

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Minutes of the Board of Governors meeting held on Tuesday 20 March 2018.

Present: Sonia Mills (Chair), Jenny Body, Zain Choudhry, Professor John Craven, Sandy Forbes, Rob Fraser, Richard Holmes, David Lamb, Clive Lewis, Mark Mason, Jocelyn McNulty, Graham van der Lely, Professor Steve West, Donna Whitehead, Denis Woulfe.

Apologies: Martin Hagen, Professor Steve Neill.

In Attendance: Jodie Anstee (Clerk), Professor Martin Boddy (from G18.03.2.5), Christine Gledhill, Professor Jane Harrington, William Liew, Bill Marshall, Jo Midgley.

G18.03.1 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

No interests were declared.

G18.03.2 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

Paper G18/03/01 was received.

G18.03.2.1 Members approved the minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2017.

G18.03.2.2 Vice-Chancellor's Report – Office for Students (OfS) Regulatory Framework Consultation (G17.11.4.9 refers)

Members noted that the University submitted its response to the consultation by the deadline of 22 December 2017, following sign-off by the Chair of the Board and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost.

G18.03.2.4 Members noted that 300 responses had been submitted to the consultation. Changes that were made to the Regulatory Framework as a result of the consultation included:

- i. Removal of the baseline level of registration – it was felt that this level of registration gave no protection to students, but could have given the illusion of doing so. A major risk of this removal was that fewer institutions would register and therefore the OfS would have no opportunity at all to engage with them;
- ii. VC remuneration was not included in the main tenets as this did not fall within the remit of the OfS.

G18.03.2.5 Members also noted that registration fees were due to be discussed by the OfS Board the following week and were likely to be linked to institution size.

Professor M. Boddy arrived at the meeting.

G18.03.2.6 Compliance with the Prevent Duty 2016-2017 (G17.11.7.5 refers)

Members noted that the Board's declaration of compliance to the Prevent Duty was submitted to HEFCE.

G18.03.2.7 Annual Statements of Assurance (G17.11.8.6 refers)

Members noted that the Annual Provider Statement of Assurance was also submitted to HEFCE.

G18.03.2.8 Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement (G17.11.10.1 refers)

Members noted that the statement was now published on the University website.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

G18.03.3 Vice-Chancellor's Report

Paper G18/03/02 was received.

G18.03.3.1 Members noted the content of the report and received an update from the Vice-Chancellor on the following:

Mental Wealth Strategy

- G18.03.3.2
- i. The University's Mental Health Strategy, 'Mental Wealth First' would be launched on 11 April 2018;
 - ii. The University would propose curriculum and new activity to promote and support staff and student engagement to deliver this agenda;
 - iii. There was a huge amount of interest from the Prime Minister and other government departments in mental health in universities and the workplace.

G18.03.3.3 Members acknowledged recent reports in the media of increased use of 'study' drugs by students and questioned whether UWE Bristol monitored such use. Members noted that this was the case for all drugs and that Bristol and other large cities had seen an increase in the use of recreational and anti-anxiety drugs; performance-enhancing drugs had appeared around 5 years ago.

G18.03.3.4 Members also noted the importance of the need to be realistic in what the University was able to do and that it would continue to educate and raise awareness of drug and other substance abuse, including alcohol. Members further noted that the University held a clear position in expelling students proven to be dealing drugs at the University.

G18.03.3.5 Members further noted that the University was working to improve the diversity of its counsellors to better reflect the profile of the student community.

Dispatches – Vice-Chancellor's Pay and Expenses

G18.03.3.6 Members were reminded of the statements published by the University in response to the programme, which noted that the programme presented an unfair and inaccurate portrayal of the University and the way it conducted its governance and finances. The University had refused Channel 4's request to withdraw that statement.

G18.03.3.7 Members also noted that the boards of both HEFCE and the OfS had conveyed the view that the University had managed the matter well. University activity had not been disrupted as a consequence of the broadcast.

G18.03.3.8 Members further noted that Unite and Unison members at the University were outraged that the Vice-Chancellor had been targeted and members of UCU – whose Chair had appeared on the programme – were equally supportive of the University's position. Directorate Members had offered to meet with union representatives if they had any further questions or required further information in relation to the matter.

