

Board of Governors

Minutes of the eighty-fourth meeting of the Board of Governors, held on Thursday 5th July 2012 at 6:00 pm in the Council Room, Wulfruna Street, Wolverhampton.

Present:

Mr M Elliott (Chair)	Professor G Layer
Ms K Gee	Professor M Chambers
Dr B Conway	Mr K Harris
Mr J Sharp	Cllr K Sahota
Dr J Bergin	Dr S Walford
Ms C Burgher	Mr J Pymm
Ms K Copestake	Mr I Hyde

In attendance:

Professor A Holmes, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic
Professor Sir G Hampton, Deputy Vice-Chancellor External Affairs
Ms J C Nelson, Pro-Vice Chancellor Student Recruitment
Mrs H Lloyd Wildman, The Registrar– until item 1228
Mr A Holding, Finance Director
Mr D Batchelor, Students' Union
Ms S Harris, Director of HR
Professor I Oakes, Pro-Vice Chancellor Research and Enterprise
Mr A W Lee, Secretary to the Board

Apologies

Ms L Cutting
Ms A Kimbley
Mr S Towe
Dr J Johnson

Administrator:

Miss Gemma Towns, Strategy & Governance Co-ordinator

1232 Minutes of the Board of Governors meeting, 29th March 2012

Mr Harris asked for the following to be inserted at minute 1224 to provide information on the spending of Students' Union funds:

- Marketing – warm clothing for Marketing Assistants (est cost £200)
- ASC – re-branding materials for outreach work (est £1000)

- Representation – Student rep development fund £1000
- Activities department – inspire mark project £1000
- Radio project – Miriad radio playout system, licensing costs and soundproofing £3050
- Student Internship position for representation Assistant £12,000 (£6k from this year)
- Sage HR package £350.40
- Ballot stations £1000
- Seed funding to support set up costs for the new American Football team £1000.

Mr Harris also asked the final paragraph of 1224 to clarify the Investors in People status. The paragraph was corrected to read *“the Students’ Union had regained Investors in People status and were working towards bronze”*.

Subject to the foregoing the Minutes were approved.

1233 Matters Arising

Mr Pymm asked about the result of the electronic survey of governors concerning information dissemination; it was advised results had shown that the vast majority of Governors preferred to continue receiving hard copies of Board papers.

1224 Membership

It was **resolved** that Ms Kate Copestake be reappointed as an Independent member for a three year term.

It was **resolved** that Dr Josh Johnson be reappointed as an Independent member for a three year term.

It was **resolved** that Cllr Kuldip Sahota be reappointed as an Independent member for a three year term.

It was **resolved** that Dan Batchelor be appointed as the student nominee member for a one year term effective from 1st August 2012.

1225 Vice Chancellor’s Report

The Vice Chancellor provided further details on his report to Governors. The following areas were highlighted:

Student Recruitment: The Vice Chancellor advised that for Wolverhampton student applications had increased slightly compared with last year but there was a growing level of concern across the sector because of an overall national reduction in applications of about 9%. It was acknowledged that whilst our applications position was relatively good, their conversion into enrolments remained uncertain. Ms Nelson added there were still a number of variables to be taken into account such as the significant number of applicants holding the University as an insurance offer. Ms Nelson reiterated that

nationally there was some pessimism; it was unclear whether students were waiting until their A Level results and then deciding what to do. Ms Nelson advised there was little evidence students were deterred by the fee. Mr Harris stated he had recently attended a NUS Conference where they had viewed data for all institutions who had changed their fees and those who had not. The data he had seen supported Ms Nelson's comments. Mr Sharp asked if there were fewer applicants attending open days. The Vice Chancellor stated the number of prospective applicants attending this year had increased but they were accompanied by fewer people as for example, they were part of school groups.

Access Agreement: Ms Gee commented that Governors had made decisions about 2013/14 fee levels before knowing the impact of the 2012/13 fees, and data was now emerging rather late in time which may have influenced the decisions reached. Ms Gee asked what had been the drivers behind the changes made to the 2013/14 fees and scholarships package for students. Ms Nelson advised that one critical change had been the number of additional 'margin' student places being allocated via HEFCE which were not sufficient to offset the reduction in income which would result from retaining a net fee of less than £7500. Mr Holding reminded the Board that the original projections had incorporated a number of different scenarios because of the paucity of firm data at the time decisions were required to be taken to meet the deadlines set by the Office for Fair Access.

Academic Portfolio: The Vice Chancellor advised that professional regulation was important, such as General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) as set-out in his report. Mr Hyde enquired why the approval from GPhC was for a short period of time; the Vice Chancellor advised this was similar to some other accredited institutions and it was not detrimental to students. Cllr Sahota asked why one of the conditions of registration related to equality and diversity compliance; the Vice Chancellor confirmed this related to the school's production of materials and the University's website, both of which had been updated accordingly.

