

Board of Governors

Minutes of the eighty-seventh meeting of the Board of Governors, held on Thursday 4th July 2013 at 6pm in The George, Wulfruna Street, Wolverhampton.

Present:

Mr M Elliott (Chair)
Ms K Gee
Mr D Batchelor
Mr J Sharp
Cllr K Sahota
Dr J Johnson

Professor G Layer
Mr M Priddy
Professor M Chambers
Dr J Pymm
Ms C Burgher

In attendance:

Professor Sir G Hampton, Deputy Vice-Chancellor External Affairs
Ms J C Nelson, Pro-Vice Chancellor Student Recruitment
Mrs H Lloyd Wildman, The Registrar
Professor I Oakes, Pro-Vice Chancellor Research and Enterprise
Mr A W Lee, Secretary to the Board
Mr A Holding, Finance Director
Ms S Harris, HR Director

Observers:

Dr A Byrne
Rev E Wynn
Ms Z Harrison
Mr S Chandra

Apologies:

Mr S Towe
Ms K Copestake
Dr B Conway
Mrs A Kimbley
Mr I Hyde
Dr J Bergin
Mr B Reid
Professor A Holmes, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic

Administrator:

Miss Gemma Towns, Strategy & Governance Co-ordinator

1379 Welcome and apologies

The Chair congratulated Ms Gee on behalf of the Board on her MBE award in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

The Chair announced Mr Lee would be retiring from the University at the end of July 2013.

Mr M Priddy, Mr S Chandra, Ms Z Harrison, Dr A Byrne and Rev E Wynn were welcomed as observers to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Mr S Towe, Dr B Conway, Mr I Hyde, Mrs A Kimbley, Dr J Bergin, Mr B Reid and Professor A Holmes.

1380 Membership

- (a) It was resolved that Mr Reid be appointed to membership of the Finance and General Purpose Committee.**
- (b) Mr Priddy withdrew from the meeting for this item. It was resolved that Mr Priddy be appointed as an Independent member for a three year term and also appointed to membership of the Audit Committee.**
- (c) It was resolved that Dr Aidan Byrne be appointed as the elected representative of teaching staff as a whole to the Board with a two year term effective from 1st September 2013.**
- (d) It was resolved that Rev Eddie Wynn be appointed as the elected representative of non-teaching staff as a whole to the Board with a two year term effective from 1st September 2013.**
- (e) It was resolved that Mr Simeon Chandra, President elect of the Students' Union be appointed to the Board with effect from 1st September 2013 to 31st August 2014.**
- (f) It was resolved that Bye-law 2 be amended to reflect the intention to appoint a second student Governor.**
- (g) It was resolved that Ms Zoe Harrison of the Students' Union be appointed as the second student representative with effect from 1st September 2013 to 31st August 2014.**
- (h) It was resolved that Mrs Helen Lloyd Wildman, The Registrar, be appointed the post of Secretary to the Board effective from 1st August 2013.**

1381 Declaration of interests

The members present confirmed they had no conflict of interest with the items at this meeting.

1382 Minutes of the meeting held on 28th March 2013

Subject to the following amendments, the minutes were agreed as a true record.

- Minute 1369, paragraph five, this should be amended to read:

Walsall Campus: Professor Layer advised he had met with the Leader and Chief Executive of Walsall MBC. Discussions continued regarding an access road. Mr Batchelor stated students generally viewed all the open space alongside The Broadway as University land due to their shared use with the Rugby Club and did not favour a housing development. Mr Pymm hoped that there would be no repeat of previous decisions to sell land to developers that had subsequently led to neighbours complaining of the close proximity of their houses to student activities on the campus.

- Minute 1369, paragraph seven, this should be amended to read:

National Student Survey (NSS): Dr Johnson asked if the results of this year's NSS were known. Ms Nelson advised that the survey was underway and the results would be known in the summer. She commented that, while the University's 2012 score of 80% would be regarded as very successful in most sectors, it was, for the HE sector, lower than both the England average (85%) and the University's benchmark (84%).

1383 Matters Arising from 28th March 2013

Professor Sir Geoff Hampton advised the University Technical College would be officially opened by HRH Prince Andrew, Duke of York, on 8th July 2013.

1384 Presentation on the Staff Survey

Ms Harris, Director of HR, delivered a presentation on the results of the staff survey and the action plans. The Chair asked if the governing body as the employers of University staff should also have an action plan; this was to be discussed in further detail outside of the meeting and could feature in the forthcoming Away Day.

1385 Vice-Chancellor's Report

Professor Layer highlighted the following areas of his report:

Business Solutions Centre: The University had won the Knowledge Exchange/Transfer Initiative of the Year category at the fifth annual Times Higher Education Leadership and Management Awards for the Business Solutions Centre. The Board expressed their congratulations to BSC on this achievement.

