



BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Minutes of the Board of Governors meeting held on Tuesday 24 May 2011.

Present: G Camm (chair); I Gray; Dr M Hagen; Dr J Harrington; J Laycock; S Mills; S Moore; C Ofler; Professor P Olomoloyai; Professor G Upton; Rt. Revd. B Rogerson; L Seager; G van der Lely; Professor S West.

Apologies: C Booy; T Smallwood.

In Attendance: Professor P Gough; T Harrison; W Marshall; A. Osborn (clerk); J Rushforth.

G11.5.1 CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair informed the Board that the Nominations and Governance Committee had received no suitable applications for Board membership as a result of an advertisement placed on the Public Appointments Website.

G11.5.1.1 The Committee had recommended the appointment of Simon Moore, Regional Chairman for Barclays Bank to the Board with due regard to the need to manage any conflicts that might arise as a result of the University conducting business with the Bank. The Nominations and Governance Committee also recommended that Andrew Martyn-Johns, a former auditor to the HEI sector including UWE, be co-opted to the Audit Committee. The Board **agreed** to confirm both appointments.

G11.5.1.2 The Chair further informed the Board that:

- the Carbon Management Plan had been approved by Chair's Action; and
- that the Clerk to Governors would be leading a review of the Board's effectiveness facilitated by an online questionnaire, a link to which would be circulated later in the week;
- feedback would be sought on Board members' priorities for the forthcoming meeting.

G11.5.2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 21 MARCH 2011

Papers G11/5/2 and G11/5/1(R) were received.

The Board confirmed the minutes of the last meeting.

G11.5.3 VICE CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

Paper G11/5/1 was received

The Board received an update from the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Resources, Planning and Infrastructure) on recent work with the University's marketing agency which had demonstrated that UWE was seen as large, friendly and welcoming. In addition, the partnership message (U+WE) was being well received by research participants. However, potential applicants were sceptical about the usefulness of making concrete promises within promotional material.

The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) noted that the results of the market research had already prompted a review of the language used in order to convey opportunity rather than consumer guarantees.

G11.5.3.1 It was **agreed** that the Board would be updated at a future meeting on further marketing developments as a result of the market research.

ACTION: Deputy Vice Chancellor (Resources, Planning and Infrastructure)

G11.5.3.2 The Vice Chancellor provided an update on engagement with the student body in light of the new graduate contribution level and the need to deliver the promised investment in student experience improvements to manage the expectations of future students. The emphasis of activity would necessarily be on academic quality and ensuring students experienced high quality interactions with academic and professional staff alike.

G11.5.3.3 The Chair congratulated the Executive and Marketing teams on the handling of the announcement of the graduate contribution and the follow up interactions with the Media.

G11.5.4 NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY AND LOOKING AHEAD TO 2012.

The Board welcomed a presentation from the Director of Widening Participation and Schools and Colleges Partnership Service on the Access Agreement submitted to OFFA and its implications.

During discussion following the presentation members noted:

- in response to a question from the Student Governor that the number of bursaries awarded would drop by approximately fifty percent in line with OFFA guidance to more closely targeted bursary schemes;
- that bursaries had been shown to have little impact on widening participation but were known to aid retention, as a result retention would require close monitoring;
- the University would be required to publish detailed arrangements of financial support for students on the 11 July 2011;
- the risk to widening participation students would be mitigated by working closely with partner schools and colleges to ensure the financial package and the long term benefits of higher education were understood by potential applicants;
- the Vice Chancellor had written to the Prime Minister, the Minister for Universities and Science and Simon Hughes MP (the Advocate for Access to Education) to highlight what UWE does and to offer support in policy development;
- current students would be a key communication route and regarded by applicants as significantly more credible than marketing material produced by the University;
- parents would also be alive to the University's links with employers but the language used to communicate employability may need to be adapted.

G11.5.4.1 The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Resources, Planning and Infrastructure) **agreed** to provide the Board with further details of how the additional funding generated from the graduate contribution would be utilised at its next meeting.

ACTION: DVC Rushforth

G11.5.4.2 The Board welcomed a Presentation from the Dean of Students on student surveys and results.

During discussion the Board noted that:

- the UWE Student Experience Survey (SES) completed by first and second year undergraduates provided an early warning mechanism for the National Student Survey (NSS) in following years;
- the 2010 SES provided some challenging results and generated some concerns for the current round of the NSS, the results of which would be available to applicants considering their 2012/13 university choices;
- in response to the results a rigorous action plan and follow up mechanisms were introduced. Preliminary results from the 2011 SES indicated a large jump in overall satisfaction indicating that actions taken appeared to have had a positive effect;
- despite an increase in student satisfaction some areas of concern, including visibility of the graduate development programme, remained;
- in order to enter into a positive dialogue with students the University needed to be eloquent with its message, take action and honestly explain where action would not be possible.

G11.5.4.3 The Board welcomed a further presentation from the Assistant Vice Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience) on the development of the University's academic character.

During the presentation the Board noted:

- a greater emphasis on the currency of the academic portfolio and ensuring new developments satisfied a market demand;
- the goal of delivering teaching of the highest quality facilitated by recruiting and retaining high quality staff, this would be aided by the development of a single framework for staff development;
- the online assessment project would help mitigate poor student satisfaction scores by enabling richer feedback channels;
- contact time had become a key issue for applicants and UWE's commitment towards offering twelve hours a week had been well received; significant work was ongoing to deliver the commitment;
- the creation of the UWE leaders scheme to train students to support other students and provide recognition for the activity would build on the already successful Peer Assisted Learning project.

