

Minutes:	Board of Governors
Time and date:	10:00, Thursday 24 November 2022
Location:	Bede House, room 0.46
Present:	Ian Squires (Chair), Peter Collyer, Fiona Cownie, Stuart Dawkins, Jon Lees, Jonathan Kerry, Jonathan Mills, Katie Normington, Buddy Penfold, Sara Pierson, Sardip Sandhu, Aashni Sawjani, Beverley Shears, Benjamin Smith, Peter Tansley and Paul Woodgates
In attendance:	David Bryan (Director of Strategic Planning) (item 51), Pete Cross (Chief Finance and Resources Officer), Richard Greene (Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Tracey Jessup (Chief Transformation Officer) (item 46), Chloe Keenan (Governance Officer), Susan Orr (Pro Vice-Chancellor Education) (items 47 and 48), Nikki Pierce (Registrar (Academic) and Secretary to the Board)
Secretary:	Nick Jeffs; nick.jeffs@dmu.ac.uk

CONFIRMED

39 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Catherine Clarke, Shreeya Paudel and Dan Toner.

40 Declarations of any pecuniary, family or other personal interests

No declarations of pecuniary, family or other personal interests were made in respect of any items on the agenda.

The university maintains a Register of Interests, which records standing declarations of pecuniary, family or other personal interests from all members of the Board of Governors and the University Leadership Board.

41a Minutes of the 29 September 2022 meeting of the Board of Governors

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved.

41b Minutes of the 13 October 2022 Board of Governors' strategic away day

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved.

41c Minutes of the 20 October 2022 extraordinary meeting of the Board of Governors

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved.

42 Matters arising

139 Engagement Strategy

The strategy would be shared with the board early in 2023.

142 Ofsted Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan

Governors would be offered the opportunity to attend sessions aimed at outlining what might be asked of them in the event of an Ofsted inspection. The sessions would be delivered by an external provider and the Governance Office would contact governors to determine their availability.

All of the remaining matters arising [42] had been completed prior to the meeting or were scheduled to be considered by the board at a future date.

43 Report from the Chair

The Chair of the Board delivered an update concerning the following matters:

- i. **[Redacted]**
- ii. The board would be embarking upon another round of governor recruitment in early 2023, driven by the departure of Sara Pierson (as noted under item 69) and a loss of contact with the newly-appointed Lauren Waters who, it was now assumed, no longer wished to take up her role.
- iii. Stuart Dawkins and Jonathan Kerry had agreed to act as the board's Ofsted 'champions'.
- iv. Sardip Sandhu had agreed to replace Fiona Cownie as the independent observer of Academic Board.
- v. Governors were reminded of their invite to join the graduation ceremonies taking place in February 2023. The university hoped to have at least one governor at each ceremony. The dates and timings of the ceremonies had been circulated to the board prior to the meeting and governors were asked to indicate their availability to the Governance Office at the earliest opportunity.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the update be noted.
- b. That governors would indicate to the Governance Office their availability for the February 2023 graduation ceremonies.

44 Report from the Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor introduced a report [44] concerning a range of recent developments in relation to the university and the higher education sector as a whole. Arising from the discussion of this item, and questions from governors, the following points were highlighted:

- a. **[Redacted]**
- b. The university continued to develop its approach to DMU London. The board would be provided with further updates as progress was made.
- c. The Office for Students was currently reviewing student outcomes data across a range of higher education providers. The outcome of this review, and any potential implications for DMU, would be shared with the board in due course.
- d. The Minister of State for Education, Robert Halfon MP, had been invited to visit DMU and Leicester College with a view to exploring the partnership between the two institutions.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

45 Report from the Student Governors

The student governors delivered an update concerning the following matters:

- i. The students' union had been working to raise awareness in government of student hardship as a result of the current cost of living crisis. The union's executive officers had met with local MPs Jon Ashworth and Liz Kendall, who had agreed to write to the Minister of State for Education with the aim of highlighting the issue, and a request had already been made for student hardship to be mentioned in Parliament. It was noted that the union and the university continued to support students via their respective hardship funds.
- ii. The student governors reiterated the union's position of neutrality with regards the current University and College Union industrial action. The students' union would continue to support students who had been adversely affected by the current industrial action.
- iii. The students' union had seen a c. 30% increase year-on-year in engagement with sports clubs and societies, which, it was felt, reflected a positive return to face to face activity, post-pandemic.

RESOVLED:

That the update be noted.

