



## **BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors held at 5.30pm on Monday, 10 March 2008 in Room 2S704, Frenchay campus

Present: Ray Burton (Chairman), Chris Booy, Nigel Costley, Peter Daw, Ruth Drysdale, Iain Gray, Dr Jane Harrington, Dom Passfield, The Rt Revd Barry Rogerson, Lise Seager, Dr Louis Sherwood, Graham van der Lely, Prof Steve West

Apologies: Bob Barnett, Rosamund Blomfield-Smith, Prof Colin Fudge, Prof Bhupinder Sandhu

In Attendance: Ian Apperley, Prof Rob Cuthbert, Bill Marshall (for minutes G08.3.1-4), Katie Owen-Jones, John Rushforth

## **MINUTES**

G08.3.1 The minutes of the meetings held on 26 November 2007 and 19 December 2007 were confirmed as correct records.

## **COUNTRYSIDE AND COMMUNITY RESEARCH INSTITUTE (CCRI)**

G08.3.2 Further to minute G07.11.7, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Mr Rushforth reported on recent developments with the Institute. A bid had been submitted to HEFCE for funding, but HEFCE had agreed to defer consideration following the news that the Commission for Rural Communities (CRC) was not now relocating to Hartpury, which undermined the current submission. While co-location with the CRC was desirable it was not essential, the CCRI covered an important academic area and had a viable purpose in itself. Discussions would continue between the HE partners in the CCRI and also with CRC and HEFCE to find a way forward. The Chairman of Hartpury College confirmed that the College was still committed to constructing the building and wished to proceed. It was thought that the position would be clearer by the end of April.

Minutes G08.3.3-4 are confidential to the Board.

## **HR AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

G08.3.5 Received, Paper G08/3/1, the HR and Organisational Development Strategy. The Strategy had already been considered by the Personnel and Joint Diversity Committees and had been altered in response to their comments. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Cuthbert, and the Director of HR presented the Strategy, drawing attention to: the basis for the Strategy; the main themes; and, its implementation and the related key indicators.

G08.3.6 In the discussion, a number of points were covered including: input from external stakeholders, for instance for benchmarking; current and planned benchmarking activities; that the standards to be used for promoting well-being were from the Health and Safety Executive; that the Personnel Committee

regarded staff turnover and retention as an important area that it would keep under review; and, the similarity in the feedback received from different groups of staff. Governors were pleased to see the introduction of a staff attitude survey and that the Personnel Committee would review the results. They made suggestions about the timing of surveys and interim sampling/monitoring to check progress in particular areas. The Board **APPROVED** the Human Resources and Organisational Development Strategy.

## **SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY**

G08.3.7 Received, Paper G08/3/2, the Sustainability Strategy. It had already been considered by the Estates Committee and Academic Board. Academic Board had endorsed the Strategy but had questioned whether the targets were ambitious enough. It had asked the Sustainability Board to review the targets with a view to strengthening them, though also taking into account the consequences of doing that.

G08.3.8 The Board welcomed the Strategy and supported its aims, but were concerned whether there was a real commitment to its implementation and that it should become embedded throughout all the University's work. It was recognised that this would mean a change in the culture and some hard decisions, and the Board was assured that the Strategy had the support of the Senior Management Team (SMT). The University was pleased that it had appeared eighth in a recent 'green' league table, but it was suggested that UWE should aim to be in the top three. The President of the Students' Union reported that the Strategy was strongly supported by the Union and that this was something that students regarded as important. He emphasised the importance of the issues covered in the context of the estates developments and of educating undergraduates so that they could then take that knowledge into other organisations. In response to a question, the University was already looking at the possibility of generating energy itself from renewable sources, and that funding would be available from HEFCE for such schemes. It was noted that Hartpury College had a sustainability programme in place, which included two wind turbines. Also discussed was achieving a balance between price and sustainability in procurement.

G08.3.9 The Board **APPROVED** the Sustainability Strategy as a good starting point to be developed further. It was also agreed that:

- i) proposals presented to the Board or its committees should make clear that they had been tested against this strategy for their sustainability. The Clerk was asked to take this forward with colleagues;
- ii) the Estates Committee should receive regular reports on performance against the key indicators identified in the document.

Further consideration would also be given to reporting externally on such matters.

## **IT STRATEGY**

G08.3.10 Received, Paper G08/3/3, the IT Strategy. The Strategy had been amended following discussion by the Finance and IT Committee. The Deputy Vice Chancellor, Mr Rushforth presented the paper, noting in particular that the Strategy was central to the University operations, the programme for developments and the change in timing for a replacement student records system. The Board was pleased to **APPROVE** the Strategy.

