



University of the
West of England

ACADEMIC BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 OCTOBER 2005

Present: AC Morris (Chair), J Bradley, Professor G Channon, N Clough, Professor RE Cuthbert, Professor J Duffield, Dr K Foreman, M Frutos-Perez, Prof C Fudge, C Hill, W Jones, M Keppel-Palmer, S Keeble, Dr R Lawton, J Lydon, Dr S Newby, E Newman, A Osborn, V Patel, Dr D Reynolds, C Rex, Professor R Ritchie, T Westcott, Professor A Winfield, Dr J Vinney.

Apologies: Dr A Beckett, Professor M Boddy, Professor P Gough, A Taylor, Professor S West.

In Attendance: T Harrison, A Hill, K Owen-Jones (for Mins AB.05.4.1-13), Dr R Means (for Mins AB.05.4.1 – 35), M McLaughlin (Secretary).

Rod Coleman

AB.05.4.1 The Chair asked members of the Board to stand in a minute's silence in memory of Rod Coleman, the Modular Scheme Director and a long serving member of the University. He had made an invaluable contribution to the life of the University and, in recent years, particularly to the development of the modular assessment regulatory framework. Rod's participation in and enthusiasm for all aspects of UWE's activities would be greatly missed. The Chair, who had spoken at Rod's funeral on behalf of the institution and his colleagues, commented on the cruel effects of Rod's clinical depression and the determination of Rod's to ensure that awareness of, research into, and the effects of, such illnesses was encouraged.

Fred Smith

AB.05.4.2 Members were advised of the sad and sudden death of Fred Smith who had recently been appointed Deputy Director of Higher Education at Hartpur College. The Chair extended condolences to Fred's family and to Hartpur College colleagues.

MEMBERSHIP

Scheme for Academic Board Composition

Paper AB/05/4/1 was received.

AB.05.4.3 The Board received for consideration and approval a paper which made recommendations to the Board of Governors regarding changes to the current scheme of Academic Board composition and membership, as specified by Article 4.2 of the Articles of Government. The proposed changes, to be effective from 30 September 2005 were outlined as follows:

- (i) The reduction of Faculty Board Chair membership from 12 to 9, in line with the number of faculties, together with an increase in “other” non-executive members from 3 to 6, the latter to include up to 3 co-opted, as well as 3 elected members. These changes would ensure that the necessary balance between the executive and the non-executive members of the Board was maintained.
- (ii) In order to reflect recent changes to the UWESU Constitution, the student representation would be amended to: President, Vice-President and three members elected by the Student Representative Council.
- (iii) In noting that the term of appointment of an Associate Dean as a member of the Board had now expired, the Board agreed to recommend the extension of that appointment to 31 August 2006.

AB.05.4.4 Members noted that the role of Secretary to the Board would formally pass to the Academic Registrar.

AB.05.4.5 **The Board agreed to endorse and forward the recommendations in the paper for the approval of the Board of Governors at its next meeting.**

New and Departing Members

AB.05.4.6 The Chair welcomed the following to their first meeting of Academic Board:

- Tessa Harrison, Academic Registrar;
- Professor John Duffield, Interim Dean of the Faculty of Applied Sciences;
- Dr Darren Reynolds, Faculty Board Chair of the Faculty of Applied Sciences;
- Manuel Frutos Perez, elected member of academic staff;
- Alistair Osborn, Vice President of the Student’s Union.

The Chair also welcomed back Jonathan Bradley in his capacity as a co-opted member of the Academic Board for academic session 2005/06.

AB.05.4.7 Members were advised of the recent departure of Professor Wendy Purcell (Dean of Faculty of Applied Sciences) and forthcoming departure of Ali Taylor (Assistant Vice-Chancellor)

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 8 JUNE 2005

AB.05.4.8 The Board confirmed the minutes of the meeting of 27 April 2005.

