



## **BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors held at 3.00pm on Tuesday, 12 May 2009 in the Dartington Suite, the Farm House, Frenchay campus

Present: Gillian Camm (Chairman), Bob Barnett, Chris Booy, Prof Paul Gough, Dr Jane Harrington, Matt Hughes, Sonia Mills, Dom Passfield, Professor Bhupinder Sandhu, Lise Seager, Graham van der Lely, Professor Steve West

Apologies: Rosamund Blomfield-Smith, Nigel Costley, Sherrie Eugene, Iain Gray, Wil Harris, John Laycock, Rt Rev Barry Rogerson, Prof Graham Upton

In Attendance: Angeline Carozza (for minutes G05.9.6-8), Prof Richard Luxton (for minutes G09.5.1-5), Bill Marshall, Katie Owen-Jones, John Rushforth

### **MEMBERSHIP**

G09.5.1 The Chairman welcomed Prof Paul Gough to his first formal meeting of the Board.

### **MINUTES**

G09.5.2 The minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2009 were tabled. Those members present were asked to send any comments or amendments to the Clerk by Friday, 15 May 2009.

### **RESEARCH**

G09.5.3 John Rushforth, Professor Paul Gough and Professor Richard Luxton made a presentation to the Board on research, covering: the national picture; research funding; the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) and Research Evaluation Framework (REF); the position of research in the University and how it might be developed in the future. Professor Luxton gave an overview of the development of the Institute of Bio-Sensing Technology as an example of a very successful research endeavour. The presentation led into discussions about some of the opportunities, issues and challenges for the University.

G09.5.4 Main points included:

- research costs and the annual TRAC (transparent approach to costing) exercise, the level of cross funding - particularly for PhD students, and the link with the workload model and expectations set out in the UWE academic, and how that was to be re-balanced;
- the tactics for the RAE had been to be more focussed: to enter under fewer units of assessment and with a lower number of staff than previously, to aim for higher ratings in each area. It had been important to achieve a balance between reputation and funding – and the outcomes had been a doubling of research income and to increase the quality ratings in a number of areas. Decisions now had to be made about those areas where the outcomes had been disappointing;

- the important reputational gains made in the RAE needed to be used in presenting a rounded picture of the University;
- the significant improvement in successful bidding for funds from research councils and other sources. This had been achieved partly with support for grant writing from RBI and also from a growing reputation with funders for taking research seriously;
- the RAE was only one of factors that the University needed to look at in making future strategic decisions about research. The criteria for REF would have to be taken into account, but more important was a more holistic view of research and its contribution to the University and its activities more broadly. User-led research, and its economic and social impact, might become more important for the REF, which would put UWE in a good position and could increase the number of staff included;
- the importance of continuing to motivate staff in the context of having to make some difficult decision about future investment;
- the community of learning between staff and students created partly by staff being put into a position analogous to students by their research being assessed externally;
- the objectives of UWE's research strategy had been set, and a small group was now looking at its implementation. The strategy took a broad view of the contribution of research to UWE's activities including teaching;
- the value of Research Institutes in integrating different areas of research: drawing together research centres in a way that was sustainable, building on their success to create new connections with the aim of new developments and building relationships with industry and other external relationships, that might eventually be exploited. There were already a number of Institutes and the model would be used in more areas too.

G09.5.5 The Board thanked Mr Rushforth, Professor Gough and Professor Luxton for the presentations and the interesting discussion. The Board looked forward to further discussions in the future on this and related topics.

#### **RACE EQUALITY SCHEME**

G09.5.6 Received, Paper G09/5/2, the draft Race Equality Scheme. Angeline Carozza, Equality and Diversity Manager presented the Scheme, noting in particular: the process for its development; the extensive consultation; and the feedback from students. She drew the Board's attention to the action plan. The Diversity Committee had already commented on the Scheme.

G09.5.7 Governors welcomed the Scheme and raised a number of points, including:

- areas in which there was a significant gap between BME and non-BME students, specifically attainment and employability. Further analysis was being undertaken to understand the reasons better, and then improvements could be made to systems as relevant. On employability, a key factor was the low numbers of BME students going on placements, which also applied to other equality groups, there was a lot that could be done to improve this and it was included in the action plan;
- the need to address systems that were inadvertently discriminatory;
- the role of the Board of Governors, and how by promoting the strategy and engaging with diversity activity it could help success. It was also important to achieve diversity within the Board;
- it was important that the scheme was now made to work through implementing the action plan, which was extensive and would be demanding;
- the SRC President expressed congratulations on the consultation

- exercise which had been done very well, and commented that the scheme was being well received;
- the Vice-Chancellor commented that huge steps had been made over the past 18 months. This piece of work was to be regarded as an exemplar, but needed to be followed by single equality scheme.

