



## **BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

Minutes of the Board of Governors meeting held on Tuesday 9 July 2013.

**Present:** G Camm (Chair); S Forbes; I Gray; Dr M Hagen; Dr J Harrington; J Laycock; S Mills; S Moore; Professor P Olomolaiye; C Roper; T Smallwood; G van der Lely; Professor G Upton; Professor S West.

**Apologies:** C Booy.

**In Attendance:** H Boyes (for Item G13.07.4); R Cowie (for Item G13.07.5); Professor P Gough; W Liew; W Marshall; J Midgley (for Item G13.07.5) A Osborn (Deputy Clerk); J Rushforth (Clerk).

### **G13.07.1 Declarations of Interest**

None received.

### **G13.07.2 Minutes of the Previous meeting**

*Paper G13/07/01 was received.*

Members approved the minutes of the meeting held 21 May 2013.

### **G13.07.3 Membership**

G13.07.3.1 The Chair welcomed the UWE Students' Union President Charlie Roper and updated the members on the outcomes of the recent round of succession planning that had been conducted by Nominations and Governance Committee.

G13.07.3.2 Members unanimously agreed to appoint:

- i. J McNulty for a term of three years from 1 August 2013;
- ii. A Gilkison for a term of three years from 1 August 2013;
- iii. Professor J Craven as the co-opted Governor with educational experience for a term of three years from 1 January 2014.

## **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

### **G13.07.4 UWE Students Union 2013/14 and 2014/15 budget projections**

*Papers G13/07/2 was received.*

G13.07.4.1 Members received a presentation from the Student Governor illustrating the key points of the Students' Union Block Grant and the value the Students' Union provided to the University as well as highlighting the Officers concerns over the effect of the planned reduction in the block grant.

G13.07.4.2 During extensive discussion members:

- i. tested the assumptions within the General Manager of the Students' Union and requested further information on the cash flow monitoring within the Students' Union
- ii. noted that the Students' Union would benefit significantly from the capital programme providing both a new dedicated building and the improvement to spaces elsewhere;
- iii. noted that the final details of the block grant would be subject to a

concluding discussion between the Students' Union and the University which would be led by the Vice-Chancellor.

**ACTION: Finance Estates and IT Committee to be provided with requested information and updated on final block grant settlement.**

### **G13.07.5 International Strategy, and Academic Partnerships**

*Paper G13/07/3 was received.*

- G13.07.5.1 Governors received a presentation from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Operations) highlighting that the:
- i. international market remained large and diverse. The challenge was to navigate it in order to achieve a balance of nationalities within the University and target countries to focus recruitment and transnational educational (TNE) partnership activities on.
  - ii. market continued to grow but the rate of growth had slowed and countries including China, Singapore and Malaysia were beginning to become educational destinations in their own right;
  - iii. proportion of international students at UWE remained lower than the national average and that median would continue to rise as UK institutions sought to counter the restrictions on funding applied to home students. Growth of international students in the UK would be heavily influenced by Government policy on student visas representing a risk to institutions dependant on international student fees.
  - iv. TNE offered a way to mitigate the effects of government policy by collaborating to teach students in their home counties. However this also exposed the institution to a reputational risk which UWE's policies, regulations and processes had been developed to mitigate.
- G13.07.5.2 The Director of Student and Partnership Services provided a further update on progress against the International Strategy, approved by the Board of Governors in 2010. The University had exceeded, and thus extended the target for direct international recruitment but had missed the target for TNE education as a result of under estimating the length of time required for Partnerships to become fully operational. TNE also complemented recruitment of international students at UWE as one year of the programmes were often located in the UK.
- G13.07.5.3 Three thousand international students were forecast to study at UWE by 2015 which would be recruited through a mix of agents, UWE BIC and targets overseas marketing.
- G13.07.5.4 During extensive discussion members:
- i. considered feedback from Staff/Governor Forum suggesting that staff were supportive of international activity but felt that there could be insufficient information and that the initiation and subsequent implementation of TNE partnerships did not always run smoothly. The Deputy Academic Registrar highlighted that each partnership would be accompanied by a learning curve and that a significant amount of work continued to be undertaken to develop UWE's approach to partnerships;
  - ii. received a briefing on the approval processes for partnerships which provided for checks and balance between commercial and academic concerns;
  - iii. noted that where considered strategically important the University would supply staff to potential partner organisations in order to transfer knowledge of UK Higher education as well as of UWE's quality processes. This reflected the importance of relationship building. To support relationships further Partnership Directors were being introduced to coordinate links across faculties;
  - iv. recognised that the QAA criteria on TNE would likely indicate that UWE as

high risk due to its scope and thus substantial challenge could be expected during the institutional review. Assurance mapping conducted to date against the QAA quality code continued to indicate that UWEs processes were appropriate;