MATTERS ARISING

Nominations from Academic Board to UWESU Board of Trustees [Min AB.05.3.4 refers]

AB.05.4.9 The Board was advised that following a notice issued by the Secretary in June 2005, two expressions of interest in the position of Academic Board representative to the Board of Trustees had been received. The nomination of Carole Augousti, currently Faculty Board Chair of the Faculty of Health and Social Care, was being taken forward by the Students’ Union.

Outcomes of HEFCE ASN Bid [Min AB.05.3.32 refers]

AB.05.4.10 Members were advised that the recent bid to HEFCE for Additional Student

Numbers had been successful, with the University gaining an additional 639 places over two years 2006/07 and 2007/08. Notification from the Funding Council regarding application for development funding was anticipated in the near future.

VICE CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

Paper AB/05/4/2 was tabled.

- AB.05.4.11 Vice-Chancellor
Vice-Chancellor – The Board noted the recent appointment as Vice-Chancellor Designate of Sir Howard Newby, who would arrive in 2006. The Chair confirmed that he would be retiring as planned on 31 December 2005. He would then become Chair of the North Bristol National Health Service Trust, from January 2006.
Secretary of State Visit – Members were advised of the forthcoming visit to the University by the Secretary of State, on 4 November. The full programme for the visit was yet to be agreed.
UWE/University of Bristol – The Board was advised of a successful SRIF joint funding bid for £670K from HEFCE and £330K from the University of Bristol to improve the IAS laboratory facilities which will then become the new joint UWE/UoB 'Bristol Robotics Laboratories'.
EPSRC bid – Members were advised of two successful EPSRC bids resulting in awards to CEMS/FAS with a total value of £360K to fund Public Engagement Robotics.

UUK ANNUAL CONFERENCE

- AB.05.4.12 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor tabled a brief report on the recent Universities UK conference which took place 13-15 September. Members were particularly encouraged to look at the 5th report of the Long Term Strategy Group on Patterns of Higher Education Institutions.

PARTNERSHIP IN PLANNING

Governance Review

Papers AB/05/4/3a and b were received.

- AB.05.4.13 The Clerk to the Governors, Katie Owen Jones, attended the meeting to speak to this item and gave a broad outline of the planned review of the review of governance which would focus on the Board of Governors, the Academic Board and their linkages with the executive. For the review of the effectiveness of Academic Board, a working group had been established with Julie Lydon, Pro Vice-Chancellor as chair. It is considering the terms of reference and business of the Board and its sub-committees and will produce an interim report this term on the effectiveness of current arrangements.

CPE/Deans

- AB.05.4.14 Members were advised that the main items for discussion at the meeting of the CPE with Deans. which took place on 20 September were: the new planning parameters; the Pay Equality Project; and, a professorial pay scheme. Deans had also received a presentation from Liz Falconer on aspects of "e-learning".

CPE/Faculty Board Chairs

- AB.05.4.15 The agenda for the meeting between the CPE and Faculty Board Chairs held on 23 June 2005 was tabled for information. It covered governance review, planning and race equality issues. It was noted that the Vice-Chancellor Designate hoped to meet with the Faculty Board Chairs as a group in due course, as part of his induction into the University.

Planning 2005/06

Papers AB/05/4/4a and b were received.

- AB.05.4.16 The Board received a paper from Professor Steve West, "*Tides and Weather, Planning and Audit*" together with a paper from Julie Lydon focussing specifically on Academic Planning for 2005/06. The first paper, in abridged form, provided a "window" on changes to the planning process. The main changes were characterised as: a sharper focus on the measurement and evaluation of key performance indicators; the re-timing of the planning process, to bring it forward in the academic session; and improved integration with the FIN10 process. Guidance for the forthcoming planning process 2005/06 had recently been issued to Deans and Heads of Services and meetings with faculties were due to commence in January 2006.

- AB.05.4.17 Student representatives queried whether they might offer some comments to the CPE on the proposed performance indicators and were advised to feed comments to Professor West.