46 Digital Transformation strategy implementation plan

The Chief Transformation Officer introduced a report [46] concerning the implementation plan for the 'Digital Transformation' cross-cutting theme of the 'The Empowering University' strategy. Arising from the discussion of this item, and questions from governors, the following points were highlighted:

- i. It was recognised that the university's IT infrastructure would need to be modernised and that this would involve short term costs that would, ultimately, be offset somewhat by longer term savings as a result of newer and more efficient equipment and services.
- ii. It was agreed that it would be important for both staff and students to develop their digital skills so that both groups could take full advantage of the benefits that would be brought about by the transformation programme.
- iii. It was agreed that it would be important to raise awareness across the university, both among staff and students, of the work that would underpin digital transformation at DMU. It was noted that the university would shortly be launching

- a microsite, which would be a key element in demonstrating ways in which the culture at DMU would be changing as part of the transformation.
- iv. It was suggested that it would be important to harness colleagues' enthusiasm for change to build a network of advocates for the programme. It was recognised that co-creation would be a key element of the transformation process and that it would be critical to reach out to all staff and students in order to encourage positive, meaningful engagement with any planned changes.
 - v. In discussing the engagement of external consultants, the board suggested it would be important for the executive to be clear on what it hoped consultants to achieve, and that it would be critical to remain conscious of costs. It was noted that two projects had already been identified on which to engage consultants: the digital workspace, and how to manage the digital transformation portfolio as a whole.
 - vi. It was suggested that the university would need to remain agile in its approach to the transformation, both in terms of its ability to react to changes in circumstances as the programme developed, but also in terms of the financial model required to support the process.
 - vii. It was agreed that the role of research in the transformation programme would be made clearer.
 - viii. It was suggested that it would be useful to develop a working definition of what 'digital transformation' meant at DMU, which could then be shared with staff and students.
 - ix. It was suggested that it would be useful for the board to consider in more detail the benefits end users would derive from the proposed transformation as well as, if possible, being given the opportunity able to observe, first-hand, elements of the user experience.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the ambition for digital transformation at DMU, as set out in the vision, value proposition and principles of the Digital Transformation Strategy, be approved.
- b. That the three core strategic priorities aimed at delivering the strategy's vision, be approved.
- c. That the implementation plan for the 'Digital Transformation' cross-cutting theme of the 'The Empowering University' strategy be approved.
- d. That the board would consider in more detail at its next meeting the benefits end users would derive from the proposed transformation programme.

47 Learning for Life strategy implementation plan

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC) Education introduced a report [47] concerning the implementation plan for the 'Learning for Life' pillar of the 'The Empowering University' strategy. Arising from the discussion of this item, and questions from governors, the following points were highlighted:

- i. It was recognised that the university would continue to work on the implementation of its approach to peer observation of teaching, and that this would be a key part of developing colleagues' teaching practice.
- ii. It would be important for colleagues to be aware of their National Student Survey teaching-related metrics and how that data might be used to develop their teaching practice.
- iii. It was noted that the university was engaged in a number of schemes aimed at developing and supporting students' employability, including working with the University of Leicester and Loughborough University on a combined open day for

local government jobs, and engaging with Leicester City Council on the local skills improvement plan. The university was also ensuring that employability was woven into its programmes of study.

- iv. It was recognised that the 'Learning for Life' pillar was a key measure of the success of various elements of the university's strategy, and that it would be important for its KPTs to be monitored closely, with oversight by the board and more in-depth consideration by appropriate committees of the board.

RESOLVED:

That the implementation plan for the 'Learning for Life' pillar of the 'The Empowering University' strategy be approved.

48 Teaching Excellence Framework update

The PVC Education delivered a presentation concerning preparations for the university's submission to the 2023 Teaching Excellence Framework exercise. Arising from the discussion of this item, and questions from governors, the following points were highlighted:

- i. It was recognised that the statement would need to demonstrate that the university appreciated its current position in terms of the data on which it would be assessed, and emphasise the actions it was taking to improve that position (i.e. with recent changes in leadership and the development of a new strategy).
- ii. The university was supporting the students' union in the drafting of their element of the statement.
- iii. It was noted that the university's Marketing and Communications team would be reviewing the statement to ensure consistency of voice across the final submission.
- iv. It was agreed that the latest draft of the statement would be shared with the board in December so that governors would have the opportunity to provide feedback on its content prior to submission. The criteria against which the university's submission would be assessed would also be shared with the board.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the presentation be noted.
- b. That the latest draft of the statement, and the criteria against which it would be assessed, would be shared with the board in December 2022 so that governors would have the opportunity to provide feedback on its content prior to submission.

