

<b>Minutes:</b>	Board of Governors
<b>Time and date:</b>	10:00, Thursday 16 May 2024
<b>Location:</b>	The Yard, rooms 3.05 and 3.06
<b>Present:</b>	Ian Squires (Chair), Peter Collyer, Alison Court, Stuart Dawkins, Phil Grierson, Amir Iqbal, Priya Karasala, Jonathan Kerry (until item 136), Jonathan Mills, Patrick Moody, Abdul Mullick, Katie Normington, Buddy Penfold, Beverley Shears, Shikha Singh, and Paul Woodgates
<b>In attendance:</b>	Jill Cowley (Pro Vice-Chancellor Skills and Training) (item 139), Mel Fowler (Executive Director of Marketing and Communications) (item 134), Mike Kagioglou (Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Business Innovation) (item 139), Chloe Keenan (Governance Officer), Debbie Muddimer (Executive Director of Finance and Procurement), Susan Orr (Pro Vice Chancellor Education and Equalities) (items 137 and 138), Nikki Pierce, Registrar (Academic) and Secretary to the Board of Governors
<b>Secretary:</b>	Nick Jeffs; <a href="mailto:nick.jeffs@dmu.ac.uk">nick.jeffs@dmu.ac.uk</a>

*CONFIRMED*

**127 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Vivek Ganotra, Sardip Sandhu, Peter Tansley, and Dan Toner.

**128 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.

**129a Minutes of the 29 February 2024 meeting**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes [129a] of the 29 February 2024 meeting of the Board of Governors be approved.

**129b Minutes of the 18 April 2024 extraordinary meeting**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes [129b] of the 18 April 2024 extraordinary meeting of the Board of Governors be approved.

### 130 Matters arising

All of the matters arising [130] had either been completed or were scheduled for consideration at a future meeting of the board.

### 131 Report from the Chair

The Chair of the Board delivered an update concerning a range of issues:

- i. Work continued on the development of the university's governor apprenticeship scheme. It was hoped that the scheme would be launched early in the summer with the aim of having two governor apprentices in place during the 2024/25 academic year.
- ii. A recent KPMG audit of corporate governance had recommended that the board give some thought to succession planning for key roles. The Chair would discuss this issue with governors as part of the forthcoming appraisal process.
- iii. Independent governor Peter Collyer had notified the university of his intention to step down from the board at the end of the 2024 calendar year. Consideration would be given, in due course, to Peter's replacement in the role of Chair of the Remuneration Committee.
- iv. An appointment had been to the role of Deputy Secretary and Head of Compliance. The role holder would join DMU in September and meet the board in due course.
- v. To make the logistics of the meeting slightly easier, it was agreed that item 144, 'Governor remuneration', would be considered as the final item of business.
- vi. Governors were reminded of the invitation to visit the university's Trading Room following the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

### 132 Report from the Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor introduced a report [132] 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:

- i. It was felt that the Migration Advisory Committee's recommendations regarding the Graduate Route were positive for the university and the higher education sector as a whole, although it was noted that the government might still make changes to the route regardless.
- ii. **[Redacted]**
- iii. Regarding the recent article in the *Daily Mail* concerning asylum claims from students studying at DMU, it was noted that the university had discussed the issue with UKVI. It was also noted that the related Freedom of Information request, submitted by the BBC, would be dealt with in accordance with the relevant procedures and that a response would be provided by the deadline.
- iv. Regarding the recent article in the *Jewish Chronicle*, it was noted that the university's internal investigation was ongoing but that the local rabbi was supportive of the approach taken so far, including DMU's public statement on the matter. The board agreed that it remained important for the university to maintain

- a visibly balanced approach to the issues raised by the Israel-Gaza conflict, and that it would continue to support all affected staff and students.
- v. It was noted that the Office for Students would shortly be publishing a report concerning the financial sustainability of higher education providers in England.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

### **133 Report from the Student Governors**

The student governors delivered an update concerning a range of issues relating to the students' union:

- i. The union had recently held a number of student recognition events, including the DMU Sport Awards.
- ii. Planning had begun for the 2024/25 academic year, both at the union and amongst sports clubs and societies.
- iii. The union elections had concluded, with over 5,000 votes being cast for 49 candidates across 16 roles. Handovers had since begun to take place with the incoming team of executive officers.
- iv. The union continue to support students with key issues such as the Israel-Gaza conflict, the cost of living, and exam preparation.
- v. Finally, it was noted that this would be the final board meeting for the current student governors, Amir Iqbal and Priya Karasala. The board thanked them both for their service over the course of the past year, and wished them well in their future endeavours.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