G18.03.3.9 Members noted that, on this occasion, the University had not sought the expertise of an external Corporate PR specialist but was led by the University's Director of Corporate Communications, who was highly experienced in the choreography of such communications.

G18.03.3.10 Members noted with pleasure that a robust crisis management structure and procedure were in place and that the University would continue to work to ensure the appropriate categorisation of business expenses.

Jacob Rees-Mogg Incident Report

G18.03.3.11 Members noted the details of the internal review report of the recent incident.

G18.03.3.12 Members also noted that the University had hosted controversial speakers both before and since this particular event, whose visits had passed without incident.

G18.03.3.13 Members commended the University's management of a number of incidents over the last few weeks, conducted in a dignified manner, and which had demonstrated that good underlying processes were in place.

OfS Register of Providers

G18.03.3.14 Members noted that from 1 August 2018 providers were required to register with the OfS in order to access the student support system or to receive grant funding; registration would open on 3 April 2018; the University was currently compiling its registration application.

Health and Safety Risk Description

G18.03.3.15 Members noted the report.

G18.03.4 Corporate Scorecard

Paper G18/03/03 was received.

Members noted that the revised International and Transnational Education (TNE) student fee income was included in the financial plans.

ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

G18.03.5 Joint Venture Company Proposal

Paper G18/03/04 was received.

This item is recorded as a confidential minute.

REPORTS

G18.03.6 Research Integrity Annual Report

Paper G18/03/05 was received.

G18.03.6.1 The Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research and Business provided an outline of the contents of the report.

G18.03.6.2 Members noted in particular:

- i. The range of actions and activities undertaken in response to the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, such as postgraduate and researcher training;
- ii. The significant number of improved and new policies, procedures and processes approved, including an external-facing Policy Statement on the use of Animals in Research;
- iii. The very small number of formal investigations of research misconduct, undertaken under new procedures. A review to identify any areas of the procedures that could be simplified would be undertaken following the conclusion of ongoing cases;
- iv. A Research Ethics Committee was in place. The Board of Governors' role with regard to research ethics would be engaged by way of a small number of Governors serving on a panel to hear appeals against decisions made with regard to complaints.

G18.03.6.3 Members noted the activities that had taken place in response to the Concordat over the year from August 2016 to July and **approved** the publication of the report.

G18.03.7 Financial Update

Paper G18/03/06 was received.

G18.03.7.1 The Director of Finance provided Members with a brief outline of the summary update. Members noted the following in particular:

G18.03.7.2 *Forecast for year to 31 July 2018*

- i. the current forecast financial outturn for the year, based on outcome to Period 5, indicated that the budgeted surplus would be achieved;
- ii. shortfall in planned tuition fee income was compensated by higher than budgeted CPD and other income (particularly in HAS), salary savings and the release of contingency.

G18.03.7.3 *Planning and budgeting for 2018/19 and forecasts to 2022/23*

- i. Planning and budgeting round had commenced and, in accordance with the approved finance strategy, the target for 2018/19 was to prepare a budget that delivered a 10% EBITDA (Earnings Before Interest, Tax, Depreciation and Amortisation) before FRS102 charges;
- ii. OFS registration fees are expected to be £158,200;
- iii. The minimum generation of cash required from University operations in order to support the Masterplan Investment Programme. This was particularly challenging as tuition fees in 2018/19 (and possibly beyond) would be capped at £9,250; modelling for future fees scenarios had begun;
- iv. Up to 27 extra academic posts had been released for recruitment for 2018/2019 and further release was planned, subject to further analysis of income forecasts and student recruitment data;
- v. The University's cash balance fluctuated significantly through the year, the majority of which came via tuition fees in tranches: October 25%, February 25% and May 50%;
- vi. Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) exposure –
 - a. this was a scheme for academic and academic-related staff, and predominant within red-brick universities.
 - b. UWE's exposure was low, with around 70 USS members. If these members were to move to the Teachers' Pension Scheme or the Avon Pension Scheme, it would trigger Section 75 and recovery of deficit payment. Retaining a small number of USS members would prevent this trigger occurring.

