



## **BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors held at 3.00pm on Tuesday, 31 March 2009 in the Dartington Suite, the Farm House, Frenchay campus

Present: Gillian Camm (Chairman), Ray Burton, Bob Barnett, Rosamund Blomfield-Smith, Chris Booy, Nigel Costley, Dr Jane Harrington, Wil Harris, John Laycock, Sonia Mills, Dom Passfield, Rt Rev Barry Rogerson, Lise Seager, Professor Steve West

Apologies: Sherrie Eugene, Iain Gray, Matt Hughes, Professor Bhupinder Sandhu, Graham van der Lely

In Attendance: Andrea Cheshire (for minutes G09.3.1-8), Bill Marshall, Katie Owen-Jones, John Rushforth

The Board stood in silence as a mark of respect to Dr Louis Sherwood, Governor and Honorary Graduate of the University, who had died on 26 March 2009.

### **MINUTES**

G09.3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2009 were approved as an accurate record.

### **BPE LTD**

G09.3.2 Further to minute G09.2.16, it was reported that the purchase had been completed successfully.

### **LAND PURCHASE**

G09.3.3 Further to minute G09.2.20, a further meeting was planned but it looked increasingly unlikely that the purchase would proceed.

### **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

G09.3.4 Received, Paper G09/3/2, a report on the key corporate indicators and performance against them. The report was introduced by the Director of Planning and Business Intelligence who commented that she was fairly confident about the quality of the data now that the use of indicators was in its second year. She outlined the key points: the growth in student numbers; those indicators where performance had improved significantly and those that showed further work was necessary; the focus on improving tariff on entry and therefore the quality of the student intake, which might have wider implications such as a reduction in numbers; and, indicators where the targets were challenging.

G09.3.5 There was discussion about the increase in the entry tariff and related matters. A number of factors had to be balanced, for instance, it could help improve the

drop-out rate, but was likely also to involve a reduction in numbers and therefore fee income. The University had chosen, over the years, to expand its student base which had affected the tariff level and that now needed to be addressed, particularly as a relatively low entry level sent out messages to applicants and did not reflect the quality of the teaching at UWE. Neither was UWE taking advantage of the general upward trend in 'A' level grades. Governors were also concerned about the potential impact on under-represented groups and the University's position regarding widening participation and as a regional provider. Although there was a potential tension, they were reassured that the current target had been identified partly so that, on the basis of information available, it should not unduly affect those from disadvantaged groups. It was only when it reached a higher level that it appeared to have any real effect on widening participation, but this would be monitored carefully. The shift would vary across the institution and would be looked at course by course with the tariff being geared to particular circumstances. It would be essential that student numbers did not fall to the extent that HEFCE funding was affected, though there would inevitably be a reduction in income from fees.

#### G09.3.6

Governors and officers raised a number of other points:

- what those institutions that were performing well in the graduate employment area were doing to help and prepare students, and that UWE might have things to learn from them;
- it was suggested that the KPIs should include 'value added' as a measure of the quality of teaching;
- student drop-out rates had reduced, but were still considered too high and there was scope for improvement. The Graduate Development Programme had helped with this improvement, but other changes including the higher entry tariff would also help;
- widening participation: the University had achieved the external benchmark, which was welcomed. This was largely due to the extensive programme of outreach work now in place;
- the inter-relationship between a number of the areas of activity covered in the performance indicators, so that developments in one area would affect others and therefore the potential implications had to be considered carefully;
- Governors' view that excellence in academic provision was key to the University's strategy;
- the review of the academic portfolio to ensure that what was offered was what applicants, employers and others wanted. This would lead to decisions about what needed to be improved and developed, but also areas that the University might withdraw from to allow investment elsewhere;
- space utilisation remained a real weakness, partly because buildings and facilities were no longer fit for purpose and were not sufficiently flexible, but also space was not used as effectively and efficiently as it might. Key to this was the masterplan, and the development of more general and flexible space, while recognising the need for appropriate specialist facilities in many areas. It was also necessary to refurbish and manage current space better, which would require a change in thinking about 'ownership' of space and timetabling;
- it was suggested that the agreed environmental indicators should be integrated into the corporate scorecard;
- adjustments to the KPIs: they had been based originally on the 2006 strategic plan, and some subtle changes had been made to reflect the change in emphasis;

- that KPIs relating to income were being addressed in the move to budget planning on a three-year basis, and integrating this more closely with academic planning.

G09.3.7 Additional information was requested to support the forthcoming awayday discussion, including: data on the key indicators, including entry tariff and completion, at faculty level to give Governors a better overview; and, national/benchmark information where possible. It was suggested that targets should be set for five years ahead. It was noted that as targets would be part of the outcomes from the planning round, and would also depend on the discussion on strategy, it was too early to do this.

G09.3.8 The report and progress made in this area were welcomed by the Board. It was important, however, to continue to make progress particularly at a time of increased pressures when it would be important to be more effective and efficient. The Board looked forward to seeing how the indicators and targets were developed in line with the University's aspirations, and how Governors could use them to help monitor achievement.

