

CONFIRMED

## **Minutes      Board of Governors: Strategic Away Day 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the academic year 2018/19**

**Time and date:**      09:30, Thursday 4 October 2018

**Location:**              Pitch View East, Wembley Stadium, London

**Present:**                Mr I Blatchford (Chair), Ms S Bowie, Mr S Capper, Mr A Charlton,  
Ms J Ezard, Ms L Hinnigan, Ms M Footitt, Professor A Payne,  
Mr T Stockdale, Ms S Watson, Dr V Patel, and Professor D Shellard  
(Vice-Chancellor).

**In attendance:**        Mr S Weston, Clerk to the Board of Governors,  
Mr B Browne, Chief Operating Officer,  
Professor A Collop, Deputy Vice-Chancellor,  
Mr S Ambrose, Vice-Chancellor's Chief of Staff,  
  
Mr J Gardner, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Strategic and International  
Partnerships) and Associate Chief Operating Officer (for item 009),  
Ms S Setchell, Executive Director of People and Organisational  
Development (for item 011)

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

### **001      Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Mr S Cole, Dr S Handsley and Mr O Mishcon.

The board wished Dr Handsley a swift recovery from his recent illness.

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

No new declarations were made.

### **003      Confirmation of the minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2018 [003-BG181004-A and 003-BG181004-B] were approved.

### **004      Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

### **005      Chairman's update**

The Chairman led brief discussions regarding the following matters:

a. League tables

On 23 September 2018, *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* published their annual *Good University Guide*, in which DMU had been ranked 65<sup>th</sup> out of 131 UK institutions. Although they were not without their idiosyncrasies, leagues tables could be a useful reminder of where the university was doing well, but also where there was room for further improvement. It was hoped that league table metrics based on research performance would improve following the university's submission to the next iteration of the Research Excellence Framework exercise, which would take place in 2021.

b. Longitudinal Education Outcomes data

The Vice-Chancellor (VC) had published an article in *The Guardian* highlighting potential issues with using Longitudinal Education Outcomes data as a metric in future iterations of the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF). The article was published on 3 October at <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/oct/03/graduate-salaries-are-no-measure-of-a-universitys-worth>.

c. Unconditional offers

The national debate surrounding the use of unconditional offers continued, with some Russell Group institutions arguing that the practice was unfair, and some schools and colleges suggesting that such offers discouraged students from reaching their full potential in their A-levels. DMU would continue to use unconditional offers as a way of ensuring that applicants from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds were given the opportunity to study at university. They would continue to be used as part of a broad suite of recruitment tools rather than merely a means of getting 'bums on seats', as had been unfairly suggested in some areas of the national press.

d. De Montfort Students' Union

Governors had been encouraged by the performance of De Montfort Student's Union (DSU) since the update delivered at the previous meeting. The interim Chief Executive Officer had led a number of reforms at the union, including a review of its commercial activities, and the launch of an ongoing governance review. **[Redacted]**

The updates were noted.

**006 Board membership**

The board welcomed Ms Mollie Footitt to her first meeting as the student representative governor. In addition, It was noted that a new academic representative would be recommended to the board at its meeting on 22 November 2018, as Dr Handsley's term was coming to an end.

The governor recruitment exercise being undertaken by Odgers Berndtson continued, and it was hoped that further candidates would be presented to the Chairman for consideration in the near future, before discussion by the Nominations Committee.

## 007 Report by the Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor (VC) delivered a presentation concerning recent higher education policy developments, and expanded on certain elements of his written report [007-BG181004-C], which members noted.

### a. University of the Year for Social Inclusion

DMU had been named the 'University of the Year for Social Inclusion' in *The Times and The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2019*, which was an important award that acknowledged the university's commitment to embrace and empower students from all backgrounds. DMU would also feature in a new league table for social inclusion, again published in *The Times and The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2019*, where it had been ranked 16<sup>th</sup> in the UK.

### b. Student admissions for 2018/19

The university had exceeded expectations in terms of its recruitment for 2018/19, despite a number of challenges, including a reduction in the number of applicants nationally, and increased competition from higher education institutions across the UK. **[Redacted]** This had been the university's most successful recruitment round to date, and faculties and directorates across the institution had worked together to ensure that there was sufficient teaching capacity and accommodation for the additional students. The university had also performed better than expected during Clearing, and the new advert, 'Proud to be More', had contributed to this success with over 2m views on YouTube to date. DMU had been cited by Edurank as the top university for Clearing activities on social media, and was second nationally for its social media use during September 2018, behind only the University of Cambridge.

