

CANTERBURY CHRIST CHURCH UNIVERSITY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHAIRS COMMITTEE: THURSDAY 5 MARCH 2020 AT 12:30 PM IN THE FREDERIC MASON ROOM, AT ST MARTINS PRIORY

Strictly Confidential

Present: Mr Frank Martin (Chair of the Governing Body)
Ms Judith Armitt (Deputy Chair of the Governing Body and Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee)
Sir Ian Johnston (Deputy Chair of the Governing Body and Chair of the Remuneration Committee)
Mr Philip Fletcher (Chair of the Audit Committee)
Professor Rama Thirunamachandran (Vice-Chancellor and Chair of the Academic Board)

In attendance: Ms Alison Sear (Clerk to the Governing Body)

1. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies.

2. Declarations of Interest

In view of his membership of the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP) Board the Vice-Chancellor declared his interest in Item 7 (Honorary Fellowships and Doctorates: Recommendations) given that [WITHHELD] was recommended for an Honorary Doctorate. It was agreed that the Vice-Chancellor would not take part in the relevant part of discussion when Item 7 was considered.

3. Chair's Communications

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Chair said that he had enjoyed meeting the new Bishop of Dover, Reverend Rose Hudson-Wilkin, in early January and very much looked forward to introducing Bishop Rose to the rest of the Governing Body and welcoming her at its meetings.

He reported that prior to the meeting there had been a very productive meeting between the Archbishop of Canterbury, the University's Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor and himself, as well as some students and staff. A member of the student community had spoken about her transformative experience at the University. The Archbishop had been extremely supportive of the University's mission and had wanted to continue to take an active role to ensure its future sustainability.

The Chair updated the committee that a report had been presented to the Finance and Resources Committee earlier that day which mentioned the success in terms of recruitment of the new gaming and digital arts courses delivered at the new Daphne Oram Creative Arts Building. He said it was vital for the University to continue to constantly refresh its curriculum to ensure it remains appealing and relevant to

prospective and existing students. Entrepreneurial courses, particularly in the University's Business School were an interesting proposition. The Vice-Chancellor said that new Product Design courses were under consideration and that the engineering and creative arts schools were exploring new joint programme provision.

4. Minutes of the Meeting of the Chairs Committee held on 7 November 2019

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

5. Matters Arising not Appearing elsewhere on the Agenda

The Committee agreed that it would be premature to take a recommendation to the Governing Body for approval in March given that discussions were ongoing regarding the naming opportunities in relation to Building 2 (the STEM Building). The Committee agreed to reconsider the naming of the building again at its meeting in June 2020 and acknowledged that it could approve a name by virtual means if necessary.

RESOLVED that the issue of naming the STEM Building be considered by the Committee again at its next meeting in June 2020 with a view to approving the name prior to reporting it to the Governing Body for information at the Governing Body meeting in June 2020.

6. Strategic Discussion Item

The Vice-Chancellor updated the members of the Chairs Committee on the following items.

Covid-19

The University's Senior Management Team and other senior colleagues were spending significant time in response to the evolving public health situation in relation to Covid-19 which was now considered to be a serious risk to the University. The Vice-Chancellor said the situation was constantly changing and a Strategic Response Group (Gold Group) to inform decision making in response to the evolving situation had been established. The Group would be chaired by Margaret Ayers, Director of HR&OD and it would consider the strategic direction required to ensure the right messages continued to be properly communicated to all staff and students, and ensuring that appropriate business continuity plans were in place. The Group would continue to develop the University's business continuity plans with regard to the travel arrangements of its students and staff, provision of student accommodation, teaching and assessment, IT and working from home arrangements for staff. In terms of international travel, the University was following the FCO guidance and allowing travel to continue to areas which are not in the categories 1 and 2. A separate operational group (Silver Group) had also been established. The University would continue to monitor advice from FCO and Public Health England and would prepare itself for temporary closure in the event of a significant outbreak on campus or if required to do so by the Government.

External Context

There was an expectation that the Government would not make a response to the Augar recommendations until the autumn, following the Spending Review. Given the current external environment, the Chair suggested the Vice-Chancellor discussed within his external networks an independent review, commissioned on behalf of the sector, as a tool with which to lobby Government about the significant challenges faced.

Student Recruitment and Retention

The Vice-Chancellor reported that student applications were currently approximately 4% down in comparison to the figures reported at the same time last year. This figure excluded the 1,538 applications for medicine.

