

CONFIRMED

## **Minutes      Board of Governors**

### **7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the academic year 2018/19**

**Time and date:**      10:00, Thursday 11 July 2019

**Location:**            Trinity House Boardroom

**Present:**              Ms L Hinnigan (Interim Chair), Ms S Bowie, Mr S Capper, Mr A Charlton, Mr S Cole (by telephone), Ms J Ezard, Mr C Ilako, Mr P McNicoll, Ms S Overton-Edwards, Ms S Pierson, Dr D Stevens, Mr D Toner, and Professor A Collop.

**In attendance:**      Mr S Weston, Clerk to the Board of Governors,  
Mr B Browne, Chief Operating Officer,  
Dr S Oldroyd, Interim Deputy Vice-Chancellor,

Mrs M Fowler, Executive Director of Marketing and Communications and Associate Chief Operating Officer (item 112),  
Professor D Mba, Pro Vice-Chancellor for Enterprise and Dean of Computing, Engineering and Media (item 114).

**Secretary:**            Mr N Jeffs, Assistant Clerk to the Board of Governors

#### **102      Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Professor F Cownie, Dr V Patel, and Ms S Watson.

The Interim Chair welcomed three new independent governors to their first meeting of the board.

It was noted that this would have been Dr Patel's last meeting of the board before his tenure ended on 31 July 2019. The Interim Chair thanked Dr Patel *in absentia* for his contributions to the university during his time as a governor, in particular his generous donation towards the construction of the Vijay Patel Building. Dr Patel had expressed a desire to continue his relationship with the university and opportunities for doing so would be explored in due course. The Interim Chair and Interim Vice-Chancellor (IVC) would present to Dr Patel a small gift as a token of the university's thanks and appreciation.

It was also noted that this would be the last meeting of the board for Ms Overton-Edwards and Dr Stevens, whose tenures would end on 31 August 2019. The Interim Chair thanked both governors for their support and contributions since their reappointment in March, noting that they would continue their relationship with DMU by serving as Pro-Chancellors.

### **103 Declaration of any pecuniary, family or other personal interests**

Professor Collop made a standing declaration regarding members of his immediate family being enrolled as students at DMU.

Mr Cole made a standing declaration regarding teaching delivered by Leicestershire Police as part of the university's BA (Hons.) Policing programme.

Mr McNicoll made a standing declaration regarding one relative who is an employee of DMU.

Mr Toner made a standing declaration regarding ongoing commercial arrangements between DMU and Spire Leicester Hospital.

### **104 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the Board of Governors' meeting held on 3 May 2019 [104-BG190711-A] and 4 June 2019 [104-BG190711-C] were confirmed, alongside redacted versions [104-BG190711-B and 104-BG190711-D].

The minutes of the Board of Governors' meeting held on 9 May 2019 were confirmed [104-BG190711-E], subject to minor amendments that would be incorporated by the secretary, alongside a redacted version proposed for broader publication [104-BG190711-F].

### **105 Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

### **106 Interim Chair's update**

The Interim Chair of the Board provided updates on three items:

- a. **[Redacted]**
- b. The Chair of the Committee of University Chairs

The Interim Chair had met with Chris Sayers, the Chair of the Committee of University Chairs, to discuss DMU's recent engagements with the Office for Students (OfS), and explore opportunities to provide feedback to the OfS on the university's experience in this regard.

- c. 'Payment for university governors? A discussion paper.'

On 11 July 2019, the Higher Education Policy Institute had published a paper entitled 'Payment for university governors? A discussion paper', which explored whether or not university governors should be paid to undertake their role.

### **107 Report by the Interim Vice-Chancellor**

The IVC delivered an update [107-BG190711-G] concerning a number of recent university developments:

a. The Augar Review

The outcomes of the review of post-18 education and funding, which had been led by Philip Augar, had been published on 30 May 2019. The board discussed the recommendations of the report and their potential implications for DMU and the higher education sector in general. Significant concerns were expressed regarding a recommendation to 'bear down on low value degrees', particularly because the report defined the 'value' of a degree in terms of its economic worth and its 'long term earnings benefits'. DMU continued to oppose strongly the linking of the value of a university degree to the earning potential of its graduates, such as had been done with Longitudinal Education Outcomes data, particularly when such data was not benchmarked for location.

The board noted that the proposed changes to the repayment of student loans were likely to be of greater benefit to higher earners following graduation and that the reintroduction of maintenance grants, though welcome, would not necessarily increase the total amount of money available to each student as they would simply replace existing maintenance loans. **[Redacted]** However, it was unknown at this stage to what extent (if any) the Government will follow the recommendations laid out in the report, and it was acknowledged that this would depend largely on the evolving political situation in the UK.

b. The National Student Survey

On 3 July 2019, the results of the 2019 National Student Survey had been released. DMU had achieved an overall student satisfaction rate of 84%, which was down 2% on the university's performance in 2018, but equal to the sector average, and 2% higher than the OfS' benchmark. DMU's performance across the various themes of the survey had also decreased slightly in most cases, although a slight improvement had been achieved in the 'Learning Resources' theme. **[Redacted]** A further update, including the university's proposed approach to addressing the issues that had been highlighted by the survey, would be provided at the board's away day on 3 October 2019.

c. **[Redacted]**

The update was noted.