49 Student numbers 2022/23

The Chief Finance and Resources Officer (CFRO) introduced a report [49] concerning the university's current position in terms of student recruitment, as well as an update on the work being done to address a number of issues that had been identified recently in relation to student number forecasting. Arising from the discussion of this item, and questions from governors, the following points were highlighted:

- i. It was noted that there had been a number of different areas where the university's data had been incorrect, and that this data would have been used as part of forecasting at key points throughout the recruitment cycle.
- ii. It was also noted that the quality of reporting across different student groups (for example, postgraduate taught, postgraduate research, distance learning) had

- been variable although the board welcomed the university's assurance that improvements had already been made in that regard.
- iii. It was suggested that, as part of the digital transformation strategy, it would be important for DMU to ensure the quality of its data, particularly in light of other recent data-related issues, and that the university adopted a more 'joined-up' approach to data held in different areas across the institution.
 - iv. In discussing the discrepancy in the forecast position, it was suggested that a number of external factors would have contributed to a decrease in the number of applications for 2023/24, including the current cost of living crisis and a buoyant, post-pandemic job market.
 - v. In discussing the financial implications of the discrepancy, it was noted that the university continued to explore ways in which it could diversify its income streams in order to reduce its reliance on tuition fees (for example, growth in commercial income; transnational education projects).
 - vi. It was noted that the decrease in the progression rate for DMU International College students had the potential to be a future issue for the university's UK Visas and Immigration Basic Compliance Assessment metrics. Any impact on these metrics would be monitored by the Audit Committee.
 - vii. However, it was recognised that, despite these various issues, there had still been a number of positive outcomes during the recruitment cycle for 2022/23, including an increase year-on-year in the number of domestic undergraduate students, and a significant overperformance against target in the number of overseas students.
 - viii. It was suggested that it would be useful for the board to have visibility of key points of the forecasting process. It was agreed that reporting to this effect would be shared with the board once it had been developed. It was also suggested that the Finance and Performance Committee might be best-placed to consider this data in detail.
 - ix. It was agreed that the board would be provided with a further update at its meeting on 2 February 2023, which would outline the progress made to date by the working group tasked with addressing the issues highlighted by the forecasting data. The report would explore the actions that had been taken as well as outlining how the effectiveness of those mitigations would be monitored.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the report be noted.
- b. That the board would be provided with a further update at its meeting on 2 February 2023, which would outline the progress made to date by the working group tasked with addressing the issues highlighted by the forecasting data.

50 Financial position update

The CFRO delivered a presentation concerning the university's financial position at Quarter 1 of 2022/23. Arising from the discussion of this item, and questions from governors, the following points were highlighted:

- i. It was noted that the financial position would be explored in greater detail by the Finance and Performance Committee at its meeting on 28 November.
- ii. Noting the issues discussed at item 49, it was agreed that it would be important for the board's committees to seek assurance of the accuracy of forecasting across a range of areas. Financial forecasting, for example, would be examined by the Finance and Performance Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be noted.

51 Empowering University strategy update

The Director of Strategic Planning introduced a report [51] concerning an overview of the progress the university had made to date towards achieving the key performance targets (KPTs) of the Empowering University strategy. The report also included proposals as to which of the board's committee would have responsibility for review in detail the university's progress towards achieving those KPTs.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the report be noted.
- b. That the proposals regarding the committees to which each KPT be aligned be endorsed. It was noted that the proposed alignments might be reviewed in time to ensure they remained appropriate.

52 Academic governance

The Registrar (Academic) and Secretary to the Board introduced a report [52] concerning an overview of academic governance at DMU. Arising from the discussion of this item, and questions from governors, the following points were highlighted:

- i. It was suggested that it would be useful for the board to have sight of the key data as outlined in appendix A to the report, Advance HE's 'Practical advice to support the governing body with academic assurance'. It was agreed that it would be useful to consider that data alongside Academic Board's annual plan for the forthcoming academic year.
- ii. Governors were assured that the hierarchical nature of the relationship between Academic Board and the Board of Governors was defined clearly. It was noted that the Vice-Chancellor was a member of both Academic Board and the Board of Governors and was, therefore, able to provide an element of oversight of the business being considered by both bodies.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

53 Prevent annual report

The Registrar (Academic) and Secretary to the Board introduced the annual Prevent report [53], which included the annual Prevent Accountability and Data Return (ADR).

RESOLVED:

- a. That the annual Prevent report be noted.
- b. That the ADR be approved for submission to the Office for Students by the deadline of 1 December 2022. The Chair of the Board would sign the ADR declaration following the conclusion of the meeting.

54 Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking statement 2021/22

The Chief Finance and Resources Officer introduced a report [54] concerning the university's Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking statement for the 2021/22 academic year.

RESOLVED:

That the statement be approved subject to the clarification of the figure for DMU's global annual turnover, which would come following the board's approval of the university's annual accounts for 2021/22. The statement would be signed by the Chair of the Board following that clarification.

