



University of the  
West of England  
**BRISTOL**  
**BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

Minutes of the Board of Governors meeting held on Tuesday, 1 February 2011.

**Present:** C Booy; G Camm (chair); Dr M Hagen; Dr J Harrington; J Laycock; S Mills; C Offler; Professor P Olomoloyai; Rt. Revd. B Rogerson; L Seager; T Smallwood; Professor G Upton; G van der Lely.

**Apologies:** I Gray; Professor S West.

**In Attendance:** I Apperley (for items G11.2.1 – G11.2.8); Professor P Gough; T Harrison (secretary); R O'Doherty (for item G11.2.1 - G11.2.5); J Rushforth; E Sambrook (for item G11.2.9); W Marshall.

**G11.2.1 CHAIR'S REPORT**

The Board agreed to delegate responsibility to a sub-committee to review a recommendation from the Vice Chancellor in respect of the sale of the St Matthias Campus. The sub-committee would comprise Professor Graham Upton and Rt. Revd. B Rogerson and would be advised by C Booy as required.

*Secretary's Note:*

*The following items have been approved by Chair's Action since the last meeting:*

- (i) minor amendments to the UWESU Constitution;*
- (ii) exchange and completion of the purchase of land adjacent to the M32.*

**G11.2.2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 23 NOVEMBER 2010**

*Paper G11/2/1 was received.*

**G11.2.2.1** The minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2010 were confirmed.

**G11.2.3 VICE CHANCELLOR'S REPORT**

*Paper G11/2/2 was received. A further update was emailed to governors on 28 February 2011.*

**G11.2.3.1** Discussion:

- the role of executive groups in the University's governance framework was explained as being concerned with implementation of strategy and the co-ordination and communication of activities via the Vice Chancellor's Executive Group;
- there was no intention to restructure professional services at the current time although this remained an option following the implementation of the One University Administration project. A

- paper setting out the Vice Chancellor's vision for One University Administration was currently being drafted;
- the risks identified by the Vice Chancellor in the update to his report were aligned to the corporate risk register.

**Agreed:**

- (i) the corporate risk register would be reviewed at the next meeting of the Audit Committee prior to being brought to the next meeting of the Board.

**ACTION: DVC Rushforth/Clerk**

**G11.2.3.2      Trade Union Disputes:**

The Board was informed that the University was currently in dispute locally with UCU over the academic management project. The outcomes from a recent ballot of UWE members had confirmed support for action either in the form of a strike or action short of a strike. Inconclusive discussions had taken place with UCU officers since the outcome of the ballot. A UCU general meeting would be taking place later in the week at which the action to be taken would be determined. The Board was also informed that there was to be a national ballot on pensions in the near future. The Students' Union had been kept fully informed throughout the discussions between the University and UCU. The Board was reassured that the University would seek to manage disputes as collegially as possible until the point at which any action impacted on the student experience.

*Secretary's note – since the meeting UCU have confirmed that action will be taken on 10 February 2011. Contingency planning arrangements are in place.*

**G11.2.4      FINANCE**

**G11.2.4.1      BUSINESS, INNOVATION AND SKILLS (BIS) GRANT LETTER TO HEFCE AND IMPLICATIONS FOR UWE**

*Paper G11/2/3 was received.*

**G11.2.4.1.1** The Assistant Vice Chancellor (Finance and Commercial Developments) presented the current financial position to the Board noting that HEFCE that would provide a sector wide interpretation of the BIS grant letter later in the week. The University expected to receive the institution specific letter by 19 March. During the presentation the AVC noted:

- 09/10 performance had been strong with the 3% surplus being achieved; reserves improved by £15.2M and capital spend was completed within budget. The University had experienced its first ever in-year cut in the HEFCE grant;
- the 10/11 position was more difficult with a fall in student numbers expected; the associated fall in tuition fee income and the loss of the NHS CPD contract. All faculties and services had confirmed an across the board agreement to making 2.5% in year savings;
- the BIS letter received prior to Christmas had confirmed cuts in T funding, capital funding, QR funding, continuing caps on student numbers and an indication of the levels of tuition fees and

- associated conditions from 2012;
- 11/12 would be a particularly difficult year on the basis of the scope and depth of the cuts including cuts in other funding streams (e.g. NHS, TDA etc.)
- the implications of a more competitive marketisation of HE was highlighted;
- there were implications for the University's cash flow resulting from the timing of the receipt of public funding and the higher tuition fees in 2012;
- the timings for institutional decision making were extremely tight;
- the wider implications on staff of increases in pension liabilities, national insurance and the reduction/lack of anticipated pay awards.

*Secretary's note – the HEFCE response to the BIS letter can be found at <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/hefce/2011/funding.htm>*

**G11.2.4.1.2** A number of scenarios had been modelled showing the position over the next three to four years. A £17M deficit was expected at the end of 2011/12 with the figures becoming less certain in 2012/13. Whilst the University's attention had been focussed for some time on driving down costs through a range of management led initiatives, there was particular pressure on 2011/12 costs to position the University to cope with the unknown issues from 2012/13. The Board noted:

- the process by which the University was setting the 2011/2012 budget;
- the management initiatives and other projects with which the University was currently engaged.