- v. welcomed the positive contribution of the activities to the institution's finances noting that delivery costs were prudently assumed to be fifty per cent of income although it would be difficult to provide a precise figure as much of the work undertaken was considered as marginal or opportunity costs;
- vi. noted that the Vice-Chancellor considered internationalisation to be core to the institution's activity and welcomed an offer to produce a matrix illustrating the scope of international activity across faculties and programmes.

**ACTION: Deputy Vice-Chancellors (Academic/Operations)**

- vii. recognised that large scale partnerships were easier to maintain and that work continued to consolidate the smaller scale relationships; although the time lag between establishing a partnership and the delivery of significant number of students could be lengthy.

G13.07.5.5 Members further explored the student experience aspect of internationalisation noting that:

- i. the Students' Union played an important role in supporting international students and in particular had a number of international and country specific societies which continued to help to deliver an international feel to the campus;
- ii. support was provided throughout the international student journey with dedicated teams to welcome students, dedicated study support and, at the other end, the UWE led initiative, *Gradlink* supporting graduates to find work in the global market place;
- iii. the university consistently scored highly in the international student barometer survey and work continued to ensure the teams supporting international activity and students were closely aligned;
- iv. contingency plans had been developed in case a partnership failed and that the University's primary concern would always be to protect the interests of students.

G13.07.5.6 Governors welcomed the successes of the international strategy and request that Strategic Planning and Performance Committee should give further consideration to the student experience aspects of internationalisation, both for home and overseas students.

**ACTION: Clerk to schedule discussion.**

## **G13.07.6 Vice-Chancellor's Update**

*Paper G13/07/04 was received.*

G13.07.6.1 During discussion with the Vice-Chancellor members noted that:

- i. the recruitment position of the institution remained positive with limited exposure to clearing. As a result there was no expectation that the University would under recruit and potentially lose those student numbers in following years.
- ii. The University's Student Number Control remained the same as the 2012/13 academic year but the trend would be for the number to be eroded over time further emphasising the importance of international activity and the significant improvement in retention of students;
- iii. positive league table positioning supported recruitment and whilst the current recruitment round and increased capital expenditure would help there would be a year's lag before developments on the ground were reflected in the metrics.
- iv. UWE also continued to place well in employability with only five per cent of UWE graduates not in work or education six months after graduating. The proportion of UWE alumni in *graduate* positions had also improved to

- two per cent above the median;
- v. Tracey Willis had been appointed to the role of Director of IT Services and Rachel Cowie had been asked to act up as Director of Corporate and Academic Services and Academic Registrar;
- vi. the Vice-Chancellor's appointment to Chair the Academic Health Science network should lead to more successes for Bristol and UWE like the healing foundation centre for children's burns research.

G13.07.6.2 Governors congratulated the Vice-Chancellor and Senior Team for the positive recruitment and retention position enjoyed by the University.

## ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

### G13.07.7 2012/13 Forecast Outturn, 2013/14 Budget Estimates and Financial Forecasts to 2015/16

G13.07.7.1 The Chair of Finance Estates and IT Committee highlighted that the paper had been discussed extensively at the Committee and members would welcome the continued target of delivering a five per cent surplus over the period covered particularly noting that this would require significant discipline by the Board of Governors and Executive in order for it to be achieved.

G13.07.7.2 The Director of Finance drew members attention to:

- i. the lower than target surplus forecast for 13/14 that had resulted from a delay to the refurbishment programme;
- ii. the achievement of professional services in delivering significant savings. Future efficiency savings would be determined though a benchmarking exercise with similar universities. The outcome would be would be reported to Finance Estates and IT Committee in the spring;

**ACTION: Clerk to schedule discussion.**

- iii. thorough testing of the assumptions underpinning the forecasts which should be considered as prudent and achievable;
- iv. the approach to capital development in which the Board would only be asked to sanction capital projects where funding for the lifetime of the project had been secured.

G13.07.7.3 Members thanked the Chair and members of Finance Estates and IT Committee for their work testing the financial forecast and 2013/14 Estimates and:

- i. **approved** the 2013/14 Estimates, including those for capital expenditure, and the submission of the 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial forecasts to HEFCE;
- ii. considered the University to be in a satisfactory and sustainable financial position.

