



**UNIVERSITY  
OF LONDON**

## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Wednesday, 29 January 2020, at 4.00 pm  
Court Room, Senate House

## **MINUTES**

### **PRESENT**

The Baroness Amos of Brondesbury  
Stella Beaumont  
Abdul Bhanji  
Professor Edward Byrne  
Philip Clark  
Sir Richard Dearlove (Chair)  
Andrew Halper  
Professor Paul Layzell  
Professor Stuart Reid  
Malcolm Roberts  
Professor Wendy Thomson  
Rosalyn Wilton

### **APOLOGIES**

Jane Andrewartha  
Professor Michael Arthur  
Kieran Murphy  
Andrew Ratcliffe  
Mark Storey

### **IN ATTENDANCE**

Dr Ghazwa Alwani-Starr (Pro Vice-Chancellor (Strategy, Planning and Partnerships) and Director of Property and Facilities Management)  
Simon Cain (Director of Human Resources)  
Professor David Cantor (Director of the Refugee Law Initiative) for BTMM 4851-53 only  
Chris Cobb (Pro Vice-Chancellor (Operations) and Deputy Chief Executive)  
Lizzy Conder (Director of Finance (Investment and Risk Strategy))  
Damaris Currie (Central Secretariat)  
Professor Jo Fox (Deputy Dean of the School of Advanced Study)  
Rosalind Frendo (Director of Compliance and Secretary to the Board)  
Mark Harrison (Head of Inclusion) for BTMM 4859-65 only  
Karen Kröger (Director of Finance (Planning and Operational Strategy))  
Mark Newton (Managing Director, CoSector) for BTMM 4873-77 only  
John G Stewart (Director of Legal Services)  
Professor Mary Stiasny (Pro Vice-Chancellor (International) and Chief Executive of University of London Worldwide)

## **Welcome**

4830 The Chair welcomed Baroness Amos of Brondesbury to her first meeting.

## **Minutes of the Meeting Held on 27 November 2019**

4831 The Board confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2019, subject to minor amendment of the section on the financial strategy to clarify that the financial targets mentioned should be considered stretch targets.

## **Business Transacted Since the Previous Meeting**

4832 The Board noted the report (BT1407) on business transacted since the previous meeting, including the list of leases and other property agreements (Appendix BT1407A, Confidential).

## **Vice-Chancellor's Report**

4833 The Board received the Vice-Chancellor's report (BT1408, Confidential), including the list of the Vice-Chancellor's main activities and meetings since the previous Board meeting (Appendix BT1408B). It considered the following matters in more detail.

### *Implications of the General Election Result for Higher Education*

4834 Members noted the update further to the outcome of the General Election on 12 December 2019 and the summary of the Collegiate Council's discussion at its meeting the following day, which had included consideration of how the University might best engage with the new Government. The Collegiate Council had also noted the potential for greater focus on the regions and educational 'cold spots'. The Board commented on high-level Government interest in, and engagement with, the higher education sector, citing in particular, the increasing debate around various aspects of the access and participation agenda. The University's emerging five-year strategy provided an opportunity to re-confirm its commitment to making education accessible to all.

4835 The Vice-Chancellor reported on a meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary University Group (APPUG) on 28 January 2020, where speakers had included the Rt Hon Chris Skidmore MP, the then Minister for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation. A briefing produced for the APPUG, on what to expect in higher education policy in 2020, was tabled for members' information.

### *University of London Press*

4836 Members were pleased to note the re-launch, in December 2019, of the University of London Press, which built on the University's long publishing tradition by disseminating distinctive scholarship at the forefront of the humanities. The Board was informed of the pioneering approach of the University of London Press to facilitating collaborative, inclusive, open access interchange, both within and beyond the academy. A small exhibition of

historical materials associated with the Press had been made available for the Board to view.

#### *Independent Workers Union of Great Britain (IWGB)*

- 4837 The Board noted that, in December 2019, the IWGB had been given leave to appeal to the Court of Appeals. This followed the IWGB losing its judicial review case in the High Court. The IWGB had challenged an earlier decision by the Central Arbitration Committee that the University was not required to recognise the IWGB for the purposes of collective bargaining, given that the security workers in question were not employed by the University but by an external contractor with recognised trade unions for this purpose.

#### *Annual Services Statement 2018-19*

- 4838 The Board noted the Annual Services Statement 2018-19 (Appendix BT1408A), which summarised the services, facilities and support provided to Member Institutions (MI) by the University during 2018-19.