However, the picture was not as positive elsewhere in the country, with some institutions at risk of severe financial difficulty within the next few years, and many others having to drop their entry tariff significantly during Clearing in order to recruit the required number of students. The university's success could be attributed to a number of factors particular to DMU, including a diverse student body and a focus on academic excellence, as evidenced by its TEF 'Gold' award. Initiatives such as #DMUglobal, #DMUlocal, #DMUworks, and the university's partnership with the United Nations, all contributed to an attractive and fulfilling offer to students.

### c. International recruitment

DMU's domestic recruitment success was also reflected in its international figures. **[Redacted]** DMU's attractiveness to international students had been recognised in a 2018 Higher Education Statistics Agency report, in which the university had been named number one for growth in the number of students coming from India, and number three for growth in the number of students coming from China.

### d. **[Redacted]**

### e. **[Redacted]**

f. Engagements with the United Nations

The university continued to engage frequently with the United Nations regarding the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and in particular SDG 16, ('Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions') for which it was a recognised international hub. A number of UN-related events were planned in the near future, including a 24-hour vigil focussed on the SDGs, and a #DMUglobal trip to Cyprus where students would be given the opportunity to take part in a #JoinTogether event in support of refugees.

g. The Stephen Lawrence Research Centre

Dr Kennetta Hammond Perry had been appointed Director of the university's Stephen Lawrence Research Centre in September 2018. Prior to joining DMU, Dr Perry was an Associate Professor of History at East Carolina University, and specialised in Atlantic world history with a particular emphasis on transnational race politics, empire, migration and movements for citizenship among people of African descent in Europe, the Caribbean and the United States.

h. Challenges ahead

DMU would need to avoid complacency, as a number of challenges for the sector were on the horizon, including the outcome of the Government's review of post-18 education, the implications of Brexit, and a revaluation of the Teacher's Pension Scheme. Communicating these issues across the institution, whilst still remaining positive about DMU's success and future potential, would be important in managing the expectations of students and staff regarding their potential impact.

The Chairman and governors thanked the VC for his presentation and commended the university on its recent successes.

**008 [Redacted]**

**009 Global Instinct 2 – university international strategy**

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC) for Strategic and International Partnerships introduced a report [009-BG181004-E] concerning the university's new international strategy entitled 'Global Instinct 2'.

Global Instinct 2 was a development of the university's existing strategy, and focussed on five key themes that would underpin DMU's approach to engaging with the international community. '#DMUglobal 360' would offer 100% of the students studying at the university the chance to participate in a #DMUglobal experience, as well as providing similar opportunities for staff. The strategy aimed to educate DMU students to become global citizens through engagement with the UN's SDGs, to offer students the opportunity to take part in professional experiences with a distinct international element, and to embed an international focus within the university's teaching. In addition, it would also inform the development of seven 'Global Hubs' that would capitalise on strategic partnerships with higher education and industry partners across the globe.

The strategy would also inform DMU's preparations for the potentially negative impact of Brexit on the recruitment of students from the EU. The university's

Europe Office, which had previously been located in Frankfurt, had reopened in Lisbon. [Redacted] It was hoped that, by working in partnership with Oxford International Education Group, DMU's presence on the continent would signal its commitment to Europe, and help to increase the number of European students recruited onto its undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Beyond Europe, the strategy sought to increase by 6,000 the number of DMU's transnational education students. [Redacted] It was hoped that, when taken together, these elements of the strategy would help to diversify DMU's international income portfolio, which hitherto had focussed largely on the Chinese market.

Governors welcomed and praised such an ambitious and proactive international strategy, but cautioned against over-stretching DMU's resources, and stressed the need to ensure that any partnerships into which the university entered must not jeopardise its financial stability or reputation.

The international strategy, 'Global Instinct 2', was endorsed.

## **010 National Student Survey update: 2018 results, 2019 action plan**

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) introduced a report [010-BG181004-F] and delivered a presentation concerning the university's performance in the 2018 National Student Survey (NSS) and a related action plan for 2019.