Spending Review: Professor Layer advised the results of the spending review had not been known at the time of writing the report. The budget for Further Education (FE) had been reduced. As the University recruited a large number of students from FE, this would have an impact upon the University.

Government Immigration Policy: Professor Layer advised the University had taken a high profile role in the debate in the House of Commons via Adrian Bailey, MP for West Bromwich West. Professor Layer highlighted the current visa difficulties for students and advised the University would continue to lobby against further changes for international students.

Student Recruitment: Ms Nelson advised acceptances of offers from home and EU full time undergraduates were lower than the previous year. As things currently stood, the target of 3,650 “controlled” students, on which the 2013-14 budget had been based, was not predicted to be achieved. The separate target of 450 ABB grade and above students was predicted to be met. Ms Nelson outlined the steps which had been taken to address the situation. She noted that the final recruitment position would not be known until the end of September 2013 but on balance, and given the mitigating activity being undertaken, the identified recruitment targets were achievable – noting however that the behaviour of other universities, which were likely to be in a similar position, was a further unknown factor.

Faculties: Professor Layer advised the faculty paper had been approved by Academic Board. Professor Layer continued to deliver presentations to staff on the new faculty structure opportunities university and staff were generally positive about the changes.

Scifest: Professor Layer advised the recent Scifest event had been a very successful and well attended event.

Destination of Leavers of Higher Education (DLHE): Professor Layer circulated a document detailing the DLHE figures for Midlands universities for the last five years. The University’s score had improved to 88.5% of full-time students going into work or going on to further study, an increase of 4.8 percentage points. The benchmark was 87.9%.

Office for Fair Access (OFFA): Professor Layer said that the University had responded to OFFA to advise the University could not commit to guarantee expenditure for 2016-17 as at this stage, the University could not be certain that the additional student numbers and associated income were secure. The Chair asked if the governing body could be made aware of the outcome of the 2014 Access Agreement (**action: GL**).

Senior Team Changes: Professor Layer advised Sir Geoff Hampton would be stepping down from his role as Deputy Vice Chancellor (External Affairs). The changes to the senior team had been agreed by Remuneration Committee.

The Chair congratulated all the members of staff who had received awards at the recent Vice-Chancellor’s Staff Awards.

Mr Batchelor advised the Students' Union was pleased with how the identity of the Students' Union had progressed, in particular by the inclusion of the Students' Union President on to the Corporate Management Team. Mr Batchelor advised the Students' Union had focussed internally on how to capture the student voice and during the next academic year would have more frontline staff to engage with students. The Students' Union management team would be reduced but it was anticipated this would capture the student voice more effectively. Mr Batchelor stressed that the removal of posts would not have any adverse impact upon students.

Mr Batchelor advised Appendix A of his report outlined the changes to the Students' Union bye-laws. **Resolved that changes to the Students' Union bye-laws be approved.**

Mr Batchelor stated suggested revisions to the Student Charter were included in Appendix B of the report. Ms Gee advised the Equality and Diversity Joint Committee had asked if the Student Charter could be amended to state (under the category "we expect you") *"To be considerate and respectful to fellow students, staff members and visitors and to abide by the University's code of conduct **and policies** relating to your behaviour both on and off campus"*. Subject to this amendment it was **resolved that the changes to the Student Charter be approved.**

Mr Batchelor advised the Chief Executive of the Students' Union had left the Union and interviews for a new Chief Executive would be held the following week.

Mr Batchelor presented a video on the recent Students' Union Teaching Awards.

The Chair congratulated the Students' Union for their hard work and contribution to University life over the past year.

1387 Quarter 3 forecast

Mr Holding advised the University was forecasting a £4.3m surplus rather than the budgeted £0.97m due to a better than expected retention of students. As students now have to actively withdraw from the University via SITS, this provided a more accurate figure. International student recruitment was down by about 100 students. Mr Holding advised there had been a steady fall in income for externally funded schools which would be monitored. Due to uncertainty regarding student recruitment, spending would be closely monitored. **The Board received the Quarter 3 forecast.**

1388 Budget 2013/14

Mr Holding advised there was an error on page 11 of the paper, where the right hand column should total £13.5m. Mr Holding advised elements of contingency had been built into the budget and there were areas where the University could cut back without cutting budgets. **Resolved that the budget 2013/14 be approved.**

1389 Five year forecast

Mr Holding advised the forecast was based on the 2013/14 budget. Critical assumptions had been made such as 2% inflation, no fall in full time undergraduate numbers, fees for full time undergraduate students increase by 2% each year. Mr Holding advised it was also assumed the university did not take out any further loans. Mr Holding advised some additional commitments such as fee waivers, retention programmes in schools and IT upgrades had been included. Ms Gee asked if the University had considered what would happen if further cuts in funding such as those experienced across the public sector, would occur in the University. Mr Holding advised the University had these financial models and was looking at this issue. Ms Gee suggested this might be a matter for further discussion with Governors. **Resolved that the five year forecast be approved.**

1390 Business Cases – UWBS Building, Black Country Science Centre

Mr Holding advised Finance and General Purpose Committee had recommended both business cases for approval. The Chair advised Finance and General Purpose Committee was taking a rigorous approach when evaluating large projects for approval. **Resolved that the business cases for UWBS building and the Black Country Science Centre be approved.**

1391 Capital Programme 2013/14 to 2015/16

Resolved that outline approval given to the Capital Programme for 2013/14 to 2015/16.