**108 Reports by sub-committee chairs**

The Chairs of the Audit Committee and the Finance and Human Resources Committee (FHRC) provided oral updates on key items of business that had been discussed at their most recent meetings.

**109 Update on the Office for Students' investigation**

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) provided an update regarding the university's ongoing engagement with the OfS. The public statement and action plan had been published on 1 July 2019, alongside a statement disclosing the value of the severance payment to the former Vice-Chancellor, which had been determined by his contractual entitlement. The publication had generated some local and national interest in both traditional and social media, most of which had focussed on the

payment rather than OfS matters, and had been discussed with colleagues at DMU on 5 July 2019 during several 'all-staff' meetings. The IVC had also contacted a number of the DMU's key stakeholders and partners who remained supportive of the university and appreciated the transparency with which these issues were being addressed.

**[Redacted]**

**110 Office for Students' action plan monitoring**

**[Redacted]**

The COO provided an update [110-BG190711-H] concerning the university's progress towards the completion of, and ongoing compliance with, the OfS' action plan. The board was satisfied with the progress that had been made since the plan was published on 1 July 2019, however it was suggested that a mechanism be developed that would enable the board, via the Audit Committee, to seek assurance of the university's continued compliance with those ongoing actions that had been marked as 'complete'.

The update was noted.

**111 2019/20 budget and five-year financial forecast and financial position for 2018/19**

The Chief Finance Officer introduced the proposed budget for the 2019/20 academic year alongside the five-year financial forecast, which had been approved by the FHRC at its meeting on 2 July 2019, and an update regarding the university's financial position as at April 2019, which was noted [111-BG190711-I].

**[Redacted]**

The board ratified the proposed 2019/20 budget and five-year forecast, and welcomed the amount of in-built contingency planning in light of the uncertainty surrounding the future financial position of the higher education sector. It was noted that the five-year forecast would form part of the Annual Accountability return to the OfS, and the board delegated authority to the IVC to approve the return should the submission deadline fall before the next meeting.

**[Redacted]**

**112 Expo 2020 Dubai**

The Executive Director of Marketing and Communications delivered an update [112-BG190711-J] concerning the university's involvement in Expo 2020 in Dubai. The Expo would take place between 20 October 2020 and 10 April 2021 and was expected to attract over 25m visitors. In November 2018, DMU had been announced as a 'founding partner' of the UK Pavilion at the Expo, and would be the lead representative of UK higher education. **[Redacted]** The FHRC would also be delegated the responsibility for monitoring the ongoing costs associated with the Expo and would receive at its meetings regular updates to this end.

The update was noted.

**113 General regulations and procedures affecting students**

The COO introduced proposed changes to the university’s general regulations and procedures affecting students for the 2019/20 academic year [113-BG190711-K]. Governors welcomed the changes but highlighted that further clarity might be necessary around chapter two, paragraph 5.3.3, which concerned ‘abusive, threatening, coercive, manipulative or aggravating behaviour’ on the part of students. It was suggested that this issue might be further addressed as part of De Montfort Students’ Union’s ‘#NotOnMyCampus’ campaign, which aimed to combat discrimination and anti-inclusive attitudes.

The proposed changes were endorsed.

**114 Update from the Faculty of Computing, Engineering and Media**

The PVC (Enterprise) and Dean of Computing, Engineering and Media delivered a presentation concerning his faculty, including an introduction to its academic portfolio and strategic priorities until 2023. Governors welcomed the update and discussed a number of issues that had been raised by the presentation, including concerns regarding the availability of physical space for the future growth of the faculty. These issues, amongst others, would be discussed by the board in greater detail at its away day on 3 October 2019.

The board congratulated the faculty on its Cyber Technology Institute having recently been recognised by the National Cyber Security Centre and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council as an Academic Centre of Excellence for cyber security research.

The update was noted.

**115-124 Items for noting**

The various items were noted.

**125 Any other business**

Governors discussed a number of ideas for future developments, which might be given further consideration in due course. These included the potential for governors to meet ahead of formal board meetings, for governors to visit faculties, and for members of staff to observe board meetings in a ‘public’ session.

**126 Date of the next meeting**

The Board of Governors’ away day would be held at 10:00 on Thursday 3 October 2019 at a location to be confirmed.

Signed by the Interim Chair of the Board:

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Date:

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