University of the West of England BRISTOL

ACADEMIC BOARD

Minutes of a meeting of Academic Board held on Wednesday 6 April 2011.

Present: P Catley; Professor O Doran; M Frutos-Perez; T Goodhew; Professor P Gough (Chair); Dr J Harrington; Professor S Gray; P Hume; P Jones; Professor J Longhurst; A Mathieson; Professor R Means; C Offler; Professor P Olomolaiye; Professor R Ritchie; Professor L Raphael Reed; B Senior; F Tolmie; Dr S Waite.

Apologies: Professor M Boddy; D Allen; Professor G Atwood; A Cheshire; A Gilkison; T Harrison; M Grey; Professor H Langton; Professor G Lyons; T McGoldrick Professor J McLeod; P Morgan; P Nolan; J Rushforth; G Sandford; R Scott L Ventura Professor S West; G Wilson.

In Attendance: J Bradley; S Grive; K Kelly (for agenda item 11.4.7.3); A McLean (for agenda item 11.4.6); A Osborn (clerk); C Rex.

AB11.4.1 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING
Paper AB11/4/1 was received.

The Board confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2011.

AB11.4.2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

AB11.4.2.1 AB11.2.2 Review of the Regulatory Framework

Dr Harrington reported that the Group had taken stock of the rationale behind the evolution of the current regulations and surveyed the sector to ascertain good practice. This would inform the development of a set of principles to inform a major overhaul of the regulations in the future; in the interim the Group was currently concentrating on providing recommendations to Examining Boards to promote consistent interpretation of the current regulations.

AB11.4.2.2 During discussion the following points were noted:

(i) In response to a question from the Students' Union President the Chair assured the Student's Union that they would be involved once the project had been fully scoped;
(ii) members welcomed the emerging principle of a greater programme identity to the regulations that would promote student good standing and progression as well as the consideration of a "fit to sit" clause;
(iii) the difficulty in applying the current regulations to modules of different sizes.

AB11.4.2.3 AB11.2.1 Academic Governance

The Board noted the update on the revised Governance Handbook.

AB11.4.3   REPORT OF CHAIR'S ACTIONS SINCE THE LAST MEETING

The Board noted the following approvals by Chair's Action since its last meeting:

(i) ACE departmental names;
(ii) AB11.12.14 CAHE : Assessment regulations (Non-modular): Department of Education;
(iii) Change of title of BSc(Hons) Property Management and Investment to BSc(Hons) Property Investment and Management;
(iv) Professor Emerita status had been conferred on June Hannam.

AB11.4.4   VICE CHANCELLOR'S REPORT
Paper AB11/4/2 was received.

The Board received the paper and welcomed a further update that the successful outcome of the Ofsted inspection had been confirmed.

AB11.4.5   COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2010 - 2012
Paper AB11/4/3 was received.

AB11.4.5.1   The Assistant Vice-Chancellor Partnership, Diversity and Civic Engagement presented the paper to the Board and thanked his fellow contributors to the paper. The Board noted that:
(i) the strategy sought to position community and public engagement (CPE) as an embedded activity within the University's core business
(ii) the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement manifesto for public engagement, to which the University was a signatory, had been influential in the development of the strategy;
(iii) the framework for the strategy and the action plan had been set against the University's strategic objectives;
(iv) resourcing would require careful consideration but many actions would not be resource intensive;
(v) an audit of CPE was ongoing and that this, combined with the framework provided by the strategy would help Faculties and Professional Services to prioritise CPE activity.

AB11.4.5.2   The Board warmly welcomed the strategy and in discussion it was noted that:
(i) members would appreciate further guidance on how CPE could be effectively represented within the workload model and that it would need to be included as part of ongoing workload model discussions;
(ii) there may be further scope to include within the strategy the work of the University in developing and educating professionals for whom CPE is embedded within their careers (including teachers, health professionals and social workers);
(iii) further prominence might be given to the University's existing broad engagement with public sector organisations;
(iv) additional case studies within the paper or subsequent publications would provide powerful examples of how CPE could be sustainably embedded within Faculties and Professional Services;
(v) the ongoing tension between central involvement in, and direction of, CPE against individuals seeking to follow their personal interests/motivation although that this should not inhibit individuals engaging from in other activities that were congruent with their Faculty or Professional Service CPE aspirations.

(vi) discretionary effort of individuals pursuing CPE with personal motivations was currently key to a significant proportion of ongoing CPE activities and that there was a need to consider how this might be recognised.

(vii) similarly members recognised the extensive contribution made by students to CPE though initiatives operated by both the University and the Students' Union;

(viii) there would be significant discussions with the Academic Registry to promote the inclusion of CPE within curriculum development and approval activities;

(ix) staff development within a broader dialogical learning and teaching framework would be paramount in developing capacity for colleagues to engender respectful learning relationships. This would bring wider benefits to the University's learning and teaching agenda;

(x) while the dissemination of research to a wider public audience would be crucial, greater direct inclusion of the public within research projects could be beneficial;

(xi) whilst the separation of the CPE strategy from the Knowledge Exchange (KE) strategy was both appropriate and beneficial, greater links to the KE strategy would be useful.