55 Members' updates

Members of the board provided updates on key items of business that had been discussed at their most recent meetings:

i. Audit Committee

The unconfirmed minutes of the committee's meeting of 3 October 2022 were included at item 59. In addition, the Chair noted that he would be looking ahead to the next three years, during which it was hoped that the work of the committee could be closely aligned to the challenges facing the university.

ii. Finance and Performance Committee

The unconfirmed minutes of the committee's meeting of 3 October 2022 were included at item 62. In addition, the Chair noted that the committee would be ensuring that its future approach to seeking assurances around the university's performance would be aligned with the Empowering University KPTs (as noted at item 51).

iii. People and Culture Committee

The unconfirmed minutes of the committee's meeting of 3 October 2022 were included at item 63. In addition, it was suggested that it would be useful for the committee to explore ways in which it might usefully and appropriately support the current reshaping, and future development, of the People and Organisational Development directorate.

iv. Academic Board

The minutes of the Academic Board's meeting of 29 June 2022, and the unconfirmed minutes of its meeting of 12 October 2022, were included at items 65a and 65b respectively. In addition, the following points were noted:

- Academic Board had approved its annual plan for 2022/23, which had been included for the board's review as appendix D to the report for item 52.
- Academic Board had received the annual report for 2021/22 of the Centre for Academic Innovation and Teaching Excellence. The report had highlighted the support that the centre had provided to the procurement for the university of a new virtual learning environment, as well as the

support provided to colleagues in their applications for Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted.

56 Election and appointment of the professional services staff governor

The Registrar (Academic) and Secretary to the Board introduced a report [56] concerning the proposed appointment of Phil Grierson as the professional services staff governor, following an election process that had been conducted between September and November 2022. The appointment of Phil Grierson had been considered and endorsed by the Nominations Committee in mid-November 2022.

RESOLVED:

That the appointment of Phil Grierson as professional services staff governor for an initial term of three years, beginning on 1 December 2022 and ending on 31 December 2025, be approved.

57 Committee constitutions

The Registrar (Academic) and Secretary to the Board introduced the constitutions for the 2022/23 academic year of the Audit Committee [57a], Finance and Performance Committee [57b], and the People and Culture Committee [57c].

RESOLVED:

That the constitutions be endorsed.

58 Committee annual reports

The Registrar (Academic) and Secretary to the Board introduced the annual reports for 2021/22 of the Finance and Performance Committee [58a], the People and Culture Committee [58b], and the Remuneration Committee [58c].

RESOLVED:

That the annual reports be noted.

59 Unconfirmed minutes of the 3 October 2022 meeting of the Audit Committee

RESOLVED:

That the minutes [59] be noted.

60 Risk management update

RESOLVED:

That the report [60] be noted.

61 Adherence to information governance legislation

RESOLVED:

That the report [61] be noted.

62 Unconfirmed minutes of the 3 October 2022 meeting of the Finance and Performance Committee

RESOLVED:

That the minutes [62] be noted.

63 Unconfirmed minutes of the 10 October 2022 meeting of the People and Culture Committee

RESOLVED:

That the minutes [63] be noted.

64 Annual health and safety report for 2021/22

RESOLVED:

That the minutes [64] be noted.

65a Minutes of the 29 June 2022 meeting of the Academic Board

RESOLVED:

That the minutes [65a] be noted.

65b Unconfirmed minutes of the 12 October 2022 meeting of the Academic Board

RESOLVED:

That the minutes [65b] be noted.

66 Items placed under the university seal since the previous meeting

RESOLVED:

That the minutes [66] be noted.

67 Review of the board's performance

Members were content that the board had been effective in discharging its responsibilities, and that all present had been enabled to be effective in their contribution.

68 Date of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Governors would take place via MS Teams at 10:00 on 15 December 2022.

69 Any other business

a. Jon Lees

The Chair thanked on behalf of the board Jon Lees for his service as professional services staff governor over the course of the past three years. Jon had joined the board in November 2019 following his election to the role and would be stepping down as a governor upon reaching the end of his tenure on 30 November 2022.

b. Sara Pierson

The Chair thanked on behalf of the board Sara Pierson for her service as an independent governor over the course of the past three and a half years, during which time she had served as a member of the Audit and People and Culture Committees. Sara had joined the board in May 2019 and would be stepping down as a governor on 30 November 2022.

Ian Squires left the meeting at this point

70 Chair of the Board of Governors

The Deputy Chair of the Board introduced a report [70] concerning the reappointment of Ian Squires as Chair of the Board of Governors for a second term of three years. In discussing the proposed reappointment, it was noted that the future remuneration of the role of Chair of the Board was a separate issue, aside from the reappointment of Ian Squires, and would be subject to review before the end of July 2023.

RESOLVED:

That the proposal that Ian Squires be reappointed as Chair of the Board of Governors for a second term of three years, from 6 January 2023 to 5 January 2026, be approved.

Meeting duration: 10:00-13:40