



## **ACADEMIC BOARD**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 JUNE 2006**

**Present:** Sir H Newby (chair); C Augousti; Prof. A Bensted, Dr A Beckett, Prof. M Boddy, J Bradley, Prof. G Channon, N Clough, Prof. R E Cuthbert, Prof. J Duffield, Dr K Foreman, J France, M Frutos-Perez, Prof. P Gough, Prof. C Fudge, W Jones, Dr R Lawton, Prof. M Lister, Dr Newby, E Newman, A Osborn, V Patel, Dr D Reynolds, C Rex, Prof. R Ritchie, J Rushforth, R Stroud, Dr J Vinney, T Westcott, Prof. A Winfield.

**In attendance:** D Francombe, T Harrison, K Hicks, A Hill, M McLaughlin, K Owen-Jones, P Williams.

**Apologies:** C Hill, S Keeble, L Jones, E Tabiwo.

**In attendance:** T J Harrison.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

AB.06.3.1 The Vice Chancellor noted that this would be the last meeting of the Board as it was currently constituted and noted in particular that it would be the last meeting for the Director of the Centre for Student Affairs who would be retiring shortly. The Vice Chancellor thanked Steph Keeble for her lengthy contribution to UWE and, on behalf of the University, wished her well for her retirement.

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 26 APRIL 2006**

AB.06.3.2 The Board confirmed the minutes of the meeting of 26 April 2006.

### **REVIEW OF ACADEMIC BOARD COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND ITS ROLE IN THE GOVERNANCE OF THE UNIVERSITY**

Paper AB/06/3/1 was received.

AB.06.3.3 The Vice Chancellor reminded the Board that the complementary review of the Board of Governors was ongoing and that Governors' were considering the joint committees and the consequences of these on the other governor committees. The proposed joint committees for External Relations, Student Affairs and Diversity had been welcomed by the Governors who were now thinking through the practical implications of what it would mean to be more directly involved in the University's business.

AB.06.3.4 The Board agreed to approve the following subject to any amendments required following the Board of Governors' review:

AB.06.3.5 (a) the committee structure organogram as presented;

AB.06.3.6 (b) the terms of reference and membership as presented noting the reference contained therein to a Dean of Students;

AB.06.3.7 (c) the faculty board committee structures as presented. The Board

reinforced the imperative for faculty structures to mirror those of Academic Board to enable more effective and efficient decision making throughout the committee structure. During a discussion regarding the requirement for 50% of faculty board membership to be elected, faculties were reminded of the need to consider carefully the constituencies that would need to be represented to ensure that this requirement could be met. Faculties were invited to work through the terms of reference for their sub committees and to submit revised terms of reference to the secretary of Academic Board;

- AB.06.3.8 (d) the schedule of delegation as presented noting the role of Academic Board as the final decision making body;
- AB.06.3.9 (e) the implementation plan as presented;
- AB.06.3.10 (f) the indicative business plan as presented noting that the timetable of meetings had been structured to support the new university planning cycle;
- AB.06.3.11 (g) the timetable of meetings as presented noting that the UWESU SRC was considering the option of holding elections for student representatives earlier to enable students to participate on the early Autumn Term meetings of faculty boards.
- AB.06.3.12 The Board agreed that there would be an operational review of the new arrangements in the Summer Term 20 07 followed by a more strategic review of the arrangements during the 2007/2008 academic session.

