

Board of Governors

Minutes of the eighty-sixth meeting of the Board of Governors, held on Thursday 28th March 2013 at 6:00 pm in the Council Room, Wulfruna Street, Wolverhampton.

Present:

Mr M Elliott (Chair)	Professor G Layer
Ms K Gee	Ms K Copestake
Mr D Batchelor	Dr S Walford
Mr J Sharp	Ms A Kimbley
Cllr K Sahota	Mr J Pymm
Dr J Johnson	Mr S Towe – until item 1369
Dr B Conway	Mr B Reid

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
Professor J Darling, Dean of Research – until item 1368
Mr A W Lee, Secretary to the Board
Mr G Butler, Assistant Head of Finance

Apologies:

Ms L Cutting
Professor M Chambers
Mr I Hyde
Ms C Burgher
Dr J Bergin
Professor A Holmes, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic
Mr A Holding, Finance Director

Administrator:

Miss Gemma Towns, Strategy & Governance Co-ordinator

1364 Welcome, Apologies, Declarations of Interest

Apologies were received from Ms L Cutting, Professor M Chambers, Mr I Hyde, Ms C Burgher, Dr J Bergin, Professor A Holmes and Mr A Holding.

Mr B Reid was welcomed to the meeting.

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

1365 Minutes of the Board of Governors Meeting, 22nd November 2012

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd November 2012 were agreed as a true record.

It was noted the action at minute 1334 would be dealt with during the meeting. There were no other matters arising.

1366 Membership and Attendance

- (a) **It was resolved that Dr Walford be reappointed as an Independent member for a three year term.**
- (b) Mr Reid withdrew from the meeting for this item. **It was resolved that Mr Reid be appointed as an Independent member for a three year term.** Mr Reid is a Fellow of the Chartered Association of Certified Accountants and Institute of Co-operative Directors. He is the Chief Executive of the Midcounties Co-operative.
- (c) Dr Walford withdrew from the meeting for this item. **It was resolved that Dr Walford be appointed as an additional Deputy Chair of the Board for a three year term.**

1367 Presentation from the Dean of Research and the Pro-Vice Chancellor Research and Enterprise

Professor Darling and Professor Oakes delivered a presentation on the University's research strategy. A general discussion on the REF submission and the Research Hub was held.

The Board were pleased with the progress of research at the University and expressed a wish to engage with the Research Hub, if possible.

1368 Terms of Reference for Remuneration Committee

Mr Towe advised of a change in the terms of reference for Remuneration Committee whereby Mr Elliott would be included as a member of the Committee but would withdraw when the Vice-Chancellor's remuneration was discussed. **The terms of reference for Remuneration Committee were approved.**

Mr Towe left the meeting.

1369 Vice-Chancellor's Report

A report on the outcome of the Francis Report at Stafford Hospital was tabled, highlighting the actions the University would take following the report.

Professor Layer highlighted the following areas of his report:

University Technical College: The University had been successful in leading an application for the creation of a UTC focussed on a health curriculum. This UTC would be in Sandwell and would include sponsor partners from the regional health sector.

Faculty Proposals: Professor Layer advised that Academic Board had given overwhelming support for the move to faculties. Dr Walford asked how the changes would impact upon campus use. Professor Layer stated some areas may be affected but a key issue was cross faculty working. The Board were supportive of the proposal to move to a faculty structure.

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 lessons would be learned from previous land disposal at Walsall Campus.

Indian Students: Cllr Sahota asked if the visa issues had affected the number of Indian students. Professor Layer advised the India position was significant for the University and numbers of students from India had declined due to Visa issues. Ms Nelson advised that as the number of Indian students had declined, the number of students from Africa had increased. Ms Nelson highlighted the University was undertaking more teaching overseas through TNE. Professor Layer stated he would shortly be visiting India with Lord Paul, Chancellor, to promote the University and launch a scholarship scheme.

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%).

1370 Students' Union Matters

Mr Batchelor advised engagement levels at all campuses had increased. Student Voice had recruited 650 students that year, which was a large increase from the previous year. Students were focusing on volunteering and employability.

Mr Batchelor advised engagement with the recent student elections had been very positive with 1,000 more votes cast than in the previous year's election. Professor Layer advised the Students' Union had investigated improper voting practices during this election and had taken robust action to ensure the integrity of the process.

Campaigning for mental health issues had been positive. The Squeeze Box at City and Walsall campuses had performed well.

Mr Batchelor stated there had been some changes to the Students' Union bye-laws regarding job titles and positions. **Resolved that changes to the Students' Union bye-laws be approved.**

The recent Sports Awards had been a success with a positive message given to other students.