### **134 Recruitment and admissions update**

The Executive Director of Marketing and Communications introduced a report [91] concerning the university's performance in terms of student recruitment and admissions. Arising from the discussion of this item, and questions from governors, the following points were highlighted:

- i. It was noted that overseas postgraduate taught recruitment continued to prove challenging. The university would continue to analyse its performance in this area with a view to identifying opportunities where conversion rates might be bolstered. However, it was also noted that offers and acceptances for domestic postgraduate taught programmes had improved, which reflected the university's work in trying to increase demand in this market.
- ii. **[Redacted]**
- iii. It was expected that Clearing would be busy again this year, and that competition would remain fierce, particularly in light of the challenging position in the international market. As in previous years, the university would adapt its Clearing campaign in light of the prevailing circumstances at the time.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

**135 2023/24 financial update**

The Executive Director of Finance and Procurement delivered a presentation concerning the university's financial performance at Quarter 3 of the 2023/24 academic year.

In discussing this item, it was noted that the university had recently undergone its annual credit rating review by Moody's. The outcome for DMU had been to maintain its 'A1 stable' rating, with Moody's commending in particular the university's strong cash position, and its strong track record of adjusting costs to account for unstable sources of income.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the presentation be noted.
- b. That the presentation slides would be made available to the board following the meeting.

**136 [Redacted]**

**137 Annual academic quality report 2022/23**

The Pro Vice-Chancellor Education and Equalities introduced a report [137] concerning the outcomes of academic quality activity undertaken in respect of the 2022/23 academic year. Arising from the discussion of this item, and questions from governors, the following points were highlighted:

- i. In discussing the concerns raised by four external examiners, it was noted that these would be addressed via the appropriate internal governance processes, and that the university was confident that they were not representative of systemic issues.
- ii. It was noted that there was no obvious correlation between those programmes with below-target Annual Enhancement Review metrics and student retention.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

**138 Student experience tracker 2023/24**

The Pro Vice-Chancellor Education and Equalities introduced a report [138] concerning a detailed analysis and observations of the 2023/24 Student Experience Tracker. Arising from the discussion of this item, and questions from governors, the following points were highlighted:

- i. The board welcomed the improvements that the university had seen in the results of the survey, noting that this demonstrated quantifiable, positive developments in the student experience over time.
- ii. Whilst recognising that the results were not directly comparable, it was felt that the tracker had tended to be a good indicator of potential National Student Survey performance and that the university, therefore, was hopeful of an improvement in this regard.
- iii. It was noted that the results of the tracker indicated an upwards trajectory in terms of the satisfaction of students studying by block learning. It was also noted that concerns from amongst staff around block teaching appeared to be diminishing as issues that had been raised earlier in the implementation process had been

- addressed, with adjustments being made where necessary. The university would continue to work with colleagues to address any remaining concerns.
- iv. It was noted that academic staff would continue to be encouraged to include objectives focussed on teaching quality in their annual appraisals, and that the university would continue to emphasise the importance of peer observation as a means of sharing and developing teaching practice.
  - v. It was agreed that the successful delivery of the Learning For Life pillar of the Empowering University strategy would be critical in maintaining the upward trend observed in the 2023/24 tracker results.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

### **139 Enterprise activity and strategic opportunities at DMU**

The Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Business Innovation and Pro Vice-Chancellor Skills and Training introduced a report [139] concerning an overview of the university's current enterprise activity and engagement with large companies/organisations, including significant apprenticeship provision. Arising from the discussion of this item, and questions from governors, the following points were highlighted:

- i. It was noted that the scale of DMU's provision appeared modest in comparison to some providers. However, it was recognised that this was because the university was fairly new to the market and therefore still had work to do in identifying and developing potential opportunities for partnerships in the local area.
- ii. It was recognised that DMU would need to continue to expand its apprenticeships provision by exploring ways in which it might be able to extend its reach, including by offering programmes via distance learning, and ensuring that it was able to support contracts with larger businesses.
- iii. It would also be important to develop the staff responsible for the delivery of these programmes, including through the implementation of development opportunities for apprenticeships teaching, and the introduction of an associated career progression pathway.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the university's current enterprise activity and engagement with large organisations, including significant apprenticeship programmes, be noted.
- b. That the associated targets and income generated from this activity in 2022/23, and the forecast position for 2023/24, be noted.
- c. That the key opportunities for growth in the areas outlined in the report, and the potential strategic approaches, be noted.

### **140 Conclusion of Prevent monitoring for 2022/23**

The Registrar (Academic) and Secretary to the Board of Governors introduced a report [140] concerning the outcome of the university's Prevent Accountability and Data Return for 2023.

