans if the Chinese Government's zero-COVID policy impacted on recruitment; ongoing support and investment for research; and what else the University could introduce to impact on employability outcomes.

251.2.6. The Vice-Chancellor invited governors to get involved in employability-related activities at the University (e.g., employability events and student mentoring).

**Report from Academic Council**

251.2.7. Members noted the draft minutes from the Academic Council meeting on 6 April 2022 (Document COG 220525B).

**251.3. SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELLBEING UPDATE REPORT**

251.3.1. The University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer/Chair of the Being Safe, Feeling Safe Group and the Safety, Health and Wellbeing Committee gave an oral update on the work of both groups, including:

- consideration of whether to close the Being Safe, Feeling Safe Group;
- ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- continuing links with the public health directors in Brent and Westminster;
- implementation of the Student Wellbeing Framework, in partnership with the Students' Union; and
- ensuring colleagues who are first responders are aware of the tools available to address any poor behaviour on site.

**251.4. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS REPORT**

251.4.1. The Director of Finance presented the management accounts for March 2022 – Period 8 (Document COG 220525C).

251.4.2. The Director of Finance reported that activity in the second half of the financial year to drive savings in the cost base is reflected in performance against the Quarter 2 (Q2) forecast. He informed members that this positive variance has continued into Q3 so members can expect a good financial outturn for 2021/22.

251.4.3. Members discussed with the Director of Finance how the University is addressing increases in energy costs, including use of a broker to manage energy supplies and consideration of energy saving activities operationally and when refurbishing and developing our estate.

**251.5. STUDENT AND COLLEAGUE POLICY UPDATES**

- 251.5.1. Emma Standen - Deputy Registrar (Quality and Standards) and Bryony McPeake – Deputy Director of HR introduced updates to student casework policies and colleague policies to meet the Office for Students' (OfS) published expectations on preventing and addressing harassment and sexual misconduct.
- 251.5.2. Members heard that the Academic Registrar's Department and the Human Resources department reviewed and updated the policies in partnership with the Students' Union and that with the support of legal advisors.
- 251.5.3. Members discussed with the Deputy Registrar and Deputy Director:
- the scale of casework of this type and whether it is possible to benchmark that data against other HE institutions;
  - effectiveness of case handling in the past;
  - the scope of personal boundaries and influence that may be considered inappropriate (e.g., sexual, financial, religious etc);
- 251.5.4. Members received assurance that the updated policies are compliant with OfS expectations.
- 251.5.5. **APPROVED** Student Disciplinary Regulations 2022/23 and Student Code of Conduct (Document COG 220525D) to be implemented with effect from 1 September 2022.
- 251.5.6. Members noted the updated Student Complaints policy (Document COG 220525D), which comes into effect from 1 September 2022.
- 251.5.7. **APPROVED** Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure, including Staff Code of Conduct (Document COG 220525E) to be implemented with effect from 1 August 2022.
- 251.5.8. **APPROVED** Staff Grievance Policy and Procedure (Document COG 220525F) to be implemented with effect from 1 August 2022.
- 251.5.9. **APPROVED** Professional Boundaries and Personal Relationships Policy (Document COG 220525G) to be implemented with effect from 1 August 2022.

**251.6. UNIVERSITY RISK REGISTER - PERIODIC REVIEW**

- 251.6.1. The Clerk to the Court of Governors and Head of University Governance presented a report on the periodic review of the strategic risk register (Document COG 220525H).
- 251.6.2. In response to a member's query, the Clerk to the Court explained that there are narratives that provide further guidance on the assessment of risk appetite for individual risk areas.
- 251.6.2.1. **ACTION Clerk to the Court** to recirculate the risk appetite framework document.
- 251.6.3. Members discussed how the University might respond to potential risks for London-based HE institutions relating to the Government's 'Levelling Up' agenda and noted that other potential Government policies present a greater risk to the University.

251.6.4. The Chair noted that the Audit Committee and the Court will need to review the risk appetite framework to ensure alignment with the refreshed Being Westminster strategy.

**251.7. STUDENTS' UNION STRATEGIC UPDATE**

- 251.7.1. Zahra Butt, the UWSU President and student governor, presented an update on UWSU's recent activity (Document COG 220525I).
- 251.7.2. The Chair thanked the UWSU President and her team for being part of consultations with students and emphasised the importance of the student voice throughout the work of the Court.