**Action: Secretary**

#### **VICE CHANCELLOR'S STRATEGIC REVIEWS**

- AB.06.3.13 The Vice Chancellor reported that the original eleven strategic reviews had now been translated into implementation project streams to run over the next three years. There had been extensive consultation over the last six months on the projects and the outcomes had been developed into a proposed programme of co-ordinated change that would have the benefit of releasing staff time to be refocused on the student experience. The project streams were as follows:
- AB.06.3.14 (a) a project to co-ordinate the communication, induction and advice and guidance arrangements for students from pre-entry to post graduation aimed at tackling retention and improving the student experience. The introduction of the concept of Welcome Weekend in September 2006 would provide a co-ordinated set of events that would lead to more organised student support activities throughout the year and which would form the basis of a fuller programme of co-ordinated activities from September 2007;
- AB.06.3.15 (b) the curriculum reform project would create a sense of academic identity for students via a facilitated module which would be focused on academic support, skills, employability and enterprise;
- AB.06.3.16 (c) the employer engagement project would enable the development of skills within the curriculum and the way in which relationships with employers were managed throughout the university.
- AB.06.3.17 In addition to the project streams identified a number of cross cutting initiatives were also being instigated as follows:
- AB.06.3.18 (a) a review of the academic portfolio to address the fact that 66% of UWE's programmes attract 10% of applicants;
- AB.06.3.19 (b) a challenge to the resit culture that pervades and which is widely considered to be educationally undesirable;
- AB.06.3.20 (c) a review of the university's quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms in light of the increased devolution to faculties brought

- about by the review of Academic Board;
- AB.06.3.21 (d) a review of the modular regulations with the aim of simplifying and releasing capacity for staff;
- AB.06.3.22 (e) a review of staff development at all levels;
- AB.06.3.23 (f) a review of information systems with the aim of ensuring that they were fit for purpose;
- AB.06.3.24 (g) a review of professional services.
- AB.06.3.25 The Vice Chancellor reported that those transport issues that could be addressed by the University were under consideration by John Rushforth.
- AB.06.3.26 A new post, Dean of Students, was being created on a three year time-limited basis. The post would assume the role of champion working to deliver the programme across the university and to undertake the curriculum review and co-ordinate the project streams. The Vice Chancellor stressed the importance of avoiding the proliferation of groups and sub groups as the change programme moved forward whilst recognising the need from time to time for cross institutional groups as the need arose.
- AB.06.3.27 It was proposed that the proposed Policy and Resources Committee would assume the role of project board. A steering committee for the programme was being established to be chaired by Dr Sheila Newby. Individual project teams would involve as many people from across the university as possible.

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

- AB.06.3.28 John Rushforth reminded the Board that the current planning and budget round was nearing completion and that to take this further a new Strategic Plan would need to be approved by the Board of Governors at its meeting in July. The first draft had received broad approval as a start in the right direction. An informal discussion had taken place with Governors, the outcome of which had been a request for a shorter document with greater clarity of priorities and for further detail about how the timing of proposed activities would be linked to the outcomes of the Strategic Reviews. The Governors had further stressed the sense of urgency for the University in terms of moving forward to address the well documented institutional issues that had arisen from a three year loss of strategy and leadership. The new Strategic Plan would enable informed structured market analysis of the University to take place within a more transparent financial framework and against a development plan for staff and for Governors to enable priorities and performance to be measured more appropriately in future.
- AB.06.3.29 The expectation was that planning guidance would be issued during the summer followed by KPIs derived from the new Strategic Plan to inform faculties and services. The planning cycle would be based on a three year timeframe. The 2006/2007 planning round would need to acknowledge changes in faculty structures and services before the full planning round could be implemented from 2007/2008.

## **FACULTY CLUSTERS**

- Paper AB/06/3/2 was received.
- AB.06.3.30 The Vice Chancellor reminded the Board that the change agenda that had been articulated on his arrival had highlighted the need for change and the need to move quickly. He further reminded the Board that the review of faculty clusters had gained momentum with the outcomes of the review of Academic Board and the resulting increased delegation of authority to faculty boards which had, in turn, led to considerable debate about the fitness for purpose of faculty boards and about what constituted a faculty.

Whilst recognising the anxiety that any change created it was, in his view, imperative that there was recognition that there was no time for further procrastination.

