

CANTERBURY CHRIST CHURCH UNIVERSITY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHAIRS COMMITTEE: THURSDAY 6 JUNE 2019 AT 12:30 PM IN THE FREDERIC MASON ROOM, ST MARTINS PRIORY

Strictly Confidential

Present: Mr Frank Martin (Pro-Chancellor and Chair)
Ms Judith Armitt
Mr Philip Fletcher
Professor Rama Thirunamachandran (Vice-Chancellor)

In attendance: Ms Alison Sear

1. Opening Prayer

The Chair read out a section of The Exhortation and led a minute's silence to mark the 75th Anniversary of the D-Day landings.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Sir Ian Johnston.

3. Declarations of Interest

Judith Armitt declared an interest in respect of Item 6 'Membership of the Governing Body' and was not present for the duration of that discussion.

4. Chair's Communications

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

He referred to the recent WONKHE publication 'Navigating the Policy Uncertainty' drawing on several articles to prompt discussion regarding the external context affecting higher education; financial sustainability in uncertain times, the expected changes in the population of 18 to 20 year olds to unprecedented levels in the next 10 years and the mental health and wellbeing agenda. The Chair reflected that if ever there was a time to look beyond the short term uncertainty around policy and invest in the future of the institution for the benefit of current and future students, the time was now. The Chairs reaffirmed their support of the University's current strategy of ensuring long term sustainability through pursuing its major change initiatives.

5. Minutes of the Meeting of the Chairs Committee held on 7 March 2019

The minutes of the meeting of the Chairs Committee held on 7 March 2019 were confirmed and signed as an accurate record.

6. Matters Arising not Appearing elsewhere on the Agenda

There was a discussion arising from the recent circulation to the Governors by email of the University's draft Access and Participation Plan for approval. Members welcomed and praised the extensive work which had been carried out by officers across the University. The Members agreed that although the University's track record in promoting the Widening Participation agenda was strong, the BAME attainment gap was a key area for continued focus and improvement.

7. Strategic Discussion Item

Student Recruitment and Retention

- The overall current figure for firm acceptances of a place for September 2019 entry to the University were 2% lower compared to the same point last year. Applications compared to the same point last year had been 7% lower. Therefore, the University was converting better than application levels would have suggested.
- The University had set challenging targets for recruitment via the clearing process but it was hoped that last year's success during clearing could be repeated.
- The University continued to address its concerns regarding the lower applications to some of the courses within the Arts and Humanities Faculty and the Faculty of Social & Applied Sciences. The restructure of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities was still in progress and will move from an 'informal consultation' to a formal consultation shortly.

The 'Augar Review' and the University's 2019/20 Budget

- The Vice-Chancellor set out the key recommendations of the recently published Post-18 Review of Education and Funding: Independent Panel Report, (the 'Augar Review') and provided his initial reflections on their potential impact on the University for the benefit of the Committee.
- He said that a freeze in the level of tuition fees until 202/23 would represent a significant reduction in the University's income, which some institutions were building into their 'core case'. There was a real risk that the Review's advisory status could be misinterpreted by prospective students and parents meaning that a number of students may elect to delay starting their degree courses until after the forthcoming intake in order to benefit from the anticipated lower fees.
- The University would perform detailed modelling in order to assess the impact of any future Government's implementation of the Augar Review's recommendations. The Vice-Chancellor said that the Finance and Resources ('F&R') Committee had agreed at their meeting earlier that day that the current 19/20 Budget and underpinning business plans, prepared immediately prior to the publication of the Augar Review, would be further reviewed by him together with both the Chair of the Governing Body and the Chair of the F&R Committee. They would take into account feedback from the F&R Committee members during the meeting, further advice to be received from KPMG and management re-modelling. A revised 19/20 Budget would be recommended for approval by the Governing Body at its meeting on 2 July.

Fundraising and Bids

- The Vice-Chancellor shared news regarding a total of £500K which had been fundraised for the University and the University of Kent jointly, for the development of the Kent and Medway Medical School.
- The second LEP capital funding bid (for £4M for CCCU) for the development of the Medical School was still under consideration and a further update on that bid would be provided in due course.
- The University was continuing to pursue separate bids for its development of courses in Engineering.

Estate Master Plan

An update on the progress of the Estate Master Plan was provided:

- The Daphne Oram Creative Arts Building (Building 1) continued to receive very positive feedback from students and staff. Work was underway to rectify a relatively small number of issues that had arisen following the building's occupation.
- The STEM building (Building 2) was progressing well and on schedule. Drainage work was underway outside Old Sessions House.
- At the F&R Committee meeting earlier that day the new Director of Estates and Facilities had presented a brief summary of the options relating to student accommodation including the possibility of constructing University owned student accommodation as part of Phase 3 of the Estate Master Plan. The Chairs acknowledged that the characteristics of the University's student population would be evolve and change following the roll out of its courses in Engineering and Medicine.
- An update was provided on the progress of the University's disposals programme which was integral to the Estate Master Plan.

