

## **ACADEMIC BOARD**

Minutes of a meeting of Academic Board held on Wednesday 1 May 2013.

**Present:** Dave Allen, Olena Doran, Alison Fletcher, Manuel Frutos-Perez, Trevor Goodhew, Paul Gough, Philip Jones, James Longhurst, Glenn Lyons, Julie Mcleod, Patrick Nolan, Emmanuel Okon, Paul Olomolaiye, Matthew Partington, Peter Rawlings, Pippa Regan, Olly Reid, Tom Renhard, Catherine Rex, John Rushforth, Fiona Tolmie, Steven West (Chair)

**Apologies:** Jenny Ames, Gaynor Attwood, Matt Birch, Emma Brown, Andrea Cheshire, John Clarke, Alex Gilkison, Selena Gray, Jane Harrington, Helen Langton, Jo Midgley, Jackie Rogers, Kathryn Ross, Rosie Scott-Ward, Bruce Senior

**In Attendance:** Rachel Cowie (Secretary); Beryl Furey-King (Clerk); Tyrrel Bacon (UCU) David Proverbs (for agenda item 4.2)

**AB13.05.1** The Chair confirmed that the meeting was not quorate as a large number of apologies had been received. It was noted that a review would be taking place around the purpose and membership of Academic Board in order to ensure that there was good representation and engagement across the institution and this would be presented to the Board in June. Those members of the meeting not able to attend on this occasion would be asked to provide comments based on the documentation circulated and those comments, together with discussions from this meeting would be used to inform decisions taken by Chair's action. Those decisions would be reported to the next scheduled meeting of the Board.

### **AB13.05.2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

*Paper AB130501 was received*

The Board agreed the minutes of the meeting of 13 March as an accurate record. These would be approved by Chair's action after an opportunity had been given for additional comments to be received, as per AB13.05.1.

### **AB13.05.3 MATTERS ARISING**

#### **AB13.05.3.1 Attendance and Engagement Policy**

*Minute AB13.03.2.1 refers*

The PVC (LTSE) reminded the meeting that they had previously made comments on the Attendance and Engagement Policy and that these had been fed in to the Group. There were now some headline monitoring and attendance expectations on all students. The draft Policy would be taken to AQEC and Faculty ASQCs in order to ensure that it was right and

appropriate for students and staff. It was anticipated that a final version of the Policy would be available for the June meeting of Academic Board ready for September implementation.

It was confirmed that IT requirements were being fed from the pilot in place for international students and that it was expected that these would merge. It was noted that UWE had referenced the requirements against other institutions and that the Students' Union and Faculty representatives were part of the Group.

**AB13.05.3.2**      Report from Academic Calendar Group

*Minute AB13.03.2.2 refers*

This item was now a substantive item on the agenda.

**AB13.05.3.3**      MySite

*Minute AB13.03.2.3 refers*

The DVC (Academic) had made enquiries of IT Services regarding the character capacity of MySite and was waiting for confirmation.

**AB13.05.3.4**      Other items

All other actions from the previous meeting not outlined on this agenda were noted as complete.

**AB13.05.4**            **ITEMS TO CONSIDER**

**AB13.05.4.1**            **Academic Calendar**

*Paper AB130502 was received*

**AB13.05.4.1.1**      The PVC (LTSE) introduced the draft calendars for 2014-15 and 2015-16 to which minor modifications had already been made and approved. These include retaining two weeks vacation at Easter and three weeks at Christmas and aligning these with statutory holidays. In addition, the resit coursework hand-in date for the 2013-14 calendar had been agreed to be one week earlier than the assessment period in August.

**AB13.05.4.1.2**      At the meeting in December 2012, two key models had been considered for 2014-15 onwards, the Board agreed model 2 in principle but felt that it would need to be tested further. Model 2 involved bringing the resit period into July and using teaching block two to undertake teaching block one resits. Following extensive testing across departments and programmes, it had been felt that the use of TB2 for resits alongside teaching would be onerous for students who had a number of resits. The suggested model put the resit period earlier but it was felt it would be possible to give students sufficient support for this. However, it was noted that the model relied on results being fed to students quickly with a shorter revision period available. It was noted that Faculties had considered the suggested model and were supportive of the calendar although it did map to September starts rather than January. Faculties considering or currently offering other start dates and different intakes would need to consider how these could operate. The suggested model would be put forward for 2014-15 but it was noted that the Group would continue to consider the calendar for future years in order to support additional intakes.