DMU had performed well in the 2018 NSS, achieving an overall satisfaction score of 86%. This was an increase of 1% compared with the previous year's result, and was 4% above the sector benchmark of 82%. This improved score represented a rise of 20 places since 2017, in terms of overall satisfaction, meaning DMU was now ranked 45<sup>th</sup> out of 156 UK institutions. A number of areas across the university had performed exceptionally well, with eight programmes scoring 100% satisfaction, and two 98%. These results showed that students were positive about DMU as a place to study. However, it was recognised that there was room for improvement in some areas, and concerns raised by students on the lower performing programmes would begin to be addressed during the 2018/19 academic year.

Since the results had been released, the DVC and PVC (Academic) had met with colleagues in underperforming areas to discuss how best to improve the student experience, and in each case detailed actions plans had been developed to help improve their performance in the 2019 NSS. These developments would complement the actions that were already being taken following the 2018 Course Level Feedback survey, which included addressing concerns regarding assessment load and feedback, timetabling, and group work. It would also be important to engage with students regarding the results of the NSS, both in terms of seeking their input into improvements that should be made, as well as ensuring that they were aware of how DMU was addressing the concerns that had already been highlighted. Alongside this direct engagement, DMU would continue to identify and drive down hidden programme costs, and provide students with the opportunity to take part in popular initiatives such as #DMUglobal and #DMUworks. The progress of the 2019 NSS action plan would be closely monitored by the PVC (Academic) and overseen by the DVC.

The report and presentation were noted.

## **011 Committee of University Chairs' senior staff remuneration code**

The Executive Director of People and Organisational Development introduced a report [011-BG181004-G] concerning guidance around senior staff remuneration, and associated amendments to the university's scheme of delegation and financial regulations.

In June 2018, the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) had published its Higher Education Senior Staff Remuneration Code, which set out a number of measures designed to achieve 'fair, appropriate and justifiable levels of remuneration', 'procedural fairness', and 'transparency and accountability' regarding the remuneration of vice-chancellors and other senior staff. Also in June 2018, the Office for Students published guidance on financial statements, which included direction on the details that should be included in an institution's annual accounts concerning the total remuneration package of the Head of Institution and the salaries of those staff earning over £100,000. This background also instructed institutions to 'have regard to' the CUC code and its guidance on severance payments.

To ensure compliance with this directive, the board agreed that the university should formally adopt the CUC code as a matter of good governance in relation to senior staff remuneration. By visibly adopting the code, the board would demonstrate leadership in relation to remuneration and help to safeguard the university's reputation in this area. The board also agreed to delegate formally to the Remuneration Committee the authority for determining the pay and terms and conditions of the VC and other senior post holders, severance packages of staff earning a basic salary of more than £100,000 per annum, and severance packages of a value of more than £100,000, regardless of a staff member's basic salary. Guidance would also be provided to the Remuneration Committee on appropriate decision-making in respect of senior staff pay and severance arrangements.

The university's Scheme of Delegation, the Financial Regulations, and the terms of reference for the Remuneration Committee would be updated to reflect this agreed course of action.

The report was approved.

## **012 ORBIT special purpose vehicle**

The DVC introduced a report [012-BG181004-H] concerning a proposal for a special purpose vehicle (spinout company) for the ORBIT project, with the University of Oxford. The proposal had previously been considered and approved by the Finance and Human Resources Committee at its meeting on 20 September 2018, and was being presented to the board for endorsement as per the university's Scheme of Delegation.

The Observatory for Responsible Research and Innovation in Information and Communications Technology (ORBIT) was an Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)-funded project that commenced in January 2017, and was led by DMU and the University of Oxford. The project hoped to provide the first comprehensive study of how social and ethical considerations can be incorporated into the design process of new products and services, and how organisations should manage the ethical dilemmas that arise through the use of information technology. Establishing the spinout company would be necessary in order to ensure that ORBIT was seen to be impartial and open to all members of

the information and communications technology research community. It was also hoped that, by establishing the spinout company as a separate legal entity, it would continue to be financially sustainable beyond the end of the £450,000 funding from the EPSRC, which would be valid for three to five years. The company would be overseen by both universities, with half of its board and management team being drawn from each institution.

The proposal was endorsed.

**013 Any other business**

No matters were raised.

**014 Date of the next meeting**

The next meeting of the Board of Governors would be held at 10:00 on Thursday 22 November 2018 in the Trinity House boardroom, Leicester.

Signed by the Chairman of the Board:

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Date:

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