## **G13.07.8 Student Accommodation**

*Paper G13/07/06 was received.*

- G13.07.8.1 Members received an update on the student accommodation project from the Vice-Chancellor and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Commercial Projects) and during discussion noted that:
- i. although it had been discussed at Finance Estates and IT Committee earlier in the academic year the value of the project required the approval of the full Board of Governors;
  - ii. the underlying driver for student accommodation remained and that the first phase would simply replace accommodation lost as a result of disposals;
  - iii. the business case had been developed to reflect students seeking value accommodation;
  - iv. tenders received for the first phase had all been within the projections of the University's quantity surveyor;
  - v. the Vice-Chancellor and Commercial Services team, with advice from the Masterplan advisory group, would select the successful tender with a view to completion in September 2014;
  - vi. the full business case would be cost engineered to ensure that the project would be delivered on budget.
- G13.07.8.2 Governors **approved** the first phase of the student accommodation scheme and delegated authority to the Vice-Chancellor to let the contract up to a value of sixteen million pounds.

## **G13.07.9 Governance Effectiveness**

*Paper G13/07/07 was received.*

- G13.07.9.1 Members welcomed the revised proposals for amendments to the operation of the Board of Governors noting that:
- i. although at times uncomfortable the Staff/Governor and Student/Governor Forums were critical in ensuring that the Board of Governors remained connected to, and grounded within, the institution. Work also continued to ensure that both forums were appropriately diverse;
  - ii. a formal review of the new working arrangements should be conducted before the end of the 2013/14 academic year and that steps would be taken to address any deficiencies without waiting for the review;
- ACTION: Clerk and Chair to monitor the Effectiveness and take a formal review to the Nominations and Governance Committee in summer 2014;**
- iii. providing the orchestration and cross referencing proved effective the amendments to the limits of authority were reasonable. These would be kept under review by the Director of Finance.

- G13.07.9.2 Members **approved** the new working arrangements and the revised limits of authority as detailed in the paper and requested that all advisory groups provide notes to the relevant Board Committee.

**ACTION: Pro Vice-Chancellor (Commercial Projects) to ensure notes of advisory groups are provided.**

## **G13.07.10 Relationship with Academic Board**

*Paper G13/07/08 was received.*

- G13.07.10.1 The Deputy Clerk informed members that the Articles of Government designated responsibilities of Academic Board and vested the authority to amend its scheme of membership and structure in the Board of Governors.

- G13.07.10.2 The Vice-Chancellor provided the Board with the background to the proposal which was intended to increase space for the staff voice as well as its plurality and during ensuing discussion Governors explored their relationship with, and the effectiveness of, Academic Board and noted that:
- i. the Board of Governors had become increasingly aware of the work of Academic Board as a result of their desire to improve the student experience. These links would continue through Strategic Planning and Performance Committee and the annual report of Academic Board to the Board of Governors;
  - ii. Academic Board and its committees would be crucial in delivering staff buy in to the strategy and testing the projects developed to support its implementation and as such the members should be aware of its activities;  
**ACTION: Clerk to ensure Academic Board minutes are routinely provided to the Board of Governors.**
  - iii. all Academic Board committees were Chaired by the senior management team and that ultimately they were accountable for ensuring the Committees delivered the required outcomes.

G13.07.10.3 Governors **approved** the amended scheme of membership and endorsed the reintroduction of Faculty Boards and Programme Management Committees. They welcomed an offer from the Vice-Chancellor to provide further commentary on the shape and functioning of Academic Board and its committees as well as the Articles of Government.

**ACTION: Clerk [Complete]**

#### ITEMS TO NOTE

**G13.07.11 Subsidiaries and Directors**  
*Paper G13/7/9 was received.*

Members provided advice to the Vice-Chancellor on the registration of a further two companies.

**G13.07.12 Committee Minutes**  
*Paper G13/07/10 was received.*

Members welcomed the Staff/Governor Forum notes, and requested that relevant internal audit reports be more widely circulated to interested committees.

**ACTION: Clerk to ensure internal audit reports are shared appropriately.**

**G13.07.13 Any other business**  
The Chair noted that Professor Paul Olomolaiye and Trevor Smallwood would be leaving the Board at the end of the month and, on behalf of the Board of Governors, thanked them for their considerable contributions over the previous three years.