Staff Survey

The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that there had been a good level of participation in the staff survey (75% response) and the Senior Management Team would review the outcome in late June. The Governing Body would have the opportunity to discuss the survey outcome at the Away Day in September.

NOTED

Items for Approval

* Judith Armitt was not present during the discussion of Item 6 *

8. Membership of the Governing Body (Item 6)

The Clerk presented a paper regarding the appointment of a second Deputy Chair to the Governing Body (Membership of the Governing Body – Paper L115). The Clerk tabled a paper listing those eligible Governors who had either been nominated or were

self-nominated together with a summary of their professional profile and experience to date on the Governing Body. Members discussed and considered the nominations. In view of the relevant experience of the nominees, the Chairs agreed to recommend one nominee to the Governing Body at its meeting on 2 July 2019 for its approval. Subject to the Governing Body's approval, the nominee would commence the role from 1 August 2019.

RESOLVED that the Chairs Committee in its capacity as Nominations Committee to make the recommendation to the full Governing Body at their meeting on 2 July 2019 for its approval that Ms Judith Armitt be appointed as the second Deputy Chair of the Governing Body from 1 August 2019 for an initial term of four years.

9. Review of the University's Governance Arrangements

Governance Effectiveness Review

The Clerk presented Paper L116; a Review of the University's Governance Arrangements. The Clerk said the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) recommends that a Governance effectiveness review takes place at least every four years. Following a major review in 2012 and a formal peer review in 2016, the University's next formal governance effectiveness review was due in 2020. Members agreed with the Clerk's proposal for a Governance effectiveness review to be carried out and completed by summer 2020.

Articles Review

Members agreed that the timing of the forthcoming Governance effectiveness review in 2020 provided an opportunity to refresh the University's Articles of Association and Instrument and Articles of Governance (dated June 2013) to update the outdated sections and ensure the University is able to continue to fulfil its objectives, consistent with its Church of England mission and recently refreshed strategic framework, and to comply with OfS requirements. The work to refresh the Articles and associated documents, such as the Schedule of Delegation, would require wide stakeholder engagement (including the Students' Union, the Church of England, Archbishops' Council, Diocesan Boards and the Charity Commission). Incorporation of the proposed changes would be reviewed by an external law firm. Members agreed that a refresh of the Articles should be undertaken following the Governance Effectiveness Review and in the context of its outcome, by spring 2021.

RESOLVED that the Chairs Committee recommend the proposal for:

- a review of the effectiveness of the University's governance arrangements to be completed by summer 2020, and
- a refresh of the University's Articles to be completed by spring 2021

to the full Governing Body at their meeting on 2 July 2019 for its approval.

Items for Noting and Discussion

10. Governor Visits Programme: Feedback

Members received Paper L117; a summary of the Governor Visits which had been rolled out during 2018/19 as part of the Governor Development Framework. Members noted the positive feedback received from Governors and staff following the visits.

The Clerk confirmed the Governor Visits schedule for the remaining part of 2018/19 and for 2019/2020. Members noted the particular value to Governors in visiting and increasing their knowledge and awareness of the work of the academic departments and the academic process. Members requested that the Clerk's office organise a visit to the new STEM Building (Building 2) as soon as reasonably practical, given that it was still under construction.

NOTED

11. Governor Informal Feedback

The Clerk presented Paper L118. Members noted the outcome of the informal Governor discussions that had taken place in 2017/2018 and noted the progress of the recommendations to date. Members also noted the outcome of the informal discussions which had taken place in the current academic year and a summary of the recommendations. Members discussed the way in which the University's officers had supported Governors in fulfilling their roles as directors and trustees and also the way in which Governors had made significant contribution to the University.

A discussion took place around the need for the Governing Body to receive further briefing, at the next Governor Away Day, to promote deeper understanding of its overall responsibility for and oversight of teaching and academic matters notwithstanding the role of the Academic Board in this regard.

The Clerk said that the outcome of the informal discussions which had taken place in the current academic year would be reported to the Governing Body at its meeting on 2 July 2019 for information.

NOTED

12. Governing Body Away Day

Members discussed the Away Day scheduled to take place prior to the Governing Body meeting on 24 September 2019. Members noted that the Chair, Vice-Chancellor and Clerk would give further consideration to the structure and areas for strategic discussion which would be of the greatest benefit to the Governors. The idea for an agenda structured around the theme of the 'Student Experience' was supported by the Chairs.

NOTED

13. Any Other Business

There was none.

14. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Chairs Committee was scheduled to take place on 7 November 2019 at 12.30pm.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 2.30pm.