AB11.4.5.3   The <u>agreed</u>:

(i) to recommend approval the Community and Public Engagement Strategy 2010 – 2012 to the Board of Governors;

(ii) that consideration be given to the inclusion of the Board's comments to the strategy prior to publication and wider dissemination.

ACTION: Assistant Vice-Chancellor Partnerships, Diversity and Civic Engagement/Clerk to the Governors

AB11.4.6   **DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME**
Paper AB11/4/4 was received

AB11.4.6.1   The Equality and Diversity Manager briefed the members on the paper and noted:

(i) the development of six priority objectives as an outcome of the consultation;

(ii) that the paper provided for legislative changes including the Disabilities Equalities Act which came into effect during 2010;

(iii) the consultation had highlighted inconsistent practice and areas for development within the institution;

(iv) that the scheme would inform the University's ongoing work to develop the Single Equality Scheme;

(v) the equality impact assessment had drawn on expertise from external organisations to ensure it matched contemporary discussion.

AB11.4.6.2   During discussion members noted:

(i) following a question from the Students' Union Student Representative President that retention was being considered across the board and the holistic approach to engendering a sense of community would be key and that overlap with OFFA and the WP action plan would ensure retention would be treated as a priority;

(ii) the scheme had been intended to demonstrate an inclusive, rather than adaptive, approach but that this would be further emphasised as part of the Single Equality Scheme;

(iii) there was significant variability in the delivery of existing access plans and that in practice the University would be required to undertake extensive further development to provide a truly inclusive experience;

(iv) that it would be useful to involve the Equality and Diversity Unit in the discussions on the regulatory review;

(v) there may be scope to consider equality and diversity in the context of the University's partnerships;

(vi) that some faculties have found it useful to discuss and embed disability equality at a local level;

(vii) that implementation would be monitored by the Equality Management Group.

AB11.4.6.3 The Board <u>agreed to recommend approval</u> of the Disability Equality Scheme to the Board of Governors.

ACTION: Director of HR/Clerk to the Governors

AB11.4.7 **TRANS POLICY**
Paper AB11/4/5 was received

AB11.4.7.1 Members warmly welcomed the policy and the production of comprehensive guidance for staff and students in a sensitive area. Members also noted:
(i) the highly educational nature of the policy;
(ii) that the Trans Policy would be distinct to, but inform, the Single Equality Scheme;
(iii) that training developed by the Equality and Diversity Unit would become available in the near future
(iv) that there was some inconsistency of terminology used throughout the policy.

ACTION: Head of Equality and Diversity Unit to ensure terminology is consistent prior to further publication.

AB11.4.7.2 The Board <u>approved</u> the Trans Policy and the accompanying student and staff guidance.

AB11.4.8 **REPORT FROM THE DEAN OF STUDENTS**
Paper AB11/4/6 was received

AB11.4.8.1 The Dean of Students highlighted to members:
(i) a recent surge in participation in the Student Experience Survey;
(ii) responses to the National Student Survey were lower than at the same point in time last year;
(iii) that nominations to the National Learning Teaching Fellowship Scheme had resulted in two colleagues going forward but it may be possible to increase the number in future years by further encouraging participation within the University.

AB11.4.8.2 The Chair noted that it would be the last Academic Board attended by the Dean of Students and thanked him on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor and Academic Board for his extensive and outstanding contribution to the Student Experience at the University.

AB11.4.9   TOWARDS A UWE MODEL – PARTNERSHIP IN LEARNING AND TEACHING
Paper AB11/4/7 was received

AB11.4.9.1   The Graduate Development Programme (GDP) Leader outlined the background to the proposals including that:
- (i)   the paper built on an evaluation conducted by Professor Kushner and had been in development for some time;
- (ii)   GDP needed to become more consistent across the institution but still needed to allow contextual flexibility, this would be enabled by consistency workshops;
- (iii)   Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) could feasibly be extended to personal development and employability and to every student;
- (iv)   additional staff development to facilitate GDP and PAL would be required and further work in this area would be carried out.

AB11.4.9.2   The Students' Union Student Representative Council President tabled a UWESU report on GDP and expressed concern that the findings of the Student's Union review had not been fully reflected in the paper presented to Academic Board for approval and requested that it be amended to acknowledge the areas for development and the actions that would be taken to address them.

