



**Minutes** of the 04 February 2022 meeting (held via Teams)

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**Present:** Dr Andrew West (Chair)

Dr Oliver Bray, Meg Darroch, Rachel Hewitt, Tracy Lancaster, David Lowen, Professor Peter Slee, Nick Whitaker

**In attendance:** Kathryn Giddings\*, Kate Harvey (Secretary), Vicki Johnson\*, Jo Jones\*, Lucy Macdonald\*, Radhika Patel, Caroline Thomas

**Apologies:** None received.

*\* Present as indicated in the proceedings.*

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**PRELIMINARY ITEMS**

**Terms of reference and membership**

026.2122 (a) The Committee noted the changes to its membership profile following Dr Oliver Bray's appointment to the Board and welcomed Dr Bray to his first meeting as a governor.

(b) Professional Services Co-opted Governor Jo Norry had stood down from the membership of the Committee and joined the Finance, Staffing & Resources Committee. The Chair recorded thanks to Jo Norry for her commitment and contributions to the Committee during her time as a member.

(c) Caroline Thomas, Registrar & Secretary, proposed that the Committee's Terms of Reference be amended to include the monitoring of student wellbeing and safety matters in the list of delegated governance matters at paragraph 7 given the work of the Committee over the previous twelve months and its link with the CUC Higher Education Code of Governance.

027.2122 The Committee **agreed** that its Terms of Reference should be updated to make reference to its monitoring of student wellbeing and safety issues.

**Declaration of interest**

028.2122 The Chair of the Committee declared for transparency purposes his association through to the end of 2021 with Halpin and AdvanceHE, and current association with AUA Consulting. This declaration related to the Board effectiveness review agenda item.

## Minutes

- 029.2122 The Committee agreed that the minutes of its meeting on 15 October 2021 were an accurate record, subject to a minor amendment to minute 2122.009(e) to amend a typographical error.

## Matters arising

- 030.2122 (a) The Committee noted action taken by the Chair of the Board to approve in-year amendments to the membership profiles of the Committee and the Finance, Staffing & Resources Committee. Dr Oliver Bray had joined the Governance & Nominations Committee and to accommodate this change, Jo Norry had joined the Finance, Staffing & Resources Committee.
- (b) The Chair of the Committee had attended the AdvanceHE governance conference on 18 November 2021 and provided some notes to share with the Committee for reflection and discussion. These included potential positive impact of EDI target setting in the context of board recruitment, the importance of culture and behaviours in effective governance, transparency in the context of potential future changes in corporate governance reporting requirements and potential future trends in governor professional backgrounds.

## Chair's Action

- 031.2122 There were no Chair's actions reported since the last meeting of the Committee.

## STUDENT MATTERS, REGULATORY COMPLIANCE & ASSURANCE

*Victoria Johnson, Associate Director CARES and Jo Jones, Associate Director Student Services, joined the meeting. The Students' Union (SU) Welfare & Community Officer Lucy MacDonald was also in attendance for this item.*

## Student Wellbeing and Safety

*Parts of minute 032.2122 are exempt from publication under section 41 (Information provided in confidence) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.*

- 032.2122 (a) It was reported that University took a collaborative approach to promoting and managing student safety, working across the city with partners including West Yorkshire Police, Leeds City Council and the SU in relation to students as citizens, as well as through internal services including, Student Services, Security, Accommodation and Residential Services, Health & Safety and signposting by academic colleagues. This allowed the benefit and breadth of experience and a joined-up, collective response to students and a wide net to capture student concerns and safety issues. Evidence suggested that students were more likely to report where there was a pre-existing relationship.

(b)

(c) Students could report concerns through the “Support and Report” online tool,

ther reporting avenues included Student Services Advisers, trained Sexual Violence Liaison Officers and Residential Life Advisors.

- d) Key recent achievements included the development and implementation of the Preventing and Addressing Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy and the Safer Street Fund Project which delivered a number of interventions including:
- i. Unblurred Lines, a discussion-based course for students, which explores issues that can lead to sexual violence.
  - ii. Safer Streets 3 - Conflict Management, Personal Safety & Self Defence Training which focusses on real world personal safety awareness.
  - iii. Active Upstander Training which aspires to create safer and more supportive campus communities through the development of a culture of looking out for one another on and off campus.
- (e) Governors observed that much of the work in this area was proactive in nature. In response to queries about the how student engagement was sought, it was confirmed that the collaborative work with the SU was key. The SU Welfare & Community Officer confirmed that trialling initiatives such as those under the Safer Street Fund Project was important to see what was effective, with a review of outcomes planned for the summer.

(f)

- (h) The Committee welcomed the paper, which was the final report in a series focussing on student wellbeing and safety. An annual report on activity in this area has been requested for future academic years and the Committee discussed potential formats, agreeing a combination of narrative reporting and data on trends would be useful.

*Victoria Johnson, Jo Jones, and Lucy MacDonald left the meeting. Kathryn Giddings, the Student Casework Manager, joined the meeting.*

### **Student Casework Annual Report 2020/21**

*Minute 033.2122 is exempt from publication under section 41 (Information provided in confidence) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.*

033.2122 (a)

A large rectangular area of the page is completely redacted with a solid grey fill. The redaction covers the main body of text, including what would be the list items (a) and (b). The only visible text within this area is the label '(a)' at the top left and '(b)' at the bottom left of the redacted zone.