- AB.06.3.31 The paper before the Board set out the rationale for change noting that it had been widely acknowledged that nine faculties was too many and that the focus had to be on prioritising and on enhancing that which was excellent at the University. Whilst it was the UMG's role to set strategic priorities and the process by which these would be followed, it was in faculties where the real change would take place. Faculties were the major business units with devolved responsibility for planning, budgeting, learning and teaching quality, knowledge exchange and research operating within a central university framework.
- AB.06.3.32 The Vice Chancellor set out the three key priority areas for the University: curriculum reform, knowledge exchange, research - faculties had to be capable of engaging with all three. The University had to be capable of harnessing the span of management control and to manage greater consistency in policy and practice. The Vice Chancellor stressed that the proposals were not concerned with making cost savings but that they were concerned with saving staff time and with making the institution fitter and leaner in an increasingly competitive market environment. He urged Academic Board to recognise that time was not on the University's side and that to get ahead there would have to be a significant amount of catching up to do.
- AB.06.3.33 The Vice Chancellor re-iterated how essential it was that faculty structures were capable of owning and driving the change agenda. The support for deans was acknowledged as being of critical importance hence the proposals for new management arrangements. The use of institutes to facilitate strategic objectives was noted particularly in relation to the opportunities they provided for inter-faculty initiatives; research centres on the other hand provided space for intra-faculty initiatives. The Vice Chancellor's strongly held view was that effective use of both structures could increase the University's competitive advantage in areas of known strength.
- AB.06.3.34 In summary, the Vice Chancellor set out a number of reasons why the option to move from nine to four faculties was his preferred model:
- AB.06.3.35 (a) capability to deliver the change agenda in curriculum reform, knowledge exchange and research excellence;
- AB.06.3.36 (b) provision of a greater degree of academic coherence at faculty level particularly if supported by more creative use of institutes and research centres;
- AB.06.3.37 (c) more appropriate support for delegated responsibility for quality assurance.
- AB.06.3.38 Option 1 (moving from nine to three) appeared to represent the status quo but with an additional layer of senior management which would be costly and which could in fact be managed directly from the UMG without an additional layer which would bring about a degree of centralisation which would be inappropriate and would go against the principles of delegation already agreed.
- AB.06.3.39 The Vice Chancellor acknowledged that there were a number of under-examined issues contained within the proposal which would need to be addressed carefully and on an individual basis to ensure that optimum solutions were developed.

AB.06.3.40 The Vice Chancellor reassured the Board that the proposals did not signify a dilution of science at the University but that there was a recognised need to review the portfolio of activities to ensure that the University was satisfying market need and student demand.

AB.06.3.41 The Board agreed to approve option 2 for the creation of four faculties subject to noting the significant amount of work still required to develop the elements contained within each entity. Option 2 would be developed further and brought to the next meeting of the Board together with a detailed action plan for moving forward.

**Action: UMG**

## **PARTNERSHIPS**

Paper AB/06/3/3 was received.

AB.06.3.42 Dr Sheila Newby introduced the Board to a paper setting out the range of international and UWE Federation collaborative activities with which the University was currently engaged, and of the work being undertaken to ensure that they remained aligned to the University's strategic priorities and to identify opportunities for building on relations that secure the supply chain to UWE's programmes. Dr Newby described the decision making process that supported collaborative activities which were helping to make the process harmonised and transparent across the range of activities. The University would be undertaking a review of its Erasmus links in the near future to identify opportunities to consolidate and test against the university's strategic aims. The Vice Chancellor noted that he had been encouraged by the response received by FE partners to the concept of the UWE Federation, noting that care would need to be taken to ensure that the partnerships were managed appropriately.

AB.06.3.43 Dr Newby thanked the Director of AIR, the Deputy Director of Finance and staff from both AIR and the Academic Registry for their contribution to work undertaken thus far to advance the University's international and UWE Federation strategies.

AB.06.3.44 The Board agreed to approve:

AB.06.3.45 (a) the redesignation of the following colleges as Affiliated Institutions or Faculties : Hartpury, City of Bristol, GLOSCAT, Bridgwater, City of Bath;

AB.06.3.46 (b) the designation of the following colleges as Affiliated Institutions of Faculties: Filton, Weston, Richard Huish, Norton Radstock, Swindon, Stroud, New College Swindon.

**Action: SN**

## **RAE POLICY AND STRATEGY**

Paper AB/06/3/4 was received.

AB.06.3.47 Professor Fudge introduced a paper setting out the University's policy and strategy for the RAE2008, thanking Richard Bond (CRIGS) for his support for the process to date. The University's priority would be on maximising reputation and therefore on a more selective policy would be adopted than had previously been the case. He reported that the next phase of preparations would involve the compilation of full drafts over the summer/autumn of 2006 using the RAE software. Invitations to submit full drafts would be made in mid-June with a deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> October 2006. A champion would be identified for each unit of Assessment to lead to production of the draft submission. By the end of October 2006 the

University would have a full set of draft submissions.

