

CONFIRMED

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Minutes of the Board of Governors meeting held on Tuesday 20 September 2011.

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

Apologies: J Rushforth.

In Attendance: Professor P Gough; W Marshall; A Osborn (Clerk); A Riggs.

G11.9.1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received

G11.9.2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 12 JULY 2011

Paper G11/9/1 was received.

The Board confirmed the minutes of the last meeting.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

G11.9.3 FINANCIAL FUTURES

Paper G11/9/2 was received.

G11.9.3.1 The Vice-Chancellor outlined the background and political context of the Governments reforms, highlighting the potential polarisation of the sector and the juxtaposition of market liberalisation with perceived protection of "elite" Universities.

G11.9.3.2 As a result of the proposals UWE could expect to lose in excess of 450 student numbers in 2012/13 and more would be removed in future years. UWE would be unable to bid to replace these numbers unless the net fee level reduced to £7.5k or less.

G11.9.3.3 Following previous discussions with Governors and in common with many of its comparators, UWE had chosen to hold its fee position. However a number of institutions had sought to renegotiate the access agreements with the Office of Fair Access to bring the net fee down.

G11.9.3.4 To mitigate against the loss of numbers in the medium term, discussions with UWE Federation Partners had been instigated to enable the University to recoup numbers currently delivered off site and provide a viable alternative for the Partners. However given the majority of UWE's offsite numbers were allocated to Hartpury College there remained a strategic question of what the impact would be of the White Paper proposals on the relationship with the Associate Faculty.

G11.9.3.5 The Board noted that there may be scenarios whereby it may be beneficial to reduce student numbers. The key question with such a strategy would be where to reduce numbers given it could have a significant impact on the shape and character of the University. Governors articulated strong support for the ongoing academic reviews to address poor performing programmes.

G11.9.3.6 The Vice-Chancellor further outlined the assumptions of the models that had been developed to assess the financial impact of the White Paper proposals and noted that they provided an added driver for the ongoing work to diversify income streams including:

- growth of international recruitment;
- the development of a pathway college;
- innovative degree design and delivery locations.

G11.9.3.7 It was noted that the White Paper largely ignored postgraduate students and that the impact on undergraduate students of the proposals could in turn lead to a significant weakening of the postgraduate market. This and other uncertainties over the impact of the proposals would likely persist for two to three years, although there would be no immediate need for a reaction by the University as the cost savings and infrastructure development over recently implemented placed UWE in a positive position.

G11.9.3.8 Governors welcomed assurance that the University could continue to evaluate the impact of the White Paper proposals as they became clearer without any detrimental impact on the financial sustainability of the institution.

G11.9.4 MASTERPLANNING

Paper G11/9/3 was received.

G11.9.4.1 The Chair updated Governors on discussion at the recent estates advisory group formed at the last meeting of the Board and highlighted that that the proposal to design and build a new Students' Union building had been an outcome of the meeting.

G11.9.4.2 Placing the proposed new build within the wider context the Vice-Chancellor provided an update on the Masterplan noting that:

- whilst significant estates work was ongoing, the priority would remain the quality of the academic offer;
- other project streams including the stadium and options appraisals for the consolidation of the Arts Creative industries and Education (ACE) Faculty onto the Frenchay campus continued as planned;
- new commercial opportunities were being explored for the periphery of the campus which would be brought back to the Board and Finance Committee in due course;
- it was likely that the Emergency Committee would be convened to approve the contracts for the Stadium;
- UWE had an innovative and effective Students' Union despite current accommodation being significantly below the standard provided by benchmark institutions.

G11.9.4.3 The Student Governor highlighted that increasingly the UWE Students' Union and its members were moving towards a focus on representation and away from traditional emphasis on trading activities. The proposed new building would allow the Students Union to increase the visibility of the representation and support services provided.

- G11.9.4.4** During discussion Governors noted that:
- the outline business case presented would be finalised and taken to Finance Committee for approval;
 - the business case would be centred on maintaining market share though an attractive offering to students rather than additional income generation or efficiency savings;
 - the Masterplan would see a reduction in the physical footprint of the University's teaching and administrative accommodation;
 - it was necessary to consider the quality of teaching accommodation alongside that of the supporting communal and social areas.

G11.9.4.5 Governors articulated concern over the efficiency of existing utilisation of the University's accommodation and, whilst noting work undertaken to date, stressed the importance of further boosting space utilisation and choosing appropriate benchmarks to assess performance in this area.

G11.9.4.6 The Board unanimously **agreed** the principle underpinning the development of the new student union building as recommended within the paper, subject to satisfactory consideration of an enhanced business case by the November meeting the Finance Committee.

G11.9.5 ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Paper G11/9/4 was received

G11.9.5.1 The Board welcomed a presentation from the Acting Health and Safety Manager on the University's revised approach to Health & Safety and during discussion noted:

- the significant improvement of the University's position;
- that Audit Committee would consider a further internal audit report on Health and Safety later in the year;
- the importance of Health and Safety could not be understated and that it was unacceptable that a number of staff had yet to attend mandatory training;
- that it would be a significant cultural shift to participation in mandatory training but that the Vice-Chancellor would take steps to inform all staff yet to participate that failure to do so would be considered a disciplinary matter;

G11.9.5.2 The Board endorsed the Annual Report and **agreed** the recommendation. The Chair congratulated Acting Health and Safety Manager on the improvements made and requested a further update on participation rates to be brought to the Board in the new calendar year.

ACTION: DVC Rushforth

G11.9.6 NATIONAL COLLEGE OF LEGAL TRAINING (NCLT)

Paper G11/9/5 was received.

The Board endorsed the formation of a Limited Liability Partnership with the Central Law Training to consolidate the existing successful partnership around NCLT subject to approval of the contract by Finance Committee.

G11.9.7 CHAIR'S REPORT

Following the Governance Review the Chair noted that a new member of the Board, Sandra Forbes, would shortly be considered by Nominations and Governance Committee with a recommendation to be presented to the Board in November.

G11.9.8 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

Paper G11/9/6 was received.

The Board congratulated the Vice-Chancellor and the Executive Team on the successful bid for the Creative Economy Hub and noted that there was an increasing appetite for collaboration with UWE from other Universities within the region.

G11.9.9 ITEMS TO NOTE

Papers G11/9/7 (National Student Survey Results), G11/9/8 (Governance Update), G11/9/9 (HEFCE Assurance Review Outcomes and Report) and G11/9/10 (Corporate Seal) were received electronically by the Board and noted.

G11.9.9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

29 November 2011, 15:00 to be followed by dinner.