1371 Access Agreement and Fees 2014/15

Ms Nelson advised the University were required to submit their Access Agreements for 2014/15. Ms Nelson highlighted the University were proposing to increase their tuition fee by 2.9%; guidance from OFFA suggested a maximum increase should be no higher than 3%. The University was also developing a package of significant widening participation and outreach proposals. Mr Elliott advised this item had been presented to Finance and General Purpose Committee on 7th March 2013.

Ms Nelson clarified that financial support for individual students would be as offered in the year they were admitted. Evidence from Universities suggested that scholarships had no impact on student demand and a change to outreach would make it easier for students to access support. Mr Batchelor advised the Students' Union were happy with the proposals. Ms Nelson stated financial modelling had been undertaken but had made a number of assumptions, one being the number of students which linked to expenditure.

1372 Key Performance Indicators

Mrs Lloyd Wildman highlighted the inclusion of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 10.1, 10.2, 11 and 12 on the summary sheet, following feedback from the November 2012 meeting. An amendment had been made to KPI 3 which should have stated 90 days, not 60 days. Mrs Lloyd Wildman advised if the Board were happy, selected KPIs would be presented to the July meeting. Dr Walford was of the view the KPIs were rigorous and constructive. **The Board approved the amended KPIs.**

1373 Academic Board Reports

(a) **17th January 2013:** Mr Pymm highlighted that the Collaborative Process Review would become part of the QAA Audit in 2014. The percentage marking scheme was being implemented as a change from the alpha-numeric system. Mr Pymm also highlighted the postgraduate taught provision paper which was being developed.

(b) **11th March 2013:** Dr Conway advised the accreditation of teaching staff was underway. Dr Conway stated a framework for the Professoriate was being developed which would be a significant change for the University. The Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) project was underway. Due to its effect upon teaching staff, it was important the review was noted. Mr Sharp advised Audit

Committee had insisted that appropriate contingency plans were put in place for other IT dependent projects and asked if this was being undertaken for the VLE review so if a change was effected, the move would be handled well. Dr Conway agreed to convey this to the project team and to keep Audit Committee briefed on the progress of the project including contingency plans.

(c) Honorary Awards: The Honorary Awards nominations for the September 2013 Congregations were approved.

1374 Proposed Meeting Dates 2013/14

Mr Lee advised the proposed meetings followed the usual calendar pattern and stated that Governors' opinions on evening meetings would be sought during the desktop review of governance effectiveness.

Mr Elliott stated it seemed unusual for meetings to be held until late in the evening. Cllr Sahota supported the proposal for daytime meetings.

1375 Reports from Governor Committees

- (a) Remuneration Committee, 19th December 2012: The report was noted.
- (b) Finance and General Purpose Committee, 17th January 2013: The decision to uncouple student debt from academic debt would require a change in University bye-laws. This would be dealt with at the July meeting. The report was noted.
- (c) Finance and General Purpose Committee, 7th March 2013: The report was noted.
- (d) Audit Committee, 28th February 2013: Mr Sharp advised he had met with Jamila Begum, Risk Officer, to discuss risk appetite. The report was noted.
- (e) Wholly Owned Companies, 7th March 2013: The report was noted.
- (f) University of Wolverhampton Science Park Ltd, 7th March 2013: The report was noted. Professor Layer advised there had been management changes at the Science Park with two directors leaving the University. Professor Oakes had put in place transitional arrangements whilst further plans were developed.

The reports from the Governor Committees were received and noted for information.

1376 Meet the Board Event

Mr Lee advised the event would be held on the afternoon of Thursday 26th September 2013 at Telford campus. It was noted this date was also calendared for the September Finance and General Purpose Committee which could precede the Meet the Board event. Mr Lee added that the following day 27 September was the Boards awayday at Telford campus and the plan was to offer Governors a dinner and overnight accommodation on the night of 26th September 2013. **The report was noted.**

1377 Sealing Register

Mr Lee advised of three further entries in the register:

- 383: JCT Intermediate form of contract with Wagstaff Group for OVC office refurbishment.
- 384: JCT Intermediate ICD Contractors Design Interclass PLC for WD refurbishment Walsall Campus.
- 385: JCT Intermediate form of contact with AH Construction & Development plc for the Students' Union Juice Bar and Sports Hall changing rooms refurbishment.

The affixing of Seals 379 to 385 were confirmed by the Board.

1378 Any Other Business

- (a) **Dr Mark Wakelin, President of the Methodist Conference:** Dr Johnson advised Dr Wakelin had visited the University and Chaplaincy on 28th January 2013. Dr Wakelin had been pleased with his visit to the chaplaincy which it was hoped would lead to a closer engagement.

Meeting closed.

Next meeting: 4th July 2013, 6pm, MA Council Room