CCPC meeting of 10 October

- AB.05.4.18 The Board was advised of the main items of discussion in the meeting of the CCPC which took place on 10 October. It had included consideration of the main risks facing the University, including those arising from the NHS contract renewal and the number of interim appointments in senior positions. The Chair agreed to circulate to members a copy of his appraisal of the overall performance of the University, as delivered to the CCPC.

STUDENT MATTERS

Student Representation in Academic Board Review of Governance

- AB.05.4.19 The UWESU President informed the board that she was a member of the Academic Board Review Group. She was focussing her attention on the terms of reference and composition of all committees from her unique perspective of having experience on most of those committees over the past academic session. The President would be commenting on how students currently participate in committee operations and the benefits to students from representation.
- AB.05.4.20 The Board was also advised that the Students' Union had recently conducted a survey of students dealing with Assessment feedback, and had received some 2140 responses. The President was in the final stages of analysis of the results and writing up the findings for a paper to be presented to the various committees of Academic Board over the autumn term. It was felt that the results of the survey might provide further insight into the outcomes of the NSS for UWE in the area of assessment.
- AB.05.4.21 Members were advised of the difficulties the Students' Union was currently

facing in obtaining the names of nominees for Faculty Boards. Deans and Faculty Board Chairs were encouraged to submit the names of nominees to the UWESU executive as quickly as possible.

REPORT FROM FACULTY BOARD CHAIRS

AB.05.4.22 The Board was advised that Nick Clough, Faculty Board Chair from the Faculty of Education, had assumed the role of convenor of Faculty Board Chairs. The Chairs had not had an opportunity to meet ahead of the Academic Board meeting but planned to feed comments into the CPE on the planning process in due course. It was noted that the Chairs had been pleased with recent progress with dissemination of information relating to race equality issues and felt that appropriate action had been taken in response to their initial concerns about lack of information. The feedback had been extremely positive following the meetings organised by Dr Sheila Newby with faculties to discuss these issues.

AB.05.4.23 The Chairs asked for an update in due course on the dissemination of information relating to the Freedom of Information Act.

QUALITY ASSURANCE MATTERS

QAA Major Health Review

AB.05.4.24 Dr Kevin Foreman, Dean of the Faculty of Health and Social Care, updated members on the preparations for the QAA Major Health Review which was about to commence on 16 October with the first visit of the full team to the University. To date the Faculty had received some constructive feedback on the SED submitted and had made a full response to this initial scrutiny.

QAA Collaborative Provision Audits 2005/06

Paper AB/05/4/5 was received.

AB.05.4.25 The Board received information about the QAA programme of collaborative provision audits over 2006 involving 21 HEIs across the UK and some brief detail relating to the QAA overseas audit visit to China in spring 2006. It was noted that the University representatives would not be able to participate in the overseas audit as only a small part of the University's provision (Faculty of Computing, Engineering and Mathematical Sciences with Peking University [PKU]) would be considered within the scope of this audit. Hilary Cole (Academic Registry) and a representative of the Faculty of CEMS will attend a QAA briefing seminar on the audit in November 2005.

QAA Foundation Degree Review

Paper AB/05/4/6 was received.

AB.05.4.26 The Board received the initial findings letter from the QAA Review Co-ordinator arising from the recent review of the Foundation Degree in Sports Conditioning and Coaching. Members were pleased to note that a judgment of confidence had been reached in both the academic standards and achievements and the quality of learning opportunities. The Board was advised that there were a number of learning points to arise from the draft report concerned with the operation of the work based elements of the provision which would inform future developments of Foundation Degrees within the University. The draft report had now been received and a

response submitted to the Review Co-ordinator on matters of factual accuracy on 5 October. The final report was expected to be received by the end of October 2005.