(b)

(c)

(d)

*Kathryn Giddings left the meeting.*

**Annual Report on Subsidiary, Associate, and Investment Companies - Appointment of Director to Leeds University Student Residences**

*Minutes 034 and 035.2122 are exempt from publication under section 43 (Commercial interests) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.*

034.2122 (a)

(c)

035.2122

### OfS Regulatory Update

*Parts of minute 036.2122 are exempt from publication under section 41 (Information provided in confidence) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.*

- 036.2122 (a) The Registrar & Secretary reported that data and information returns falling due in the period since the last update to the Board on 19 November 2021 had been submitted in line with the required deadlines.
- (b) The Office for students (OfS) had issued revised guidance on Reportable Events requirements intended to alleviate regulatory burden on providers which, along with the removal of specific Covid-19 measures, which had come into effect on 01 January 2022.
- (c) The OfS had launched three related consultations linked to condition B3 relating to quality, standards and positive outcomes for students:
- i. a new approach to regulating student outcomes
  - ii. the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)
  - iii. an approach to constructing student outcomes and experience indicators.
- (d) The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) was leading on the consultation responses for the University. Meg Darroch, Student Governor, noted that the Students' Union (SU) was considering how it could be of support to the University in the preparation of its consultation responses and would link in with the Deputy Vice Chancellor via the SU/Senior Management Liaison Group and other meetings.
- (e) The Board would consider the proposals in more detail at its meeting on 11 March 2022

- (f) It was noted that the outcomes of the consultation were expected in July 2022.

## BOARD EFFECTIVENESS

### Board Effectiveness Review

*Part of minute 037.2122 is exempt from publication under section 41 (Information provided in confidence) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.*

- 037.2122 (a) The Registrar & Secretary reported that seven consultancies had been invited to submit an expression of interest to facilitate the external review. The briefing provided had set out that the key objective of the review would be to ensure the University's governance structures appropriately supported its strategic planning framework and were fit for the future, and that the Board had the line of sight it needed on performance against the strategy in the context of changing regulatory expectations of governing bodies.

(b)



- (c) Interested facilitators had been asked to submit an expression of interest by 18 February 2022. Following a shortlisting process, they would then be invited to present their proposals to a panel of governors, which would include the David Lowen as Chair of the Board and Dr Andrew West as Chair of the Committee. The final report and recommendations would come to the Committee at its meeting in October 2022.

## GOVERNANCE MATTERS

### Governor Recruitment

*Minutes 038 and 039.2122 are exempt from publication under section 41 (Information provided in confidence) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.*

- 038.2122 (a)





### **Advance HE Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Toolkit**

- 040.2122 (a) The report from the Secretariat Manager summarised the contents of the Advance HE Toolkit and current activity in this area and made some suggestions for further developing this. The Toolkit had been developed under the umbrella of Advance HE's Board Diversity Practice Project in collaboration with Perrett Laver.
- (b) The report to the Committee focused on recruitment practices and induction, development and retention as the Board was midway through a recruitment cycle. There were opportunities to review how and where the Board advertised for future governor searches, as well as the content and language used in advertisements and candidate packs and the format of interviews.
- (c) The Toolkit highlighted the importance of social interaction outside of meetings in onboarding new governors as well as having mechanisms in place for feedback. The Committee agreed with this assessment with newer governors and a Board Apprentice, agreeing that 1:1 meetings with other governors and informal "cuppas" hosted by the Chair had been very helpful in making them feel welcome. There were opportunities to build on activity in this area as tentative plans began to be made for resuming Board activities on campus and ensuring that those meetings and away days held on campus promoted the opportunity for more social and informal discussion.
- (d) An additional option that could be introduced part of induction support would be to offer new governors the chance to initially meet with a senior governor prior to and after a Board meeting, to go through the papers and to address any queries on the background to issues. This opportunity had been offered to the Board Apprentices with positive feedback, so the mechanism was in place to be rolled out more widely, as was the option for a "touch base" opportunity with the Registrar & Secretary or Secretariat Manager every six weeks or so. The Committee welcomed the suggestions made in the paper and endorsed their inclusion in the University's induction offering.



- (e) The Chair reminded the Committee that in February 2021 it had discussed a comparison of the Board's composition against data in AdvanceHE's report "Diversity of Governors in Higher Education", published by Dr Natalia Codioli McMaster in October 2020. The report had set out the outcomes of AdvanceHE's analysis of 2018/19 HESA data looking at the diversity characteristics of governors in UK higher education. The Committee agreed it would welcome a new comparison following the end of the current recruitment cycle, using updated HESA data if available.

041.2122 The Committee **resolved** that a further review of the Board's composition against HESA equality, diversity and inclusion data would be received at its meeting in June 2022, following the end of the current recruitment cycle.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Use of the University Seal**

042.2122 The Committee noted that since its last meeting two new documents had been executed using the University Seal.

### **Schedule of meetings and business 2021/22**

043.2122 (a) The Committee received its schedule of business for the 2021/22 year.

044.2122 The Committee **resolved** that the schedule of business be updated as agreed during the course of the meeting.

### **Date of next meeting**

045.2122 The next meeting of the Committee would be held at 13:30 on 10 June 2022, venue TBC

### **Other business**

046.2122 No other business was raised.

Confirmed by the Committee as a correct record and signed by the Chair:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_