



## **A 3-Day High-Level Conference for the Governing Councils and Management Teams of African Universities**

### **Management-Council Relationships in Universities: Strategic and Practical Considerations for Executive Leadership and Governance in African Universities**

22–24 June 2026

Conference Venue: Fylde Lecture Theatre 1, Lancaster University, United Kingdom

Conveners: Global Skills Hub (UK) & Lancaster University

#### **PROGRAMME RATIONALE**

Universities face increasing pressure to deliver quality teaching, impactful research, and societal relevance in contexts of financial constraints, demographic growth, regulatory complexity, and global competition. Governing Councils play a decisive role not only in institutional oversight, but also in strategic positioning, sustainability, and resource mobilisation.

This 3-day executive programme is designed to:

- Strengthen council–senior leadership management effectiveness
- Deepen understanding of UK governance best practice
- Engage in knowledge exchange and good practice sharing with Lancaster University
- Equip councils with tools for financial sustainability and risk oversight
- Deliver an immersive experience aimed at developing customizable resource mobilisation strategies for research, teaching, and learning tailored for the African university context.

## DAY 1 – STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE AND COUNCIL EFFECTIVENESS

Theme: Governing Councils as Strategic Stewards and Custodians of Institutional Performance

09:00–09:30 | Registration

09:30–10:00 | Opening Session

- Welcome and introduction from **Prof Kirk Semple**: Director of International Research
- Welcome from **Prof Rebecca Lingwood**: Deputy Vice Chancellor, Lancaster University
- Conference objectives, structure, and expected outcomes from **Mr Honey Olawale**

10:00 – 11:00 | Session 1: Building a High-Performing Governing Council and Leadership Team

Speakers: **Dr Vincent G. Giatho**: Chairman of Council and Pro-Chancellor, Mount Kenya University  
**Susan Mitchell**: Registrar, Secretary, and Chief Operating Officer, and member of Council

11:00–11:30 | Tea Break

11:30–12:45 | Session 2: Governing Councils and Executive Management—Roles, Authority, and Boundaries

Speakers: **Right Honourable Alistair Burt**: Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council member of Lancaster University.

**Prof. Shedrack Best**: Vice-Chancellor, Plateau State University, Nigeria

12:45 – 13:30 | Lunch

13:30–14:45 | Session 3: The UK/Africa Universities Management Model – Case Study and Dialogue – A facilitated panel session.

Panel Facilitator **Prof. Mark Stevenson**: Cross Faculty Academic Dean for International

Panel: **Right Honourable Alistair Burt**: Pro-Chancellor and Council member of Lancaster University

**Adrian Jonas**: Council member and Chief Analyst for the NW Region in the NHS and Senior Responsible Officer for the North West Regional Secure Data Environment

**Kendi Guantai**: Dean for Culture and Inclusion, Lancaster University

**Prof. Amevi Acakpovi**: Vice-Chancellor, Accra Technical University

**Prof. Paul Gundani**: Vice-Chancellor, Zimbabwe Open University

**15:15–15:45 | Tea Break**

**15:45–17:00 | Session 4: Financial Oversight, Risk Management, and Institutional Resilience – short talk and a moderated workshop session**

Speakers: **Sarah Randall Paley:** Chief Financial Officer and sits on LU's Council, Lancaster University  
**Prof. Oluwatoyin Ashiru:** Chairman of the Governing Council, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Nigeria

Q & A

## **DAY 2 – TRUST, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND GLOBAL POSITIONING**

**Theme: Ethical Leadership, Regulation, and International Engagement**

**09:00 to 10:30 | Session 5: Ethical Oversight & Strategy in African Universities**

Speaker: **Prof. Olubayi Olubayi:** Chairman of the Governing Council of Cavendish University Uganda  
Followed by a breakout session of four groups

**10:30–11:00 | Tea Break**

**11:00–11:45 | Reporting from Breakout Session**

**11:45 – 12:30 | Session 6: Autonomy, Regulation, and Government Relations**

Speakers: **Prof. Olalekan Asikhia:** Vice-Chancellor of Caleb University, Lagos Nigeria  
**Michael Wykes:** Director of Strategic Planning and Governance

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**12:30 – 13:30 | Lunch**

**13:30–14:45 | Session 7: Governing Councils and Internationalisation Strategy**

Speakers: **Prof. Alisdair Gillespie:** University Academic Dean/Prof. VC Education  
**Prof. Stephen Jobson Mitchual:** Vice-Chancellor of University of Education Winneba, Ghana

**14:45–15:00 | Tea Break**

**15:00–16:00 | Session 8: Managing Tensions and Conflict – Scenario-Based Workshop**

**Facilitated Interactive Discussion**

**Tours around the university**

**18:30–20:30: Conference Dinner (hosted by Lancaster University)**

**Venue: County South Event Space, Lancaster University**

## DAY 3 – RESOURCE MOBILISATION AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

### Theme: From Dependence to Diversification—Financing the African University of the Future

#### 09:00–09:30 | Setting the Scene: The African University Funding Challenge

- Declining public funding and rising demand
- Why councils must lead on sustainability
- Aligning mission, strategy, growth, and sustainability

Speaker: Prof. Ahmad Mohammed Gumel: Vice-Chancellor of Federal University of Dutse, Jigawa.  
**A brief contribution from Hassan Balarabe: Bursar, Federal University of Dutse, Jigawa.**

#### 09:30–10:45 | Session 9: International Research Funding – Strategy, and Case Studies

Key Focus:

- Show me the money—Telling a good story
- Major global funding sources (UK, EU, foundations, multilaterals)
- Building institutional credibility and track record—evidence from past Lancaster University projects (RECIRCULATE etc)

Speaker **Prof Kirk Semple:** University Director of International Research

#### 10:45–11:15 | Tea Break

#### 11:15–12:45 | Session 10: Short Group Work Session—Understanding the 5P's of Resource Mobilisation and the 5P's of Grantsmanship

Key Focus:

- Perspectives on resource mobilisation and grantsmanship
- Building a good team for resource mobilisation and grantsmanship
- Articulating and substantiating problems for resource mobilisation and grantsmanship
- Building strategic partnerships for resource mobilisation and grantsmanship

Speaker Dr. Akanimo Odon: Head of Strategic Africa Partnerships, Africa Research and Innovation Partnership, Lancaster University

#### 12:45 – 13:45 | Lunch

**13:45 – 15:00 | Session 11:**

Key Focus:

- University–industry collaboration
- Consultancy, executive education, and short courses
- Intellectual property, spin-outs, and innovation hubs
- Council oversight of commercial risk and reward

Speaker: **Prof Kirk Semple, Dr Akan Odon**

**15:00–15:30 | Tea Break**

**15:30–16:45 | Session 12: Institutional Resource Mobilisation Clinics (Breakout Groups and reporting back)**

Key Focus:

- Assessing institutional readiness for diversification
- Identifying priority income streams by context
- Governance reforms needed to enable mobilisation
- Peer learning and expert feedback

Facilitated Clinics

**16:45 – 17:15 | Closing Session**

- Certificates and closing remarks