G08.3.11 It was reported that the Audit Committee had raised the matter of IT security arrangements in the context of recent incidents elsewhere. The SMT believed

that appropriate measures were in place but were reviewing them to make sure that data was protected as far as possible. It was recognised, however, that it was still dependent on individuals complying with the arrangements.

Minutes G08.3.12-14 are confidential to the Board.

### **PLANNING PROCESS 2007/08: PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

G08.3.15 Noted, Paper G08/3/5, a progress report on the 2007/08 planning round and an executive overview of performance changes against University-level key performance indicators.

Minute G08.3.16 is confidential to the Board.

### **ACTING VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT**

G08.3.17 Received, Paper G08/3/7, a report indicating briefly some issues at present concerning the SMT. The Acting Vice-Chancellor reported that the HEFCE letter on funding for 2008/09 had been received. The headlines were that UWE had received a 3.2% increase including growth, 2.6% without growth, against a sector average increase of 3.5%. In view of the estimated 7-8% increase in the University's running costs, there would be a significant funding gap in 2008/09 which was being addressed through the planning round. The Acting Vice-Chancellor would be sharing some of the issues in a note to all staff.

### **BRISTOL POLYTECHNIC CHARITABLE TRUST**

G08.3.18 A background note about membership of Bristol Polytechnic Charitable Trust and related trusts was noted (Paper G08/3/8). The Board:

- i) **APPROVED** the appointment of Professor Steve West as an Original Trustee of Bristol Polytechnic Charitable Trust; and
- ii) delegated authority to the Chairman to appoint an additional Original Trustee to fill the remaining vacancy.

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

G08.3.19 Noted, Paper G08/3/9, a report on action taken since the last meeting by the Chairman on behalf of the Board.

G08.3.20 The Board noted the current specific delegations of authority to the Chairman, the Emergency Committee and others (Paper G08/3/10).

G08.3.21 Noted, Paper G08/3/11, a paper prepared by the Committee of University Chairmen on the payment of governors. The paper had been brought to this meeting so that the Board was aware of the current debate and other work that was being done on this topic. The Board would return to the topic in future, perhaps at an awayday.

G08.3.22 The Chairman thanked members for their co-operation in arranging individual meetings with him. He would want to explore particular themes with each Governor, and would report back to the full Board on matters to be taken forward.

## **COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND JOINT COMMITTEES**

- G08.3.23 The Board received and noted the unconfirmed or draft minutes or reports of the following meetings (Paper G08/3/12):  
Joint Student Affairs Committee – 14 January 2008  
Joint Diversity Committee – 23 January 2008  
Estates Committee – 28 January 2008  
Personnel Committee – 4 February 2008  
Finance and IT Committee – 11 February 2008  
Nominations Committee – 18 February 2008  
Strategic Planning Advisory Group – 13 December 2007 and 18 February 2008  
Audit Committee – 25 February 2008
- G08.3.24 **Strategic Planning Advisory Group:** A report on the plans for the Business School would be presented to the next meeting of the Board in July.
- G08.3.25 The Acting Vice-Chancellor reported that he was reviewing the Academic Board committee structure and would also look at the current governors' committee structure to see if any improvements might be made.

## **ACADEMIC BOARD**

- G08.3.26 **QAA (Quality Assurance Agency) Institutional Audit:** The Acting Vice-Chancellor and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Cuthbert, reported on the Audit that would take place in spring 2009. The QAA had introduced a new approach to audits, the focus of which was enhancing academic provision. Considerable preparatory work was underway involving the Academic Registry, faculties and some other services: the project group was being led by Professor Geoff Channon and Tessa Harrison, and would draw on a larger group as time went on.
- G08.3.27 Noted, Paper G08/3/13, the minutes of the meeting of Academic Board on 5 December 2007 and a brief oral report of the meeting held on 27 February 2008.
- G08.3.28 The Board delegated authority to the Chairman to give the Board's assent to changes to the Academic Regulations approved by Academic Board at the December and February meetings.

## **CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2008-09**

- G08.3.29 The Clerk reported that she was consulting over the final version of the calendar of meetings for the next academic year. It would be sent out to members shortly.

## **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- G08.3.30 7 July 2008.

## **BRIEFING SESSION: UNIVERSITY BRAND**

- G08.3.31 The Chairman reported that the briefing session for governors on the University brand and the work going on on that had been very interesting. He thanked those involved.

## **STUDENTS' UNION ELECTIONS**

G08.3.32 The Chairman congratulated Dom Passfield on his re-election as SRC President for 2008-09. The President reported that the election had gone well and had had the highest ever turnout. Not only he, but two of his colleagues had also been re-elected and they hoped to be able to continue the work started during this year.

## **PAM PEARCE**

G08.3.33 On behalf of the Board, the Chairman thanked Pam Pearce, who had recently moved to a new role, for her work in support of the Board and its committees over the past few years.

Meeting closed 7.35pm.