The University's mid-year financial position had been reported to the Finance and Resources Committee earlier in the day. Despite the budgeted provision for income shortfall against student number growth, revisions had been made to the full year forecast as student recruitment and returning student targets had not been fully achieved. Financial forecasts at this stage indicated a deficit of more than the budgeted deficit for this year. The University's Senior Management Team were planning for a range of strategic actions to ameliorate the impact of the expected shortfall in income and further update would be provided to the Governing Body at its meeting in March.

KMMS

The Vice-Chancellor shared an update regarding the latest fundraising activities in support of the development of the Kent and Medway Medical School. It was positive that the second LEP capital funding bid (for £4M for KMMS), for the development of the Medical School, had been successful. This brought the total raised for KMMS so far to £19M

Tremendous efforts were being made and it was anticipated that the joint fund raised on behalf of the University and the University of Kent would reach £20 million by the end of March.

Engineering

The total fund successfully raised for the University's new Engineering provision was £13 million.

Estate Master Plan

Excellent progress had been made regarding the construction of the STEM Building; construction was on target for completion in June 2020.

NOTED

Items for Approval

7. Honorary Fellowships and Doctorates: Recommendations [Paper M87]

The Vice-Chancellor reported that he had invited nominations from Governors, staff and students and had received a number of nominations on a standardised template. He reminded the Committee of the key criteria for the awards and the Committee was invited to agree the below awards for the academic year 2020/21.

[WITHHELD]

Honorary Doctorates

- [WITHHELD]

RESOLVED that:

- the Honorary Doctorate awards be notified to the full Governing Body in June; and
- [WITHHELD]

8. [WITHHELD]

Items for Noting and Discussion

9. CUC Draft Code Consultation and Approach to Governance Effectiveness Review Update [Paper M89]

The Clerk presented a draft response to the CUC's public consultation on the draft updated Higher Education Code of Governance. Chairs welcomed the report and noted that institutional values are not necessarily set by the Governing Body and in respect of the University, for instance, its key Church of England foundation is enshrined in its Instrument and Articles of Government. Chairs briefly discussed the "Golden Vote" which gave the Church the right of veto in relation to any proposal for a fundamental change to the University's Church of England foundation.

Subject to the addition of the phrase "subject to the University's Articles" in the 'Values' section of para 2.4, Chairs agreed that the commentary provided in the paper be forwarded to the CUC in response to the consultation.

Chairs noted the draft assessment of the University's compliance with the draft updated Code of Governance which was appended to the paper and were content that the University was significantly compliant with the draft Code. They noted that actions in respect of "amber rated" responses could be woven into the Governance Effectiveness Review in order to canvas the opinion of Governing Body members during that process.

Chairs noted that the University's due diligence checks conducted prior to a new Governor joining the Governing Body would be reviewed in line with the draft guidance and best practise. The Chair commented that the process needed to be balanced between being sufficiently robust without being too draconian.

Several Chairs supported the University having a Senior Independent Director to act as an independent senior Governor for other Governors to consult with if necessary. Such changes could be incorporated into the refreshed Articles of Association which would also allow for the representation of students on the Governing Body and its committees to be reviewed.

The Clerk said that the final version of the CUC Code was expected to be published after May 2020. Given this timeframe, she proposed the University's Governance Effectiveness review be undertaken for draft recommendations to be endorsed by

Chairs at their meeting in early November and recommended for consideration and approval by the Governing Body at its meeting in November 2020. Previously it had been hoped that the annual Governor Informal Feedback process, which takes place between April and May each year could feed into the effectiveness review but given the timing of the publication of the CUC Code, a mid-year Governor Informal Feedback in October 2020 could be utilised instead. Chairs endorsed this proposed timeframe and agreed the proposed consequential review of the University's Articles of Association be carried out by the end of academic year 2020/21, with implementation for the start of the 2021/22 academic year.

RESOLVED that:

- subject to the addition outlined above the University respond to the CUC consultation before the deadline of 13 March 2020; and
- the revised approach to the Governance Effectiveness Review be endorsed for approval by the Governing Body at its meeting in March 2020.

10. Membership of the Governing Body – Governor Retirement Dates

The Clerk gave an oral update regarding the forthcoming Governor retirement dates.

NOTED

11. Students Union Election 2020 Update

The Vice-Chancellor updated Chairs regarding the outcome of the Students Union elections and said the following would be the Students Union post-holders during 2020/21:

- Students' Union President - Becky Thomson
- President (Development) - Beth Elwood
- President (Sports & Engagement) - Maddy Young
- President (Wellbeing) - Nathan Baker.

Members said they looked forward to welcoming Becky Thomson to the Governing Body.

NOTED

12. Any Other Business

There was none.

13. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Chairs Committee was scheduled to take place on 4 June 2020 at 12.30pm.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 2.28pm.