Internationalisation: The Vice Chancellor advised that, contrary to the position at other universities reported in the press, entry requirements at Wolverhampton were the same for home and international students, with the exception of English language competency requirements for International students. The Vice Chancellor explained that within government, further discussions were being undertaken in relation to students and immigration visa controls. Cllr Sahota asked why the numbers of applicants from India had reduced; the Vice Chancellor stated the Indian community in particular appeared to have been influenced by the new UK Borders Agency rules and felt the UK was not as welcoming as it had been. However there had been growth in the number of students from Saudi Arabia and a Saudi society had been set up at the University.

Estates: Compton campus had been handed over. Discussions were ongoing with the developer and the Council for Walsall Rugby Club land. The developer was keen to have a speedy response. The Vice Chancellor suggested Finance and General Purpose Committee members would consider firm proposals on behalf of the Board if speedy action was needed. **This was agreed.**

Cultural Change: The Chair requested Governors were kept informed of the cultural changes in the organisation. Ms Gee was keen for Governors to also embrace change. Mr Sharp commented some members of staff may react stressfully to the changes and

asked if managers were trained appropriately to deal with this; it was confirmed that this formed a part of the People Strategy.

1226 Enabling Strategies

Mrs Lloyd Wildman confirmed three strategies (People, Campus, Finance and Investment) had been approved at Finance and General Purpose Committee on 21st June 2012. The remaining four enabling strategies were deemed managerial and had been approved at Corporate Management Team (CMT) Mrs Lloyd Wildman advised the Offices of the Vice-Chancellor were having two days to consider plans on 16th and 17th July. Sub committees of CMT had been set up and would monitor the strategies.

The Chair was of the view that the Reputation and Recruitment Strategy was strategic and therefore relevant to Governors. The Vice Chancellor suggested that this strategy could be forwarded to F&GP for information. The Chair stressed that he did not want this proposal to hold up any action emerging from the plan and that it should be presented to F&GP for information only. The remaining enabling strategies would be made available to all Governors for information **(action: HLW)**.

Mr Sharp asked if we undertook staff recruitment via e-recruiter as Lincoln University did. Ms Harris confirmed that we had recently introduced such a system and it had streamlined the process; it had made a positive impact and had led to a significant reduction in advertising costs, less paperwork and was simpler for managers to follow.

The enabling strategies were approved.

1227 Key Performance Indicators

Mrs Lloyd Wildman advised the key performance indicators would be in a new format in the autumn.

Dr Walford noted there had been some improvement in space utilisation across the University. It was noted KPI 14, Residential Accommodation, had improved and Governors asked if the issue of condition and maintenance had been completely addressed. The Vice Chancellor advised that part of the residential estate was of lower quality but maintained to a health and safety compliant standard. It was a popular budget choice of accommodation for students. It was noted the Campus Masterplan would be presented to Finance and General Purpose Committee on 27th September 2012.

The Key Performance Indicators were approved.

1228 Students' Union Report

A video of the recent Students' Union Teaching Awards was shown.

On behalf of the Board, the Chair expressed thanks to Mr Harris for his hard work, strong leadership and enormous contribution to the Board and the University over the

last two years. Mr Harris outlined the good work the Students' Union had done to date, including their efforts in becoming a greener Union. Mr Harris also highlighted the Wolverhampton Students' Union had been one of only five Students' Unions across the country to win gold in "Be a Champion". Mr Harris introduced Mr Batchelor who would be taking over the office of Students' Union President from August 2012 and stated Mr Batchelor would continue to move the Students' Union forward. Mr Batchelor was welcomed to his role and the Board of Governors.

1229 Finance Items

Quarter 3 Forecast Outturn 2011/2012: Mr Holding advised this did not include the sale of Compton and also did not include the impact of purchasing The Varsity. Mr Holding explained the University was now better at collecting debt via debt collection agencies which meant the University were on top of debt earlier and the process had been improved.

Budget 2012/13: Mr Holding advised he had factored in £1m for staff pay. Mr Holding stated the bottom line figure did not equate to the target of a 5% surplus and therefore budgets needed to be closely monitored. Mr Holding advised it was expected HEFCE/TDA budgets would reduce. On the matter of student fee income, there was some uncertainty around the impact of the census dates which would trigger instalments of fee and it was unclear how the census points would affect students' decisions around drop-out.

Mr Holding had budgeted for a 20% to 25% increase in gas and electricity but since writing the report a new three year contract had been signed where electricity had increased 14% and gas had increased 30%. Mr Holding noted more electricity was used than gas but the rise in prices was indicative of the costs across the sector. Mr Holding also advised that the budget assumed funds would be taken out of non-pay budgets due to procurement savings arising from the cost optimisation review.