In discussing this report, and as per the matters arising, it was noted that a briefing would be arranged with the aim of outlining for governors the university's responsibilities in relation to the Prevent Duty. It was suggested that it would also be useful to brief

governors on the university's responsibilities under the forthcoming 'Martyn's Law'. Both briefings would take place in due course.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

#### **141 OfS statement of expectations: harassment and sexual misconduct**

The Registrar (Academic) and Secretary to the Board of Governors introduced a report [141] concerning an update on the university's work to prevent and address harassment and sexual misconduct, and to meet the expectations of the Office for Students in that regard.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

#### **142 Member's updates**

##### **i. Audit and Risk Committee**

In the absence of the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, no update was provided. However, it was noted that the unconfirmed minutes of the 15 April 2024 meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee were included at item 145.

##### **ii. Finance and Performance Committee**

The minutes of the 15 February 2024, and unconfirmed minutes of the 18 April 2024, meetings of the Finance and Performance Committee were included at items 146 and 147, respectively. In addition, the Chair of the committee highlighted the following:

- The committee had considered a number items already discussed by the board, including recruitment, financial performance, medium-term financial planning, and the student tracker.
- The committee had also considered its annual report on DMU's various pension schemes, as well as receiving a detailed update from JP Morgan on the performance of the university's investment portfolio.

##### **iii. People and Culture Committee**

The unconfirmed minutes of the 20 March 2024 meeting of the People and Culture Committee were included at item 148. In addition, the Chair of the committee highlighted the following:

- Whilst recognising that the university was making positive overall progress on decreasing its pay gaps, the committee had felt that a reduction to 0% by 2025/26 was perhaps overly ambitious and that there may be some merit in considering a more realistic target.
- The committee had received a report on staff development opportunities at DMU, which included leadership training for senior colleagues.

iv. Remuneration Committee

The committee had met on 8 May 2024 to consider a number of items, including salary benchmarking for members of the executive.

v. Lead governors for Ofsted and skills

The lead governors for Ofsted and skills provided the following summary of recent activity:

- The lead governors had met with the university's Ofsted nominee (the Registrar (Academic) and Secretary to the Board) a number of times since the last board meeting. It was hoped that the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Skills and Training would join those meetings in future.
- Jonathan Kerry had undertaken a 'learning walk' focussed on the university's apprenticeships provision.
- A dashboard outlining the university's performance in terms of apprenticeships provision was now considered annually by the Finance and Performance Committee.
- The lead governors would be producing an annual report for the board, which would summarise Ofsted and skills related activity over the previous 12-month period.

vi. Academic Board

The unconfirmed minutes of the 28 February 2024 meeting of Academic Board were included at item 149. In addition, the following points were highlighted:

- Members of Academic Board had felt that the Annual Enhancement Review had been a positive process, identifying areas for development across the university's portfolio as well as acting as a vehicle for the sharing of good practice.
- Academic Board had considered a White Paper concerning Graduate Attributes.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted.

*Paul Woodgates left the meeting for the next item*

**143 Appointment of the Deputy Chair of the Board**

The Registrar (Academic) and Secretary to the Board of Governors introduced a report [143] concerning the proposed appointment of independent governor Paul Woodgates as Deputy Chair of the Board of Governors. The Nominations Committee had recommended the appointment of Paul following a call for expressions of interest from eligible governors, and an interview process.

RESOLVED:

That Paul Woodgates be appointed as Deputy Chair of the Board of Governors, effective immediately. Paul's tenure as Deputy Chair would be co-terminus with his tenure as an independent governor.<sup>7</sup>

*Paul Woodgates re-joined the meeting following this item*

**144 [Redacted]**

**145 Unconfirmed minutes of the 15 April 2024 meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes [145] be noted.

**146 Minutes of the 15 February 2024 meeting of the Finance and Performance Committee**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes [146] be noted.

**147 Unconfirmed minutes of the 18 April 2024 meeting of the Finance and Performance Committee**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes [147] be noted.

**148 Unconfirmed minutes of the 20 March 2024 meeting of the People and Culture Committee**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes [148] be noted.

**149 Unconfirmed minutes of the 28 February 2024 meeting of the Academic Board**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes [149] be noted.

**150 Items placed under the university seal**

RESOLVED:

That the report [150] be noted.

**151 Board and committee dates for 2024/25 and 2025/26**

RESOLVED:

That the list of dates [151] be noted.

**152 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.



**153 Date of the next meeting**

The next meeting of the Board of Governors would take place at 10:00 on Thursday 4 July 2024 in The Yard, rooms 3.05 and 3.06.

**154 Any other business**

[Redacted]

*Meeting duration: 10:00-14:10*