**G11.2.4.1.3** The Board was updated on the discussions to date in respect of the University's policy on tuition fees and on the modelling that had been undertaken based on a range of unconfirmed assumptions. Discussions about the future of the University's widening participation strategy were also taking place to inform the letter to OFFA which would need to be finalised within the month.

**G11.2.4.1.4** Discussion:

- the Board reasserted its concerns about the potentially negative impact of cost saving measures on the student experience at a time when it needed to be protected and enhanced as the sector moved into 2012;
- governors were concerned that the public's understanding of the new system was inconsistent and ill-informed;
- at this stage it was not anticipated that UWE would look to differentiate fees at individual programme level although it was the case that several institutions were considering this;
- the government had a political choice to make about whether all or a small number of institutions could charge the £9K fee and until that decision was made there was very little the University could do to accurately position itself;
- the next three to four years would be extremely difficult; the University would need to be confident that the cuts being made were of a sufficient magnitude to protect its survival;

- student number reduction had largely been as a result of reductions in planned increases (e.g. modernisation fund). Retention was a key area of important focus with evident variability across the University; this was being actively addressed by faculties;
- the effect of competition on certain discipline areas should not be underestimated within the context of a decline in real numbers and higher tariffs – quality of the provision would be absolutely fundamental in a new customer led environment.

**G11.2.4.1.5    Agreed:**

- (i) The Board would approve the University's fees policy at its meeting in March to enable external deadlines to be met.

**Action: Clerk**

**G11.2.5        CHANGE MANAGEMENT**  
*Paper G11/2/4 was received.*

**G11.2.5.1**    The Assistant Vice Chancellor (Business Change and Innovation) attended the meeting to update the Board on the Change Management Programme introduced twelve months ago. During the last year the project had focussed on academic restructuring, academic workload allocation and administrative business process reviews and restructuring. Clear design principles for the project had been established at its beginning including the delivery of 25% savings, a focus on process efficiency, organisational connectedness and improving the student experience.

**G11.2.5.2**    The workload model had already demonstrated improvements in the student experience since its introduction in April 2010 in terms of increases in student/staff contact and was attracting the attention of KPMG as a change management tool with wider applicability across other sectors. Business process reviews had been undertaken in six areas of the University's operations leading to professional service restructuring. Executive Deans had been involved throughout the process reviews and had recently signed up to the creation of an integrated administration bringing together professional service staff and administrative staff in faculties. New integrated service structures had been developed against which all faculty administrative staff had been aligned and which would result in real cost savings. Road-shows would be taking place in the next few weeks and professional service and faculty based follow-up discussions would be held to reassure staff and explain the proposition in greater detail.

**G11.2.5.3        Discussion:**

- the changing nature of the University's relationship with its staff needed to be better understood as did the impact of the ways in which the trade unions were now engaging with the University's senior managers; this was generally regarded to be increasingly defensive as the national context became more difficult;
- the staff:governor forum needed to ensure that the breadth of the University's staff was being exposed to the governors;
- institutions where the financial position was significantly worse

than the University had managed to deliver deep and difficult changes quickly. It was imperative that any complacency towards the change and associated cuts was addressed and the urgent drive for efficiency was maintained.

**G11.2.5.4      Agreed:**

- i. to congratulate the Change Management team on its achievements to date and in particular for modelling the collaborative working behaviours that the University would need in moving forward;
- ii. to review the membership of the staff:governor forum to ensure that the breadth of staff was represented;
- iii. to explore further the benefits and opportunities for the University in KPMG's interest in the workload model.

**Actions: AVC (BCI) (i) and (iii); Director HR/Clerk (ii)**

**G11.2.6      RESEARCH AND BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT AT UWE**

*Paper G11/2/6 was received; presentation slides were tabled.*

**G11.2.6.1** Deputy Vice Chancellor Gough introduced the Board to the University's current position on its research activities, reminding governors that the reasons for doing research at UWE were:

- reputation;
- attracting and retaining high quality staff and students;
- nourishing and refreshing the curriculum;
- connecting to business, innovation and technology transfer;
- supporting professional practice, professional development, community and public engagement

noting the current activities in terms of winning research grants and collaborative research projects. A significant amount of work had been undertaken to understand the costs of doing research at UWE and the reviews that had taken place of UWE Research Centres, of the costs associated with PGR and MPhil students, and of Professors and Readers had informed the development of an institutional strategy for research development around evidenced key areas of strength. The summary costs saved were significant and, culturally, the change management in this area should not be underestimated particularly in terms of shifting the perception of research as an entitlement to being something that the University invested in to improve overall performance. The workload model had had a direct impact on the management of research staff.

**G11.2.6.2** The Board thanked DVC Gough for the paper.

**G11.2.7      DRAFT ACADEMIC STRATEGY**

*Paper G11/2/7 was received.*

**G11.2.7.1** Deputy Vice Chancellor Gough introduced the draft academic strategy which was an attempt to draw together the various individual strategies underpinning the academic activities of the University. The draft also drew on papers written about the nature of the UWE Learner, the Graduate Development Programme, internationalisation, community engagement and the other value added features of the UWE experience.

