

**University of Central Lancashire**

**Unreserved Minutes of the Board Meeting Held on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2020 commencing at 10.30am**

**Present (via video-conference):**



views on 'low value' courses will also be addressed. UCLan can respond with confidence, but elsewhere in the sector, there is a great deal of concern.

- Office of the Independent Adjudicator ('OIA') and awards to students due to 'misteaching' - This is not a matter which has affected UCLan, but the University will challenge proposals for changes in the OIA complaints handling process, including possibly allowing 'large group' complaints and allowing the by-passing of university internal procedures.

- Ofsted Review of Apprenticeship Provision - the short notice review (centring on Nursing provision) is expected to confirm that remedial work of recent months has been effective. Whilst the two-day review is not a formal inspection, and there will be no grading, a positive outcome is anticipated.

- Government Spending Review - Details - 16.4 (l) 5.8 (i) 9 (er- (o)-4.7 (t)-16 (i)-17.9 (c)-7 (es) 2.

**UB875. Reserved Minute.**

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**UB878. Draft Consolidated Financial Statements and Letter of Management Representation**

Mr Charles presented the draft 2019/20 Consolidated Financial Statements. A copy of the Statements is set out in the Minute Book.

Mr Charles confirmed that the draft Consolidated Financial Statements had been examined at Audit and Risk Committee, but there had been a subsequent minor change (ie., inclusion of additional information on the impact of Covid 19) in the Going Concern section.

The Board reviewed the draft Statement, noting that the University's significant cash balances would provide reassurance as regards 'going concern' judgement. The impact of the pensions-linked actuarial loss was also noted, but, in general terms and otherwise, it was agreed that the Statements were consistent with fairly good financial health at UCLan.

The contents of the draft Letter of Management Representation were noted.

The recommendation that KPMG be reappointed as external auditor for the 2020/21 accounts was approved.

**Resolved:** That

- (i) the Financial Statements for 2019/20 and the Letter of Management Representation be approved and be signed by the Chair on behalf of the Board; and
- (ii) KPMG be reappointed as external auditor for the 2020/21 accounts.

**UB879. Annual Report of Audit and Risk Committee**

Mrs Lowry presented the Annual Report on behalf of the Audit and Risk Committee. A copy of the Annual Report is set out in the Minute Book.

Mrs Lowry reminded Board Members about the assurance which the Committee's Annual Report offers when acceptance of the Consolidated Financial Statements is considered. She then briefly summarised the constituent elements of the Report, drawing attention to the Committee's reviews of the Risk Register during the year. She confirmed that the risk referred to in the discussion of staff costs (under UB877 above) was indeed included in the Risk Register.

In conclusion, Mrs Lowry advised that the Committee offered the Annual Report as confirmation that it has fulfilled its responsibilities and had complied with its Terms of Reference.

**Resolved:** That the Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee be received and the assurances therein be noted.

## UB880. Annual Prevent Assurance Report



(vi)

**UB885. Academic Board - Meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2020 - Update**

Mrs Lloyd had attended the latest meeting of the Academic Board as representative of the University Board. She reported that a very lengthy agenda had been processed proficiently



## **UB888. Student Wellbeing and Suicide Prevention**

Professor Baldwin reminded the Board about references in his Update reports, often in the context of the Covid 19 pandemic and lockdown conditions, to student wellbeing issues and to student suicides.

Professor A Ireland presented his report on the University's approach to supporting student mental health and wellbeing. A copy of the report is set out in the Minute Book.

Professor Ireland confirmed that there had been an undoubted upsurge in student need for wellbeing services, often related to the pandemic and to the increased sense of loneliness which has been a consequence of imposed conditions.

Professor Ireland commented on the two papers presented to the VCG in recent weeks on (i) development of the University's approach to suicide prevention and (ii) a Counselling, Mental Health and Wellbeing update and resource proposal. He confirmed that the recommendations accompanying each paper had been reviewed and endorsed by the VCG and that implementation had commenced. Cnas 3e5 (t)-12 (a)-.'(t)5.6 s-1626 8 U.7.96. ( ((m)0.7

Mrs Lloyd advised that, in many cases, there would be no obvious indicators of impending suicide. Thus, systematic analysis of available data (eg on attendance rates) could sometimes provide pointers to cases of concern. Professor Ireland advised on the "Stream" system (predictive learner analytics) which, although hampered by the pandemic disruptions, is currently being rolled out at UCLan. He gave examples of how the system would be used. The Chair advised that the University of Northumbria was involved in the development of apps which serve to identify potentially vulnerable students.

Dr Armstrong suggested that data comparisons with other institutions might assist in the identification of particularly vulnerable groups. Professor Ireland agreed that more intelligence of that nature would be very useful, and that efforts to develop data sharing (including via sector Student Services networks) are ongoing. He confirmed that it is already recognised that suicide is more prevalent among males and that male students are thus considered to be a higher risk.

Ms Chikh confirmed that the Students Union was fully involved in the measures to ensure maximum wellbeing of students. She advised that care was required where the transporting of systems from elsewhere (eg the Bristol University approach) was contemplated, given that there are often entirely different characteristics between the student bases of individual universities. She drew attention to current arrangements at UCLan for obtaining (and maintaining records of) student consent. Professor Ireland outlined the current approach and arrangements for keeping records up-to-

**UB890. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The next Board meeting will be on Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021 at 10.00am via Microsoft Teams.

The Chair confirmed that it was almost certain that the next meeting will have to be on a 'virtual' basis. However, prospects of reverting to traditional on campus meetings seem considerably more realistic for later in the academic year.

**I M Fisher**  
**Clerk to the Board**