G09.5.8 The Board **APPROVED** the Scheme in principle and delegated authority to the Chairman to approve the final version. The Board asked that a report be made to it on progress against the action plan in a year's time.

Minutes G09.5.9 – 16 are confidential to the Board.

### **APPOINTMENTS TO THE BOARD**

G09.5.17 The Board **APPROVED** the appointment of Katy Phillips, SRC President for 2009-10, as a Governor from 1 July 2009, and Wil Harris for his second term as the student nominated by the SRC from 1 August 2009.

### **DIVERSITY COMMITTEE**

G09.5.18 Received, Paper G09/5/3, the final proposals for the terms of reference and composition of the Diversity Committee. The Board **APPROVED** the proposals as set out.

### **MATTERS REFERRED BY ACADEMIC BOARD**

G09.5.19 Received, tabled Paper G09/5/4, changes to the Academic Regulations approved by the Academic Board at its meeting on 4 March 2009. The Board was reminded that it was required to ratify such changes. The Board **ASSENTED TO** the changes as follows:

- i) revised assessment regulations for the Legal Practice Course and PG Diploma Legal Practice;
- ii) award-specific variants to the Academic Regulations for the BSc (Hons) Midwifery;
- iii) a framework under which faculties would submit proposals for validation of specific masters by research programmes;
- iv) new award titles: Doctor of Spatial Planning (DPlan) and Postgraduate Certificate Learning Skills;
- v) a change to the award title Certificate Education (Learning and Skills) to Certificate in Education Learning and Skills;

and noted:

- vi) that Academic Board had delegated authority to a small group comprising the Vice-Chancellor and the chairs of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee and Research Committee to approve revisions to the Academic Regulations in between meetings of the Board. All revisions would be reported to the Board.

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

G09.5.20 Paper G09/5/5, a report from the Vice-Chancellor summarising matters recently considered by the Senior Management Team and not appearing elsewhere on the agenda, was received.

G09.5.21 **Public Finances:** The Vice-Chancellor reported on recent correspondence from HEFCE about a reduction in funding for its financial year 2010/11 which would affect universities' funding for academic year 2009/10. This would be a recurrent reduction from the teaching allocation. It had made the

Executive focus more on the future situation which was going to be very difficult, and they saw it as important to make progress more quickly with some of the planned changes. Although UWE was in a better position than many others in the sector, it was no time to be complacent. In response to a question about the issue of future redundancies, the Executive was clear that this was a possibility and had been open about this within the University. The Board supported the Executive in continuing its review of activities and to identify priorities and also those that would not continue.

- G09.5.22 The Vice-Chancellor also commented on: the outcomes of the QAA audit; the partnership work had put UWE in a good position to pursue the enterprise agenda in the region; that a review of the international work was to be undertaken with a view to refining the areas in which the University would concentrate in future, and a report would be brought to a future meeting; the audit that had been commissioned of health and safety arrangements, and that the report would be brought to the HR Committee and the Board.

The Board received a number of documents for information, as follows.

#### **COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

- G09.5.23 The Board received and noted draft minutes or notes of the following meetings (Paper G09/5/6):  
Audit Committee – 16 March 2009  
Students'/Governors' Forum – 23 March 2009.

#### **RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY**

- G09.5.24 Noted, Paper G09/5/7, the University's Records Management Policy.

#### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- G09.5.25 7 July 2009.

#### **DATES OF MEETINGS 2009-10**

- G09.5.26 6 October 2009, 24 November 2009, 26 January 2010, 23 March 2010, 18 May 2010, 6 July 2010.

#### **SWINDON**

- G09.5.27 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor reported on the current position regarding the Swindon project. The outcome of the planning appeal was awaited. In the meantime, the University had explored a town centre operation and had developed a bid with others. HEFCE, after an initial assessment, was not able to support the development at present, on the basis that it would expect UWE also to make an initial investment. It had acknowledged that this was a change in its position, and the Vice-Chancellor was to meet officers. The University's position had always been that it would not invest cash in the Swindon development, and the Board **AGREED** that that position should be maintained. It was noted that the 'University Challenge' programme might be affected by public spending cuts. The University should continue to engage and explore opportunities in Swindon.

## **HARTPURY COLLEGE**

G09.5.28 Mr van der Lely reported the appointment of Dr Steven Waite from University of Brighton as Vice-Principal with responsibility for higher education at the College.

Minute G09.5.29 is confidential to the Board.

## **PROFESSOR SANDHU**

G09.5.30 On behalf of the Board, the Chairman thanked Professor Sandhu for her contribution to the work of the Board over many years, and wished her well for the future.

Meeting closed 5.55 pm.