#### **Progress Report on the Development of the University Strategy for 2020 to 2025**

- 4839 The Board noted the update on the development of the University Strategy for 2020-2025 (BT1409, Confidential). Work on the Strategy continued, with focus on developing the University's academic vision and priorities, which would be at the core of the new strategic plan. An initial draft academic strategy 'Connecting Worlds' was tabled for members, who were invited to submit comments and feedback; a copy would also be circulated electronically. Members noted that the Academic Strategy would be supported by six enabling strategies covering: brand; finance; organisational development; digital transformation; the estate; and data and intelligence.
- 4840 A special informal meeting of the Board would be arranged for late March 2020, to provide an opportunity for members to discuss the emerging strategy in more depth and provide additional input and feedback.

#### **Finance Report**

- 4841 It was agreed to vary the order of the agenda, to take the Finance Report (BT1411, Confidential) as the next item. The Board considered the report, including the Management Accounts for the five months to 31 December 2019, which incorporated the forecast out-turn for 2019-20 (Appendix BT1411A, Confidential).
- 4842 The overall net result for the year-to-date and the forecast full-year performance was in line with budget and represented an improved position on 2018-19. However, the full-year forecast anticipated a shortfall in income, and members noted that there were a number of contributing factors, including below budget income from Halls of Residence summer bookings partly due to the timing of maintenance works. The Director of Finance (Planning and Operational Strategy) reported on careful scrutiny of the areas contributing to the adverse variance. Remedial actions included reviewing the business models for the various academic areas, exploring the growth potential for University of London Worldwide (UoLW), and considering options for addressing under-performing programmes. Other areas of activity were

noted, including the recent restructuring of information and communications technology (ICT) into a new Information Technology and Digital Services (ITDS) department, which would provide in-year and ongoing savings.

## **Financial Strategy**

- 4843 The Board considered an update on the Financial Strategy (BT1410, Confidential) and noted that, at the previous meeting, having considered the emerging Financial Strategy and associated Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), it had been agreed that the University should aim to achieve the proposed stretch targets in 2020-21. The Board noted that the report included the information it had requested, at that meeting, on the potential impact of the targets, if realised (Appendix BT1410A, Confidential).
- 4844 The Director of Finance (Planning and Operational Strategy) suggested that it would be helpful to establish a small group of independent members which could provide appropriate support and challenge as work on the Financial Strategy progressed. The Board welcomed the suggestion and agreed to establish a group comprising: Abdul Bhanji, Kieran Murphy, Andrew Ratcliffe and Rosalyn Wilton.
- 4845 Members commented that, as financial planning developed with a view to achieving the financial targets, it would be important to ensure that investment in new projects and initiatives continued where appropriate, in order to secure growth in revenue.
- 4846 The Director of Finance (Planning and Operational Strategy) highlighted the evidence-based approach to budget-planning for 2020-21 and the Board commented on the importance of stress-testing the proposed budget and any assumptions in relation to income and monitoring. Members also commented on the need to assess carefully what would be achievable in 2020-21 and to devise a realistic budget. The group of members identified previously (BTM 4844 above refers) would work with University officers to ascertain practical means of progressing and the Board would be updated at a future meeting.
- 4847 **AGREED**  
The Board established a group of independent members, comprising Abdul Bhanji, Kieran Murphy, Andrew Ratcliffe and Rosalyn Wilton, to provide support and challenge in the development of the Financial Strategy.

## **Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) and TRAC(T) Returns 2018-19**

- 4848 The Board considered a report on the preparation and outcomes of the 2018-19 TRAC and TRAC(T) Returns (BT1412 and Appendices BT1412A and BT1412B, all Confidential). Members noted that the TRAC Steering Group had scrutinised the returns at its meeting on 16 January 2020 and reviewed the tests for reasonableness and compliance with the guidance, enabling the completion of the required TRAC checklist.
- 4849 The Board supported the proposal that the University should apply for a dispensation from full TRAC compliance in line with the approach adopted in 2019, noting that this would enable the University's continued use of the average indirect and estates non-laboratory costs in Research Council grant applications.

4850 **AGREED**

- (i) The Board approved the TRAC and TRAC(T) Returns for onward submission to the Office for Students.
- (ii) The Board authorised the Vice-Chancellor to sign the TRAC and TRAC(T) Returns (Appendices BT1412A and BT1412B).
- (iii) The Board approved the University applying for dispensation from some of the TRAC requirements.