QAA Postgraduate Special Review

- AB.05.4.27 Professor Robin Means, Chair of SPRS, attended to speak to this item and gave a brief outline of the activity to date in preparation for the special review of postgraduate provision to be undertaken in the spring of 2006. The definitive guidance for the Review was anticipated by 18 October. Meantime, the University had made significant progress in working with the draft guidance towards preparation for the Review. A code of practice for postgraduate provision had been produced within the University and was broadly in line with the revised QAA section of its Code. The implementation of the University Code was currently underway with training courses for recruiters of postgraduate research students and Professor Steve Hoddell's forthcoming training sessions on Independent Chairs for vivas. Members were also advised that SPRS was working closely with members of the Academic Registry and CRIGS to produce relevant information on enrolments and completions to inform the Review.

Chartered Institute of Environmental Health

- AB.05.4.28 The Board was advised that the University had received correspondence over summer 2005 in respect of a planned CIEH accreditation visit in autumn 2005. This had caused significant concern because of feedback from students which indicated dissatisfaction with their programmes. The CIEH had proposed to withdraw accreditation of UWE's programmes immediately following the scheduled mid-term review visits on 16 September, unless it was satisfied that certain problems had been resolved. The letter conveying this information was received in July, following a series of meetings with staff in the Faculty of Applied Sciences earlier in the year. Those meetings had not suggested that CIEH had concerns of the severity identified in the letter. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor had led a further series of meetings between the University and the Institute, culminating in a mid-term review in September 2005 which led to a successful outcome and confirmed full accreditation.
- AB.05.4.29 It appeared that a series of misunderstandings, on both sides, had contributed to the escalation of what might otherwise have remained within the realms of "normal business". However, prompt action by the University and the CIEH's confidence in Associate Dean Professor Jim Longhurst and the Head of School, Dr Melanie Grey, had enabled the difficulties to be overcome. It was noted that assessment of risks arising from professional body engagement would be within the scope of the review of Academic Board.

Teaching Quality Information (TQI) and the National Student Survey (NSS)

- AB.05.4.30 Pro Vice-Chancellor, Julie Lydon, provided a brief update on the outcomes of the development of the TQI website and of the National Student Survey. The Board was advised that both matters were to be substantive items at forthcoming meetings of AQAC and TLAC, with a view to making a fuller report to the Board later in the autumn term. The TQI site had recently gone live following some technical difficulties. Members were informed that Dr Egils Praulitis, Chair of the TQI Standing Group, was continuing to

undertake analyses of the findings to date in order to identify the implications of the data for the University. It was noted that the outcomes of the NSS had appeared somewhat disappointing for UWE in terms of its placing on the national scale. The findings of the Survey and the implications for the general perception of the quality of the UWE student experience would be considered in greater depth at a meeting of TLAC to be held on 14 October, particularly with regard to assessment feedback and academic support issues. Outcomes of the survey and initial analyses would also be considered at a forthcoming meeting of the Student Affairs Committee on 24 October.

RESEARCH MATTERS

Proposals to establish a Research Degrees Examining Board

Paper AB/05/4/7 was received.

- AB.05.4.31 Professor Robin Means, Chair of SPRS, spoke to a paper proposing the establishment of a Research Degrees Examining Board. It had been previously circulated to Board members for comment. The paper had been initiated by the previous Chair of SPRS, Professor Stephen Hoddell, and Wendy Hopkins of the Academic Registry and had been considered by both SPRS and Research Committee. The Board was advised that the proposals aimed to: present a clearer method of organising the review of the taught element of research degrees; provide a clearer linkage between the quality assurance of assessment and policy; and, more efficiently and effectively make use of the current SPRS committee as the proposed Examining Board. The terms of reference of the committee had been amended accordingly to allow for this responsibility. One of the main benefits of placing decision-making regarding the award of the degree more effectively within the processes of the Board was that it would remove a level of discomfort felt by many staff concerning the extent of reliance on the role of the external examiner in the existing decision-making process.
- AB.05.4.32 It was recognised that, at this stage, the Board's duties would not extend into consideration of Professional Doctorate arrangements. However, there was support amongst Board members for future developments to align practice in that respect. It was noted that the faculties would require and welcome guidance from SPRS regarding the operation of AL and AEL factors
- AB.05.4.33 **The Board agreed the recommendations in the paper for the establishment of a Research Degrees Examining Board and charged SPRS and Research Committee with the development of regulations to underpin the Board.**