Resolved that approval given for the 2013/14 element of the programme as the capital budget for 2013/14 subject to detailed approval of each project.

1392 Accommodation Debt Management Policy

The Chair advised the Students' Union had been involved in the drafting of the policy. Mr Holding advised Appendix 1 detailed the proposed new wording for bye law 4. **Resolved that the Accommodation Debt Management Policy and the changes to Bye-law 4 be approved.**

Mr Batchelor advised the Students' Union had been nominated for a national award due to their campaigning on this policy.

1393 Key Performance Indicators

Mrs Lloyd Wildman advised that following discussion at Finance and General Purpose Committee two suggested amendments had been made to the Level 1 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). KPI 6, Internationalisation, and KPI 9, Research, had been amended accordingly. **Resolved that the changes to KPI 6 and KPI 9 be approved.**

Mrs Lloyd Wildman also advised the enclosed status reports had been considered by Finance and General Purpose Committee and their status had been recommended for approval by the Committee. **Resolved that the status reports be approved.**

1394 Corporate Fundraising Policy

Mrs Lloyd Wildman advised that it was important for the University to have such a policy. There was some discussion regarding the higher band gifts and whether the value was too low. It was acknowledged that some current staff would also be alumni and therefore fall into more than one category of donor. It was suggested that a list of corporate gifts received be presented at each Board meeting.

Resolved that the Corporate Fundraising Policy be approved and a list of corporate gifts be presented to each meeting.

1395 Academic Board report

Dr Pymm highlighted further work was ongoing with the University-wide language provision. The Virtual Learning Environment project remained ongoing and the provision would be brought together under one portal.

Ms Burgher asked why there had been a reduction in the number of first class and upper second class awards. Dr Pymm advised the effect of the current algorithm and number of credits were being considered. Professor Layer advised over the past five years degree outcomes had improved and the figure was low against this set of results. Professor Layer felt it was too early to identify a trend.

The report was received.

1396 Effective Governance Interim Review

The outcome of the review was presented for information. Several areas were identified as being suitable for further discussion at the Governors Away Day on 27th September 2013 (**action: HLW**).

Professor Layer advised as a result of recent membership changes there was a gender imbalance on the Board which would need to be considered. The Chair advised this would be borne in mind in Nomination Committee discussions.

Professor Layer also asked The Registrar to ensure that when the elections took place for new Academic Board representatives on the Governing Body, that this imbalance was highlighted.

1397 Start times for Board meetings

After discussion it was agreed the main Board of Governor meetings would start at 5pm for the next academic year. It was also agreed the Board of Governor meetings would be held at different campuses throughout the year.

It was agreed the sub-committees would retain their 6pm start time.

A revised calendar of meetings was to be circulated (**action: GT**).

1398 Congregations 2013

Mr Lee asked for any outstanding responses from governors to be returned.

1399 Reports from Governor Committees

- (a) Remuneration Committee, 13th June 2013: The report was noted.
- (b) Finance and General Purpose Committee, 9th May 2013: The report was noted.
- (c) Finance and General Purpose Committee, 13th June 2013: The report was noted.
- (d) Audit Committee, 6th June 2013: The report was noted.
- (e) Wholly Owned Companies, 13th June 2013: The report was noted.
- (f) UoW Science Park Limited, 6th June 2013: The report was noted.
- (g) Equality and Diversity Committee, 8th May 2013: The report was noted.
Resolved that the Terms of Reference be approved. Resolved that the equality statements for disability, trans equality, race and sexual orientation be approved.

1400 Any other business

- (a) The Chair expressed his thanks to Mr Sharp for his twenty three years' service on the Board of Governors. The Chair congratulated Mr Sharp on his contribution to the University and his stewardship of Audit Committee.
- (b) The Chair expressed his thanks to Mr Batchelor and wished him the best in his future endeavours.
- (c) The Chair thanked Ms Kimbley, Dr Bergin and Dr Conway for their commitment to the Board over their term of office.

- (d) The Chair advised Professor Sir Geoff Hampton was stepping down from his role as Deputy Vice Chancellor (External Affairs) to concentrate on his role as Chief Executive of Educational Central.

- (e) The Chair thanked Mr Lee for his support to the governing body over the years and offered best wishes for the future.

Meeting closed at 8:50pm.