G11.5.4.4 The Chair thanked the presenters and invited governors who wished to follow up any of the matters raised to make appointments with the presenters via the Deputy Clerk.

G11.5.4.5 The Chair further thanked the Dean of Students for his previous contributions to the Board and, on behalf of the Board, wished him well for his retirement.

G11.5.5 INTERNATIONALISATION

The Director of Admissions and International Development provided the Board with an update on the implementation of the Internationalisation Strategy approved by the Board during 2009/10.

G11.5.5.1 During discussion the Board noted:

- that both international undergraduate and postgraduate applications and conversions had increased;
- the placement of adverts via Google had produced an additional 160,000 hits on UWE's website;
- the targeting of marketing activity where effects were clearly demonstrable;
- the development of branded materials and translated promotional literature;
- the new international student "one stop shop" had been well received;
- the differentiation and prioritisation of partnerships to deliver long-term sustainable relationships;
- the ongoing alignment of the academic portfolio to support internationalisation had resulted in an increase of January starts and different types of delivery to increase overseas opportunities for engagement with UWE;
- the increase in regional representatives from fourteen to seventy and the resulting drive to ensure a quality flow of applicants;
- given the volume of potential partnerships the biggest challenge would be to be more selective and focused on strategic partnerships;
- UWE was becoming more sophisticated in its understanding of internationalisation and continued to challenge euro-centric curricula where appropriate, however the global outlook pursued by the University had to be carefully embedded into the academic portfolio;
- as UWE sought to increase income from international activity to a significant proportion it would be crucial to deliver high quality partnerships and student experience;
- alumni groups played a growing role in the proportion of UWE overseas and international students had received UWE internships to develop these in their home counties;
- the development of overseas offices and programmes mitigated the risk to the University of further adverse immigration policy decisions from Government.

G11.5.5.2 The Board thanked the Director of Admissions and International Development for the update and congratulated them on successes to date.

It was **agreed** that a further update on the return on investment to date as well as the quality of students coming to UWE as a result of the strategy would be provided to the Board.

ACTION: DVC Rushforth/Director of AID

G11.5.6 Minutes G11.5.6 up to and including G11.5.6.15 are confidential to the Board.

ITEMS REQUIRING THE BOARD'S APPROVAL

G11.5.7 Human Resources and Organisational Development Strategy 2011-14 *Paper G11/5/3 was received.*

The Board welcomed the direction of travel outlined by the Strategy and **delegated approval** of further iterations of the document to the Human Resources Committee.

G11.5.7 Energy Contracts *Paper G11/5/4 was received*

The Board **endorsed** the Vice-Chancellor's recommendation to enter into flexible energy contract via the Higher Education Sector Consortium.

G11.5.8 Community and Public Engagement Strategy *Paper G11/5/5 was received.*

The Board noted that the length of the Strategy in part stemmed from the need to articulate to stakeholders the diversity of activities that should be considered core to the University's business.

G11.5.8.1 The Board **approved** the strategy and noted that despite its length it had been articulated clearly.

G11.5.9 Disability Equality Scheme *Paper G11/5/6 was received.*

The Board **approved** the scheme and noted that it would be important for the Executive to take an active lead in the reporting process to eliminate the suspected under reporting by staff.

G11.5.10 UWE Federation Strategy *Paper G11/5/7 was received.*

The Chair noted that both the original rationale and risks associated with the UWE Federation partnerships remained valid. The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Resources, Planning and Infrastructure) outlined the basis for the financial relationship in light of the increased graduate contribution and that UWE had not sought to enforce the £9,000 fee on partners but instead negotiate freedom for partners to augment the UWE Access Agreement. Initial discussions with partners had endorsed the approach as it enabled colleges to respond to local market conditions and provided additional funds for investment.

G11.5.10.1 Similar arrangements would be rolled out to the University's relationship with Hartpury College but the Board noted that the sums available for investment would depend on the impact of the graduate contribution on demand for places.

G11.5.10.2 Members noted that there was significant uncertainty over the content of the forthcoming White Paper but indications were that remaining HEFCE funding would be reduced to accommodate the increased student loan commitment

G11.5.10.3 The Board **approved** the Strategy.

G11.5.11 REPORTS TO THE BOARD

Papers G11/5/8 (Financial Monitoring), G11/5/9 (Corporate Seal), G11/5/10 (Reportable Accidents), G11/5/11 (Alumni and Fundraising) were presented to, and noted by, the Board.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

G11.5.12 Revised Audit Committee Terms of Reference

Paper G11/5/12 was received.

The Board **agreed** the revised Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee subject to final discussions with and approval from the Chair of Audit Committee.

G11.5.13 2012 Away Day

The Chair informed the Board that the March 2012 meeting would be combined with the scheduled away day and that the event would be held at Hartpury College.

G11.5.14 Clerk to the Governors

The Board noted that it was the Clerk's last meeting of the Board before leaving the University. On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked the Clerk for her significant contribution to the work of the Board and wished her well for her future role at Southampton University.

G11.5.15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 12th July with light supper after.