**The Refugee Law Initiative: Research, Engagement, Impact**

4851 The Director of the Refugee Law Initiative (RLI) in the School of Advanced Study (SAS) joined the meeting and delivered a detailed presentation on the RLI; matters highlighted included:

- (i) The interdisciplinary approach of the RLI and its aims of promoting, facilitating and disseminating research in its field and of shaping the research agenda.
- (ii) The networks of Senior Research Associates and Research Affiliates that were integral to the work of the RLI and enabled collaboration across a range of disciplines.
- (iii) The dissemination of its work through a varied events programme, which aligned with SAS's remit in respect of Research Promotion and Facilitation. Notable events included the International Refugee Law Seminar Series, and the annual conference.
- (iv) The MA in Refugee Protection and Forced Migration Studies, launched in 2014, which was the first ever postgraduate course in its field to be offered by distance learning. The MA had attracted students from over 75 different countries and was designed for those wishing to develop their careers in a range of professional contexts in the refugee, human rights or humanitarian fields.
- (v) A recently launched new online short course 'Refugees in the 21st Century'. This Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) was freely accessible to all at non cost and required no prior knowledge or experience in the refugee field.
- (vi) The wide range of research projects undertaken by the RLI, including 'Pushing the boundaries', an ambitious research project, concerning the dynamics of forced migration and transnational responses in Latin America, which had won the 'Research Project of the Year: Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences' award in the Times Higher Education Awards 2017.
- (vii) The establishment of a Refugee Law Clinic, which would be run in conjunction with a number of the MIs.

4852 Further to a query about the RLI's collaboration with the MIs, the Director of the RLI highlighted the wide range of interaction with MI Law departments, including MI students' regular participation in seminars and workshops, joint research projects and the nascent Refugee Law Clinic (RLC). The latter would work closely with other MI law clinics to ensure that the RLC offering complemented that already available within the federation. The Director of the RLI further reported on the ability of the RLI to inform government policy through its research.

4853 The Board commended the Director of the RLI on the high quality, importance and relevance of the work being undertaken by the RLI.

4854 The Director of the RLI left the meeting at the conclusion of the item.

### **Office for Students (OfS) Regulatory Requirements**

4855 Further to information provided at the Board's previous meeting on the OfS regulatory framework, members received a report setting out how the University was demonstrating, for the Board's satisfaction, that it was meeting the conditions attached to its ongoing registration with the OfS, including in relation to management and governance (BT1413).

4856 Members noted the list of conditions of registration (Appendix BT1413A), the associated information on how the Board could be assured of compliance, and the implications of the conditions for the University and future actions. The Board was content with the proposal that the list would be updated on a termly basis and scrutinised by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC), noting that the Chair of the ARAC would report regularly to the Board on any issues for its attention. A member of the Board suggested that consideration be given to consolidating OfS assurance requirements as part of the risk management programme.

4857 The Board noted the data return register and the current submission status of each return (Appendix BT1413B). Additionally, in line with the Board's responsibilities in respect of interactions between the University and the OfS, it received the first of a series of termly reports on recent communications between the two bodies (Appendix BT1413C).

### **4858 AGREED**

- (i) The Board confirmed that it was content with the assurances (BT1413A referred) that the University was complying with the OfS Conditions of Registration.
- (ii) The Board confirmed that it was content with the proposed mechanism (detailed in paragraph 3 of the report) for the regular monitoring, scrutiny and reporting of continued compliance with the Conditions of Registration.

### **Annual Equality and Diversity Report 2018-19**

4859 The Head of Inclusion joined the meeting for the item.

4860 The Board considered the Annual Equality and Diversity Report for the 2018-19 academic year (BT1414), which had been approved by the Equality and Diversity Committee (EDC) at its meeting on 10 December 2019. The Head of Inclusion highlighted a wide range of activities and initiatives undertaken during 2018-19, including:

- (i) The University's participation in the annual Pride in London parade for the first time in 2019, coordinating 16 other London-based higher education institutions walking in the same section. This had proved very successful and the University planned to participate again in 2020.
- (ii) The successful launch of the new staff Race Equality Group (REG) in October 2018. The REG sought to identify and address barriers to the

- recruitment, development and retention of BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) staff and to promote equality and diversity.
- (iii) The establishment of the Athena SWAN Self-Assessment Team as part of continued preparation for an Athena SWAN accreditation submission.
  - (iv) The adoption of new guidance for students on preventing and responding to harassment.
  - (v) A comprehensive audit of the accessibility of the University estate. A number of actions had been identified as a result of the audit, with a view to improving accessibility in the properties surveyed. These actions had subsequently been incorporated into planned works and strategic estate development. Additionally, detailed visitor guides had been produced for University buildings, providing advice on the facilities available and the most accessible routes outside and inside the properties.
  - (vi) Mental health awareness training had been delivered to all Housing staff.
- 4861 Commenting on the establishment of the REG, the Chair of the EDC, Andrew Halper, highlighted its inclusive approach, explaining that the group welcomed all staff regardless of their declared ethnicity. Having personally attended a meeting of the REG, he had found it to be a valuable forum for discussion and he encouraged Board members to attend a meeting.
- 4862 The Board noted the Gender Pay Gap (GPG) Report provided within the Annual Report, which indicated that there had been a modest reduction in the 2019 GPG compared with that of 2018. The University had agreed a significant number of actions to continue to reduce the GPG and the impact of these measures would be monitored and reported. One action for 2019-20, to be considered as part of the forthcoming governance review, would be the adoption of measures to promote a more diverse membership of the Board.
- 4863 The Board recalled that, during its discussion of the previous year's Annual Report (BTMM 4491-92 of the meeting on 30 January 2019 refer), members had requested that consideration be given to what would be viewed as 'success' in addressing the GPG. A draft discussion document, 'Inclusion & Equality Objectives', had been tabled in response. It was confirmed that the document covered the timescale 2020-25 and that the target date for delivery of each objective fell within that period.
- 4864 Further to a query regarding staff completion of mental-health-related training, it was clarified that a range of training opportunities were offered in this area. In addition to those staff completing mental health awareness training, a significant number, including all those based in Halls of Residence, had completed mental health first aid courses. The Board noted that the online equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) training formed part of the suite of mandatory training undertaken by all staff. A programme was being implemented to ensure that training was refreshed on a regular basis.
- 4865 The Board welcomed the comprehensive Annual Report and the wide range of activities to date, noting also the actions in place to continue progress and to address the challenges that remained.
- 4866 The Head of Inclusion left the meeting at the conclusion of the item.