Minutes G09.3.9 – 11 are confidential to the Board.

### **PENSIONS**

G09.3.12 Received, Paper G09/3/3, an update on the current position with the University's main pension schemes, and options for the future. The Assistant Vice-Chancellor Finance and Commercial Developments presented the paper, drawing particular attention to: all schemes had recently been modernised; that not enough was made of the benefit of such schemes to staff; and, the impact on the balance sheet of accounting standard FRS17, that the deficit was unpredictable especially in the current economic climate, and the worsening effect on the net asset position.

G09.3.13 The discussion covered a number of points, including: HEFCE's attitude to the pensions situation; what the University was doing and could do to influence local and central government actions; that CUC was concerned with how this issue was being dealt with nationally; UCEA was raising in the national pay negotiations the real value of pensions; steps that might be taken in future to reduce the risks to the University. Although Governors were very concerned about the situation, they were aware that staff recruitment was increasingly competitive and nothing should be done to affect the University's ability to recruit good staff. Although little could be done as an individual institution, the Board encouraged the Vice-Chancellor to work with other post-92 universities to see that the issue of local government schemes was taken up nationally by the HE Employers' Forum. It also felt that the University might be more open with staff about the problems so that there was wider understanding at an early stage.

### **FRENCHAY CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT**

G09.3.14 A report on the outline of the project, the process and timetable, and progress to date with the Frenchay campus development project, Paper G09/3/4, was received. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor would report further at the awayday.

### **APPOINTMENTS TO THE BOARD**

G09.3.15 Received, Paper G09/3/5, recommendations from the Nominations and Governance Committee for the appointment of members of the Board and co-

opted members of committees. The Board noted the current vacancies on the Board and **RESOLVED**:

- i) to re-appoint Barry Rogerson and Lise Seager as independent governors for the second year of their final term, with effect from 1 August 2009;
- ii) to appoint Professor Graham Upton as a co-opted member of the Board with effect from 1 April 2009;
- iii) to confirm the appointment of Professor Paul Gough, Academic Board's nominee, as a member of the Board;
- iv) to appoint Patrick McNaught as a co-opted member of the Finance and IT Committee for a period of three years.

G09.3.16 The Chairman reported that a paper on the size of the Board would be brought to the awayday for discussion.

G09.3.17 In response to a comment that an equality impact assessment had not been carried out for the proposals for new appointments, the Clerk would ensure that this was done for such papers in future.

#### **MATTERS REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

G09.3.18 Paper G09/3/6, recommendations from the Finance and IT Committee, was received.

G09.3.19 **Setting of Tuition Fees:** The Board **APPROVED** a delegation to the Vice-Chancellor, on the advice of the Fees Group, for setting the non-standard fees for postgraduate taught courses within fee bands approved annually by the Finance and IT Committee. An annual report to the Committee on the individual fees set would be required.

G09.3.20 **Internal Financial Memorandum and Financial Regulations:** The Board **APPROVED** the changes to the Internal Financial Memorandum (FIN001) and Financial Regulations (FIN002) arising mainly from the restructuring of the senior management team, as set out in Paper G09/3/6.

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

G09.3.21 Noted, Paper G09/3/7, a report from the Vice-Chancellor summarising matters recently considered by the University's senior management team.

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

#### **CURRENT DELEGATIONS**

G09.3.22 The Board noted the current specific delegations of authority to the Chairman, the Emergency Committee and others (Paper G09/3/8).

#### **IMPLEMENTATION OF ACADEMIC AND RELATED STRATEGIES**

G09.3.23 The annual report for 2007-08 from the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee to Academic Board, Paper G09/3/9, was received which gave the Board an insight into the implementation of academic and related strategies.

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

G09.3.24 The Board received and noted draft minutes or reports of the following meetings (Paper G09/3/10):

Human Resources Committee - 2 February 2009  
Estates Committee - 9 February 2009  
Finance and IT Committee - 3 March 2009  
Diversity Committee - 4 March 2009  
Nominations and Governance Committee - 9 March 2009.

#### **ACADEMIC BOARD**

G09.3.25 Noted, Paper G09/3/11, the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting on 4 March 2009.

#### **CORPORATE SEAL**

G09.3.26 Noted, the documents sealed since the last meeting (Paper G09/3/12).

#### **DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

G09.3.27 Awayday – 29 April 2009, 12 May 2009.

#### **COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER**

G09.3.28 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor reported on a compulsory purchase order due to road widening. As the University's operational land was not affected, the Board **ENDORSED** officers' view that there was no point in objecting to the order.

#### **CHANCELLOR SEARCH GROUP**

G09.3.29 Further to minute G09.2.23, the Chairman reported on progress with the search for a Chancellor.

The Chairman of Governors left the meeting at this point.

Minute G9.3.30 is confidential to the Board.

Meeting closed 6.15 pm.