Knowledge Transfer

- AB.05.4.34 The Board received an oral report from Professor Colin Fudge, Pro Vice-Chancellor, on the outcomes of the Joint Board of Governors and Academic Board seminar held on 3 October on Knowledge Transfer. It had included a presentation from the Director of Research and Knowledge Transfer at HEFCE. The presentation had provided a welcome opportunity to explore the potential impact of knowledge transfer activities. The Chair had attended a further meeting with Sir Keith O'Nions, Director General of Research Councils, on 7 October, which discussed the possibility of competitive bidding for related funds. It was noted that members would welcome a written report from the CPE on the developments to date in order to inform their understanding of prioritised in the forthcoming planning

process.

TEACHING AND LEARNING MATTERS

The Impact of Widening Participation Activities: Aimhigher South West

Paper AB/05/4/8 was received, together with a tabled paper on "Impact Matters 2004/05".

- AB.05.4.35 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor commented on the findings to date of the work of Aimhigher which presented quantitative and qualitative evidence that long term collaborative activity to widen participation across the region had made a positive difference to participation in HE from under represented groups. Although Aimhigher funding would be reduced during 2006-08, Government had reversed an earlier intention to separate the schools and the FE/HE funding streams. This was a welcome step and would support the vital Aimhigher infrastructure for regional integration of WP outreach activities.

Widening Participation Strategy

- AB.05.4.36 Dr Sheila Newby gave a brief oral update on recent meetings of the Widening Participation Strategy Group and the development of the first draft of University Strategy which had benefited from active participation and input from Deans and Heads of Services. It was anticipated that a further draft of the Strategy would be presented to the CPE for consideration prior to submission to the Academic Board later in the autumn term. It was envisaged that the timing of release of the Strategy would dovetail with the revised Planning process for 2005/06.

RECENT CONSULTATION PAPERS

HEFCE

- AB.05.4.38 The following papers were noted as having been recently published by HEFCE:
- [2005/38](#) Research Activity Survey 2005 (September)
 - [2005/37](#) Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning: phases four and five funded projects (August) (*Web only*)
 - [2005/36](#) Higher Education Innovation Fund round 3: Funding proposals (July)
 - [2005/35](#) Review of the Quality Assurance Framework (July)
 - [2005/34](#) Funding higher education in England: How HEFCE allocates its funds (July)
 - [2005/33](#) HEFCE grant adjustments 2005-06 (July)
 - [2005/32](#) 2004-05 statistics derived from HESA data: guide to HEFCE web facility (July) (*Web only*)
 - [2005/31](#) Accountability for higher education institutions: consultation on a new process (July)
 - [Annual review 2004-05: Changing the landscape of higher education](#) (July)
 - [2005/30](#) Public supply, works and services contracts awarded in

2004 (July) (*Web only*)

- [2005/29](#) 2004-05 statistics derived from ILR data: guide to HEFCE web facility (July) (*Web only*)
- [2005/28](#) Sustainable development in higher education (July)
- [Space Management Group: phase one reports](#) 2005/25, 2005/26 and 2005/27 (July)
- [2005/24](#) Strategically important and vulnerable subjects: final report of the advisory group (June) (*Web only*)
- [2005/23](#) Staff employed at HEFCE funded HEIs: trends, profiles and projections (June) (*Web only*)
- [2005/22](#) Provision of higher education study by location 2002-03 (June) (*Web only*)

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

International Activities

AB.05.4.39 The Board was advised that the Chancellor had recently visited the University in order to discuss her role in leading a forthcoming visit to Malaysia and Vietnam in November 2005

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

- AB.05.4.40
- 23 November 2005
 - 22 February 2006
 - 26 April 2006
 - 14 June 2006

All meetings were scheduled to begin at 2 pm in Room 3A22.