The aim was to be able to focus on connectedness and comprehensiveness and to provide an explicit vision of the UWE experience for all of its learners.

**G11.2.7.2**      Discussion:

- whilst the performance measures in the paper were useful it wasn't entirely clear how the University could or would measure some of the more intangible aims (e.g. internationalisation of the curriculum). Whilst curriculum approval, monitoring and review processes would ensure that the right questions were asked, greater consideration needed to be given to tools that would measure their impact on the student experience (e.g. increase in number of students studying abroad as part of their programme);
- there was further work to do to clearly articulate the ways in which UWE 'made a difference' and there was an important role for faculties to build stronger inter-connectedness between staff and the local and regional network base;
- students continued to express concerns about the usefulness of the Graduate Development Programme to their employability and this would need to be explored further to ensure students understood the evidenced correlation between the two, particularly within the context of UWE bucking the employability trend in 2009/2010;
- getting the academic strategy right would have a fundamental role in the future shape of the University and would inform future decisions about investment and disinvestment priorities;
- the relationship between the academic strategy and the development of the institutional fee policy was critical.

**G11.2.7.3**      Agreed:

- i. to commend the University for the demonstrable evidence of team working that had been demonstrated by the discussions at the meeting;
- ii. to bring further information about contact hours to a later meeting of the Board.

**Action: DVC Gough**

**G11.2.8      HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
(HROD) STRATEGY 2011-14**  
*Paper G11/2/8 was received.*

**G11.2.8.1**      The Chair of the HR Committee reported on discussions that had been taking place with faculties, professional services and trade unions to develop the HROD Strategy to 2014. The Director of HR reminded governors that the 2008 staff survey had identified a number of core areas for improvement including management; communications; enabling staff to feel they were making a difference; personal development. The next staff survey would take place later in the year.

**G11.2.8.2**      Discussion:

- the role of the trade unions in the University's and governors' relationship with staff needed to be better understood. There needed to be a clear articulation of the University's philosophy in respect of employer relations;
- the HROD Strategy needed to be alert to the sector wide changes and the decreasing reliance on public funding; what would be the implications for shared services, for developing a commercial culture, for outsourcing and for changes to terms and conditions?
- the internal and external strategic imperatives and the risks associated with those need to be articulated more clearly to enable the expectations of the HROD Strategy to be better understood. Working out the 2014 vision and working back from there would support a stronger connection between strategy and implementation;
- the whole UWE Strategic Plan would need to be revised shortly.

**G11.2.8.2**      Agreed:

- i. to thank the Director of HR;
- ii. to bring the final version of the HROD Strategy to the May meeting of the Board for approval.

**Action: Director HR**

**G11.2.9**      **DEVELOPMENT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS – FIRST YEAR REPORT**

*Paper G11/2/9 was received.*

**G11.2.9.1**      The Director of Development and Alumni Relations attended to report on what had been a successful year for the service; £1.7M had so far been raised against a target of £2M by July 2011. Governors were reminded of the importance of their role in enabling the University to understand Bristol better and in identifying projects that people would be willing to invest in and as part of building long term relationships. The HEFCE match scheme had been successful in attracting donations and would continue to exist until July 2011. There had so far been less success with alumni with a small number making regular donations. To date the strategy in respect of alumni relations had been on the services the University provided to them but that would now change to inviting them to think about what they might want to give back. The Academic Hub development would provide a key focus for this.

**G11.2.9.2**      Agreed:

- i. to congratulate the Director of Development and Alumni Relations on her successes to date;
- ii. to circulate the Development Strategy to governors;
- iii. that energy and focus should be on exploiting the remaining period of the HEFCE match fund;
- iv. all governors should review forthcoming university events and try to attend with at least two other people, especially people new to UWE.

**Action: Director (Development and Alumni Relations)**

## **G11.2.10      REPORTS TO THE BOARD**

### **G11.2.10.1      Financial Monitoring** *Paper G11/2/10 was received.*

**G11.2.10.1.1** The Chair of the Finance Committee stressed the importance of the financial report and noted that there would be a session at the March away day on reading financial statements and reports to support governors in their role.

**G11.2.10.1.2** The Board **agreed** to temporarily increase to July 2011 the counterparty limits for Lloyds and National Westminster by an additional £5M as part of ensuring the risks associated with investment were managed appropriately.

**Action: AVC (Finance and Commercial Developments)**

### **G11.2.10.2      Reportable Accidents** *Paper G11/2/12 was received.*

**G11.2.10.2.1** The Chair reported that there had been significant activity in respect of improving the University's management and oversight of health and safety. The first round of standards reviews had been completed and the recruitment of a new health and safety officer with a broader and deeper role was progressing.

### **G11.2.10.2.2      Agreed:**

- i. target statistics would be brought to the next meeting.

**Action : DVC Rushforth**

## **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Monday 21 March 2010 and Tuesday 22 March 2010 (Away Day).