G18.03.8 Emergency Committee

Paper G18/03/07 was received.

G18.03.9 Capital and Major Projects Programme

Paper G18/03/08 was received.

G18.03.9.1 Members noted the progress and developments within the Campus 2020 Strategic Programme, including:

- i. Completion of Health Tech project
- ii. Completion of Enabling Works and start of Main Works for the new Design Studios (Building 2) at Bower Ashton;
- iii. Commencement of Main Works for the Glenside Laundry;
- iv. Completion of 'Works' workspace in the former Red Bar at Frenchay;
- v. Establishment of a new project to develop a refurbishment programme for Blocks A-M at Frenchay, including the Library.

The remainder of this item is recorded as a confidential minute.

ITEMS TO NOTE

G18.03.10 Access and Participation Plans Overview and OFFA Monitoring 2015-2016 Outcomes

Paper G18/03/09 was received.

G18.03.10.1 OFS Registration

Members noted that the OFS had recently released details of the process to apply for registration to its list of providers. Eligibility for registration was incumbent upon 23

ongoing conditions which covered quality, management and governance, student protection, access and widening participation.

G18.03.10.2 Members also noted that whilst the OFS would use evidence previously collected or generated by HEFCE or by the Department of Education to determine eligibility, there were four areas for which new evidence was required, namely:

- i. Access and Participation – an access and participation plan was required
- ii. Consumer Protection – completion of a self-assessment
- iii. Student Protection – a student protection plan was required; this was already in place for the University’s overseas courses and would be extended
- iv. Management and Governance – completion of a self-assessment.

G18.03.10.3 Members further noted the submission deadline of 23 May 2018 and the University’s intention to submit its application by 30 April 2018.

G18.03.10.4 Access and Participation Plan

The Pro Vice-Chancellor, Student Experience led Members through the contents of the report.

G18.03.10.5 Members noted the following:

- i. The Access and Participation Plan replaced the previous Access Agreement. The retitling demonstrated a commitment to improving participation through the student life cycle;
- ii. The OFS’s Director for Fair Access and Participation had the authority not to approve access and participation plans;
- iii. In order to have an approved plan, universities were required to demonstrate that they were:
 - a. Spending an appropriate amount of higher fee income
 - b. Setting stretching but achievable targets to widen access, improve continuation, success and good graduate outcomes for target students, and
 - c. Had a focus on continuous improvement and use evidence in decision-making;
- iv. The requirement to profile spending and how each strand of funding was being used, e.g. BoxEd, student success and progression to graduate employment;
- v. Progress against targets reported in the 2016/17 return – UWE had either met its yearly milestones or exceeded its overall targets;
- vi. UWE continued its focus on widening participation, addressing barriers to success by providing support to students in areas such as financial management, emotional resilience and by creating an inclusive community.

G18.03.10.6 Members questioned if there were differences across Faculties and noted the examples that there were many mature students in HAS and more BME students in FBL.

G18.03.10.7 Members also noted that the University was committed to and actively supported the widening participation agenda and continued to capture those students for whom the student experience was not as positive, and seek to address that.

G18.03.11 The Teaching Excellence Framework

Paper G18/03/10 was received.

G18.03.11.1 Members noted the decision to re-apply to the TEF year three process, based on the University’s continued upward trajectory, in measures of student satisfaction, graduate outcomes and continuation as evidenced by the TEF metrics.

G18.03.11.2 Members also noted that the commentary provided in the submission was more confident and that, based upon this most recent set of data, the University was performing at Gold level.

G18.03.11.3 Members further noted that the result was expected to be known in June 2018.

G18.03.12 Minutes of Board Committees
Paper G18/03/11 was received and noted.

G18.03.13 Academic Board Minutes
Paper G18/03/12 was received and noted.

G18.03.14 Corporate Seal
Paper G18/03/13 was received and noted.

G18.03.15 Dates of Future Meetings
11 July 2018 13:00 – 18:00 Room 0B16, Bower Ashton