AB.06.3.48 Professor Fudge noted the following issues that were currently under discussion and which would need to be resolved as soon as possible:

AB.06.3.49 (a) resolution of outstanding issues regarding the financial coding of research/non-research income etc.

AB.06.3.50 (b) clarification of the procedures for maximising PhD completion rates;

AB.06.3.51 (c) maximisation of PhD student numbers via a targeted bursary scheme;

AB.06.3.52 (d) review of vulnerable and junior staff to ensure the retention of research teams;

AB.06.3.53 (e) review to ensure all eligible staff are linked appropriately to units of assessment.

AB.06.3.54 The Board agreed to approve:

AB.06.3.55 (a) the units of assessment as set out to proceed to the next stage;

AB.06.3.56 (b) the policy paper as set out.

**Action: CF**

### **TEACHING QUALITY ENHANCEMENT FUND / JOINT INFORMATION SYSTEMS COMMITTEE**

AB.06.3.57 Dr Newby reported that the University had been unable to make a submission to the JISC fund although two of the submissions drafted to date were likely to go forward to the next round. The newly formed Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee would review the lessons learned from the present round.

AB.06.3.58 Dr Newby reported that the allocation of TQEF funds would be in four areas: CPD for HE, Teaching informed by research; student volunteering and supporting success and progression for students with diverse needs. The funding would be used to fund a number of the initiatives that fell out of the Strategic Reviews including reviewing the curriculum, staff development, facilitated learning, PDP, employability and enterprise etc.

**Action: SN**

### **RESEARCH COMMITTEE**

AB.06.3.59 Annual Report 2005/2006  
Paper AB/06/3/5 was received

AB.06.3.60 The Board received the Research Committee annual report for 2005/2006 and in so doing requested the newly created Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee to ensure that the actions identified in the report were seen through completion.

AB.06.3.61 The Vice Chancellor reported that a paper on research and knowledge exchange was being prepared for an away day discussion later in the year to inform the development of a research strategy for the knowledge exchange university.

**Action: Secretary**

### **JOINT MEETING OF ACADEMIC QUALITY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE AND TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE.**

AB.06.3.62 Proposal to amend academic regulation and procedure B10.4: Credit Transfer between awards.

AB.06.3.63 The Board agreed to approve a proposal to amend Academic Regulation

and Procedure B10.4 to enable the University to permit recognition of a small amount of 'cashed in' credit between awards at the same level under certain limited circumstances as set out in the attached paper.

**Action: Secretary/Clerk to the Board of Governors**

## **STUDENT MATTERS**

AB.06.3.64 The UWESU SRC President reported that the Union was reviewing the support and training activities for student representatives and looking at the arrangements for elections. She also reported that staff in the Union had been heavily involved in supporting students through the recent industrial action.

AB.06.3.65 The Vice Chancellor warmly thanked the outgoing officers and the student representatives for their contribution to the Board and more widely to the University and wished them well for their individual futures.

**Action: Secretary**

## **QUALITY ASSURANCE MATTERS**

AB.06.3.66 QAA Special Review of Research Degree Programmes.

AB.06.3.67 The Board received the draft report of, and the University's response to, the QAA Special Review of Research Degree Programmes in which the University's ability to secure and enhance the quality and standards of its research degree programme provision was confirmed as being 'appropriate and satisfactory'. The Board requested that the newly formed Graduate Studies Committee draw up an action plan setting out how the points raised in the report would be taken further and acted upon and that it make regular monitoring reports to the University's LTA Committee.

AB.06.3.68 QAA Institutional Audit of the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama.

AB.06.3.69 The Board received the report of the QAA Institutional Audit of the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama (June 2005) in which the audit team confirmed that the CDD was 'moving in an appropriate manner to fulfil its responsibilities for the current and likely future management of the quality of academic programmes and the academic standards of the awards of its affiliate schools.' The Board requested that the faculty draw up an action plan setting out how the points raised in the report and on the outcomes of the Quality Assurance Mapping Exercise undertaken by CDD in preparation for the audit would be taken further and acted upon and that it make regular monitoring reports to the Faculty Board.

**Action: Secretary**