### **Contract Award: Serials, Periodicals and Associated Services**

- 4867 The Board considered a report on the proposed award of two contracts under the Joint Consortia Framework Agreement for Serials, Periodicals and Associated Services (BT1415, Confidential). It was noted that each library was responsible for managing its collection development budget and ensuring best value for money was achieved, by reviewing titles currently held and ensuring that the agency that offered best value for money was used to order titles appropriately.

*BTM 4868 is considered exempt from disclosure in accordance with Part II of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.*

### **Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2018-19**

- 4869 The Board considered a report setting out the proposed University of London Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2018-19, which had been produced in line with the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (BT1416 and Appendix BT1416A, tabled). As the documents had been tabled, the Board was asked to provide any comments on the proposed Statement by the end of the week.

4870 **AGREED**

The Board approved the publication of the University of London Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement in principle, subject to the inclusion of any amendments required following comments received from members.

### **Report from the Investments Committee**

- 4871 The Board received a report on the issues considered by the Investments Committee at its meeting on 25 November 2019, including the Committee's annual review of the University's Treasury Management Policy (BT1417 and Appendix BT1417A).

4872 **AGREED**

The Board approved the proposed updates to the University's Treasury Management Policy, which included, at Appendix 1 of the Policy, the List of the Approved Money Market Fund Managers.

### **CoSector Progress Report**

- 4873 The Managing Director, CoSector ('Managing Director'), joined the meeting to present the latest CoSector Progress Report (BT1418, Confidential), including an update on progress against KPIs (Appendix BT1418A, Confidential).
- 4874 The first quarter of 2019-20 had been challenging for CoSector, which had seen a reduction in revenue compared against the same period in the previous year. It was noted that additional financial information now available, in respect of the Quarter 1 forecast, showed a slight improvement on the position detailed in the report.
- 4875 Revenue was down in the areas of recruitment and careers events, and digital services income was less than predicted due to a reduction in project and



development work. The Board was informed of a number of challenges in the area of housing, which had seen a reduction in Student Homes bed spaces. The activity was, however, forecast to end the financial year in surplus. Members noted the importance of maintaining regular communication with landlords, particularly during the current period of uncertainty and change.

4876 There were plans to increase revenue in both the current year and long-term, including a strategic pricing restructure in relation to digital services and a renewed focus on development and consultancy income. The Board noted that the recent ICT restructure (see also BTM 4842 above) had been completed with no compulsory redundancies and would deliver ongoing savings.

4877 The Board noted the financial pressures being felt across the higher education sector, as well as caution in relation to discretionary spending. This presented challenges for CoSector, which drew a significant proportion of its customer base from this sector. Rosalyn Wilton, who served on the CoSector Advisory Board, reported that she would shortly be meeting with the Managing Director to consider strategies for the future; it would be important to ensure that the CoSector team had the right skills to respond to the challenging environment in which it was currently operating. The Board would continue to receive regular reports on progress.

4878 The Managing Director left the meeting after the item.

*BTMM 4879-80 are considered exempt from disclosure in accordance with Part II of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.*

### **New Year's Honours 2020**

4881 The Board noted a report on awards in the New Year's Honours list 2020 (BT1420).

### **Trust Funds Committees Annual Report 2018-19**

4882 The Board noted the annual report of the Trust Funds Committee for the academic year 2018-19 (BT1421).

### **Remuneration Committee Annual Report**

4883 The Annual Report of the Remuneration Committee was being finalised and would be circulated to the Board once it was available.

### **Dates of Future Meetings**

4884 The Board noted the dates of future meetings as follows (all to commence at 4.00 pm):

#### **2019-20**

Wednesday, 25 March 2020

Wednesday, 20 May 2020

Wednesday, 15 July 2020