AB11.4.9.3   During further discussion the Board noted:
- (i)   that the paper presented could be updated to make explicit where consideration of areas for development had been highlighted by UWESU and how these would be addressed;
- (ii)   that research conducted by the Hartpury College supported the move to develop personal tutors, GDP and contact with peers.
- (iii)   there would be additional calls on the workload model, particularly to support personal tutoring;
- (iv)   that the timeline outlined for staff development was for the completion of a framework of training materials;
- (v)   further consideration might be given to how the proposals within the paper could support the transformation of pedagogy at the University to enhance the learning and teaching experience;
- (vi)   that the Faculty of Environment and Technology had been successful in engaging student representatives with GDP tutors in the development of programme within the faculty and the resulting action plan had been warmly welcomed by the Students' Union;
- (vii)   that other areas of the institution, notably Library Services, would be interested in further exploring the role and recognition of student leadership roles analogous to the existing PAL scheme;

AB11.4.9.4   Academic Board thanked the GDP Leader and concluded these papers provided a firm foundation for further discussion on the development of GDP and PAL inline with a broader approach to developing a unique approach to teaching and learning at the University and that this would be progressed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and the Assistant Vice-Chancellor Learning Teaching and Student Experience. In the interim the GDP Leader agreed to further discussions with the Students' Union to ensure an appropriate response to the concerns raised.

ACTION: Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic); Assistant Vice-Chancellor Learning Teaching and Student Experience; GDP Leader.

AB11.4.10   REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UWESU

The SRC President provided an update to Academic Board on:
   (i) the addition of a sixth priority area by the Student Representative Council;
   (ii) the implementation of the new UWESU constitution;
   (iii) how the Students' Union could support students on Languages Programmes drawing to a close;
   (iv) the student representative awards.

AB11.4.11   REPORTS FROM ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY COMMITTEES
Paper AB11/4/8 was received

Members welcomed updates on recent discussions at Faculty Academic Standards and Quality Committees and noted:
   (i) the Shell Award Framework had generated a lively discussion and a number of opportunities to explore within the Faculty of Environment and Technology;
   (ii) the Faculty of Business and Law raised the impact of the Christmas closure period, and the associated restricted access to some learning resources, had on students preparing for January assessments;
   (iii) in response to a request for guidance from the Faculty of Arts and Creative Industries and Education that further information on the standardisation of module sizes would be addressed shortly via a cross University group consisting of the Associate Deans Learning and Teaching.

AB11.4.12   RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK MID-POINT REVIEW

Members received an update from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and noted that:
   (i) the University would be well prepared for the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF) despite the emerging trend of research funding concentration and that a sizable, quality, submission was already taking shape;
   (ii) recognising and putting forward three and four star graded research would be essential as funding for two star activity would likely be limited;
   (iii) the completion rates of PHD studentships would also be a key indicator within the new system.
   (iv) following re-alignment of the panels work was on-going to determine the most appropriate submission point;
   (v) research income had marginally increased.

AB11.4.13 **UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE – ANNUAL REPORT**
Paper AB11/4/9 was received

AB11.4.13.1 The Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) introduced the report and noted that:
(i) embedding research ethics within Faculty processes was progressing well but difficulties had been encountered as a result of the ongoing change processes;
(ii) rather than audit process, the 2009/10 audit had focused on compliance and uncovered some inconsistencies across the institution; in particular a watching brief would need to be maintained in the compliance of non-funded research with the University's ethics approval processes;
(iii) that the focus in 2011/12 would be human tissue research and that work was ongoing to closer align processes at the Associate Faculty with those at the University;
(iv) that in addition to providing oversight, an important function of the committee was to promote good practice in research ethics and that inline with this objective a further work would be undertaken to support individuals undertaking non-traditional research;
(v) further work would be conducted with faculties to address areas identified for development.

AB11.4.13.2 The Board thanked the Chair of UREC for a comprehensive report of the committee's activities and agreed to approve the recommendations of the report.

ACTION: Chair of UREC to progress recommendations

AB11.4.14 **MEETINGS OF SUB COMMITTEES AND JOINT COMMITTEES**
Paper AB11/4/10 was received

The Board received the following minutes:

Academic Standards and Quality FBL – 9 March 2011
Academic Standards and Quality Hartpury – 16 February 2011
Collaborative Provision and Academic Partnerships Management Committee – 23 March 2011
Research Knowledge and Exchange (Business Engagement) CAHE – 9 February 2011
Research Knowledge and Exchange (Business Engagement) FBL – 9 February 2011
Research Knowledge and Exchange (Business Engagement) FET – 16 February 2011
Research Knowledge and Exchange (Business Engagement) HLS – 16 February 2011

AB11.4.15 **ACADEMIC CALENDAR**
Paper AB11/4/11 was received

Members noted the revisions to the Academic Calendar as a result of legislative changes to visa arrangements for international students and echoing earlier discussion further noted that the Christmas closure period represented a particular issue for some international students;

AB11.4.16   FACULTY PRIORITIES AND HIGH IMPACT ACTIVITIES
Paper AB11/4/12 was received

The Chair reported on successful planning discussions with the Board of Governors and noted that the model would now be extended to cover the Associate Faculty and Professional Services.

AB11.4.7   DATE OF FUTURE MEETING

Wednesday 15 June 2011

The meeting closed at 4.20 pm.