## APPROVED

- 251.7.3. In response to a member's query, the UWSU President assured members that reforms to election processes will be implemented and that none of the elected Sabbatical Officers were involved in the activities that led to a rerun of the elections.
- 251.7.4. The UWSU President agreed to explore why the Students' Union stopped the recognition awards for colleagues.
- 251.7.5. In response to a member's query, the UWSU President explained that students' primary concerns currently are around what the future of education looks like for them (e.g., international students are worried about their ability to stay in the UK and what the outcomes of the OfS consultations may be) and employability and prospects after graduation.
- 251.7.6. The Chair congratulated the UWSU President and the Vice-Chancellor for demonstrating the close partnership working between the University and UWSU through their co-presentation of the refreshed Strategy at colleague events.

## 251.8. HONORARY AWARDS

- 251.8.1. The Clerk to the Court presented the outcome of the Governance and Nominations Committee review of the Honorary Fellowship nomination process (Document COG 220525J).
- 251.8.2. Members noted that the Committee confirmed the process is fit for purpose and do not propose any changes.
- 251.8.3. Members considered nominees for receipt of honorary awards (Document COG 220525J), as recommended by the Governance and Nominations Committee.
- 251.8.4. **APPROVED** The following nominees will be invited to receive an Honorary Fellowship from the University:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

## 251.9. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

- 251.9.1. **AGREED** Members confirmed that the minutes of the Court of Governors meeting held on 16 March 2022 (Document COG 220525K) are an accurate record.
- 251.9.2. Members noted the summary of actions and matters arising from previous meetings (Document COG 220525L).
- 251.9.3. **Trust governance update (Minute 247.8):** Independent governor, Matthew Smith, gave an oral update on discussions between the governors nominated by the Court and trustees of the QHT. Members heard that the University expect to reach an agreement soon, and the proposed approach is subject to approval by the QHT Trustee Board. The Chair thanked the nominated governors for their work to reach a satisfactory outcome.
- 251.9.4. **Appointment of Chancellor (Action 12.1 6 August 2020)** The Chair informed members of progress in the process to identify a Chancellor candidate

## 251.10. STUDENTS' UNION MATTERS

- 251.10.1. Members noted the UWSU financial statements 2020/21 (Document COG 220525M), approved by the UWSU Trustee Board.
- 251.10.2. Members noted the UWSU block grant bid, which had been approved by the University Executive Board, and strategic plan 2021-24 (Document COG 220525N).

## APPROVED

251.10.3. Members noted the Returning Officer's report for the UWSU Sabbatical Officers election 2022 (Document COG 220525O).

### 251.11. REGISTER OF PERSONS WITH SIGNIFICANT CONTROL

251.11.1. Members noted the annual update to the Register of People with Significant Control (Document COG 220525P), which had been considered by the Governance and Nominations Committee.

### 251.12. PERIODIC EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW 2019 ACTION PLAN UPDATE

251.12.1. Members noted the final progress update (Document COG 220525Q), which had been considered by the Governance and Nominations Committee.

### 251.13. USE OF THE COMPANY SEAL

251.13.1. Members noted a report on usage of the Company Seal since the last meeting (Document COG 220525R).

### 251.14. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

- Wednesday 13 July 2022 3.30pm
- Wednesday 7 September 2022 12noon (away day)
- Wednesday 5 October 2022 3.30pm
- Wednesday 23 November 2022 3.30pm
- Wednesday 15 March 2023 3.30pm
- Wednesday 24 May 2023 3.30pm
- Wednesday 12 July 2023 3.30pm

Formal meetings will take place onsite with the option of participation via Microsoft Teams and may be preceded by a briefing/training session.

### 251.15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

#### Academic Council nominee for membership of the Court of Governors

251.15.1. Members considered a recommendation from the Governance and Nominations Committee for re-appointment of a co-opted staff governor (Document COG 220525S).

251.15.2. **APPROVED** Graham Meikle to be re-appointed as a co-opted governor for a second three-year term of office from 1 August 2022 to 31 July 2025.

#### Appointment of a second co-opted student governor

251.15.3. The Clerk to the Court informed members that the Students' Union has not yet nominated a Sabbatical Officer for the role of co-opted governor.

251.15.4. **AGREED** Members to consider the appointment by correspondence so that, if appointed, the new governor will be in the role prior to the July meeting of the Court.

251.15.5. On behalf of the Court, the Chair thanked Olivia Ponsford for her contribution to the Court and in her role as UWSU Vice-President (Activities).

251.15.5.1. **ACTION Clerk to the Court** to invite Olivia to the start of the July meeting of the Court so that members can express their thanks in person.