The budget 2012/13 was approved.

Five Year Forecast Update: Mr Holding advised the forecast generally assumed a 2% increase in tuition fees, which meant, in turn, it was anticipated the £9k cap would increase. It was assumed there would be no contraction in student numbers in 2013/14 and it was also assumed pay rises would be above inflation over the next two to three years but assumed there would be fewer staff.

The forecast was noted and approved.

1330 Policies

The Secretary advised the Anti-Bribery Policy, Conflict of Interest Policy, Declaration of Interest Policy and Freedom of Speech Policy required approval. The element of "freedom of speech" was discussed and what this meant in practice for the University.

The Anti-Bribery Policy, Conflict of Interest Policy, Declaration of Interest Policy and Freedom of Speech Policy were approved.

1331 Academic Board Report

Mr Pymm presented the Academic Board report. He highlighted there would be changes in the way the University record assessment performance. Professor Holmes stated there was a group considering the alpha numerical system which would be changed to a percentage point grading scale and this would be effective from August 2013. The Vice Chancellor stated this brought the University into line with the rest of the sector as it was felt students were disadvantaged by the way achievement was currently recorded.

The newly drafted student charter was discussed. Mr Hyde and Ms Burgher expressed some concerns that this could be regarded as a contractual document and voiced some caution over the terminology used in the document. Professor Layer advised this was a framework of expectation and not intended to be a set of contract terms between the University and students. The coversheet of the student charter had not been included in the report; this contained important wording which identified this document was not intended to be a set of contractual terms. However the Students' Union and University team who had produced the Charter would be asked to re-examine this aspect and report the outcome to the Board of Governors in the autumn.

The inclusion of two new award titles, Master in Science (MSci) and Master in Art (MArt), in bye-law 5 was approved.

1332 Reports from Governor Committees

- (a) Finance and General Purpose Committee, 10th May 2012: This report was noted.
- (b) Finance and General Purpose Committee, 21st June 2012: Ms Gee advised there had been a lengthy discussion regarding equality and diversity. An update on the investment proposals would be presented to the September 2012 meeting.
- (c) Wholly Owned Companies Meeting, 21st June 2012: Professor Oakes advised Mr Holding had been appointed as a Director of the Wholly Owned Companies. It had also been resolved that Professor Oakes would be appointed as a Director and Chief Executive of the Science Park.
- (d) Science Park Board Meeting, 5th July 2012: Professor Oakes provided an oral update as this meeting had been held earlier in the day. The name of the Science Park had changed to "University of Wolverhampton Science Park Limited". Professor Oakes advised a significant amount of work had been undertaken to gain more benefit for the University whilst continuing to deliver a good service to tenants. Professor Oakes advised consideration was being given to how the Science Park could work with the e-innovation centre at Telford. Professor Oakes also advised of a new vision for the Science Park over the next five years which would result in a change in brand and image and changed roles of University staff managing the facility.

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

1333 Sealing Register

In addition to the items listed in the paper confirmation was sought for sealing register number 377, a Land Registry deed for the removal of a registered charge at Compton Campus..

Register numbers 375, 376 and 377 were approved by the Board.

1334 Any Other Business

- (a) Senior Posts Reviews Committee: Ms Harris advised a review of the terms of reference for the committee had been undertaken. The Committee would now consider all senior posts including professors and all staff not on the nationally agreed payscale. To retain the objectivity of the Chair of the Board, it had been agreed that Mr Stewart Towe would chair these meetings from 11th August 2012. A revised terms of reference would be presented to the November Board of Governors meeting **(action: SH)**. Mr Elliott added this was in line with best practice across the sector and Mr Towe had been selected due to his commercial sector experience. Mr Elliott would no longer attend these meetings.
- (b) Congregations: Governors were reminded congregations would be taking place in September 2012 and were asked to advise if they wished to chair or participate in any particular congregations. A list of dates would be circulated to all Governors **(action: AWL)**.
- (c) Twenty First Anniversary Celebrations: Governors were informed that the twenty first anniversary of the Corporation being titled a University would be on Monday 17th June 2013. A range of celebratory events were being planned including an inaugural annual consultative meeting to be attended by members of the University and representatives from the local business, civic and voluntary community. **Governors were requested to note the date of the University coming of age (17/06/13) in their diaries.**
- (d) Governor issues: It was again noted this was Mr Harris' last meeting. The Board expressed their thanks and best wishes to him.

Meeting closed.

Next meeting: 22nd November 2012, 6pm, Council Room, MA Building, City Campus.

Away Day – 28th September 2012, Telford Campus