- AB13.05.4.1.3** The meeting welcomed further discussion of a three teaching block structure and suggested that the current model was not only a challenge for different modes of entry but also for the market place. The Chair confirmed that the market place was changing and suggested that the university might have to consider programmes delivered in a concentrated manner. Some institutions were already on that track but UWE had to consider the reality of more than just a September intake and the possibility of concentrated two year undergraduate programmes under certain circumstances.
- AB13.05.4.1.4** It was noted that postgraduate programmes did not fit the suggested model as students would continue to be taught in the suggested assessment period. It was agreed that this would be amended to reflect the third teaching block. It was confirmed that the calendar had been under discussion since September and that all faculties had been involved in the consultation and the further testing. Many issues had been raised on this journey and worked through and resolved for the majority. It was noted that there were still some issues for a minority of programmes and these needed to be managed locally until such time as a more flexible calendar was available
- AB13.05.4.1.5** The group was commended on the way in which consultation had taken place, listening and responding and making adjustments. It did not fit all Faculty requirements but it was felt that it could be made to work.
- AB13.05.4.1.6** The group would continue to meet and report to Academic Board on progress made.
- AB13.05.4.2** **Centre Status**  
*Paper AB130503 was received*
- AB13.05.4.2.1** The Head of Department for Construction and Property, David Proverbs, presented the paper which outlined the business case for the establishment of an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary Centre in Floods, Communities and Resilience. The intention was to move from the current group status in the FET landscape to a centre of excellence. The centre would represent a convergence of expertise in flood matters from different disciplines with a strong track record of research in the area, building on the body of knowledge, international outputs, books etc. The team worked very closely with the Environment Agency in river and coastal engineering so already had that link established and the view was that the centre would underpin the longevity of that relationship.
- AB13.05.4.2.2** The Faculty presented a very comprehensive document in terms of the business case which had been through various committees within the Faculty and the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee. The Executive Dean of FET supported the proposal and confirmed that he was excited about the centre because it emerged from a good track record in teaching and a demonstrated ability to attract EPSRC grants. The proposal also mapped well to the university 2020 strategy.
- AB13.05.4.2.3** It was noted that flooding was also an international issue and there was already interest from Malaysia. The other aspect was water security which

was beginning to be explored in the university and it was suggested that these could be joined up. FET should think seriously about the two areas and consider how this could be appropriately resourced. It was noted that the next stage in the institute proposal could be a project on drought. There were also possibilities for enrichment of the curriculum as well as strategic fit and the possibility of specific funding and work with the EU and European Council.

**AB13.05.4.2.4** It was felt that there were other departments across the University which might also have interest and expertise in this area. It was suggested that the discussion could be widened, in particular with colleagues from HLS.

**AB13.05.4.3 Election of Members to Committees**

The meeting was advised that the item on the election of members to committees had been withdrawn but an additional paper was circulated, inviting members to consider putting themselves forward for nomination to the Board of Governors Nominations and Governance Committee. Members interested in doing this were asked to e-mail the Governance Team in CAS who would take them through the process (academicgovernance@uwe.ac.uk). It was agreed that the document would also be circulated to all members of the meeting who had sent apologies.

**AB13.05.4.4 Students' Union Report**

*Paper AB130504 was received*

**AB13.05.4.4.1** The SU presented the paper which gave an update on what had been taking place. The success of the student representatives and student led teaching awards was noted. Some departments had been highly commended and the students really appreciated the demonstrated support and partnership. A piece of work was to be undertaken within CAS to highlight some of the good practice that has come out of the student-led teaching awards.

**AB13.05.4.4.2** Some issues were drawn to the attention of the meeting on page 80 of the agenda papers but it was noted that these were to be raised with the Start of Year Board. The DVC (Academic) also advised that he was setting up a group to consider the first year experience group as a response to management of first year student issues.

**AB13.05.4.4.3** The meeting was asked to think about how effectively the university was working with students. One concern was that the University was undertaking lots of activity but much of it was not being fed back to students so that they could engage with the activities. It was noted that there was an intention to have a Blackboard learning environment space for all programmes so that feedback could be put directly into that. This should give recognition of the student representative role and help other students to appreciate that input. It was also noted that the university was looking at the support around SRSFs and perhaps undertaking a 'you said, we did' campaign to highlight progress to the student body.

**AB13.05.4.4.4** It was suggested that the university might wish to think about the student representative system and how representatives were supported.

**AB13.05.4.4.5** Participation in the system could be accredited (in line with the peer assisted learning programme) highlighted that on their HEAR. It was noted that students already undertake a reflective piece of work which could be accredited

**AB13.05.4.4.6** Congratulations were also given to all students and staff who were winning national competitions and it was suggested that the university might want to hold an event to celebrate this.

**AB13.05.4.5** **Report to the Board of Governors**  
*Paper AB130505 was received*

**AB13.05.4.5.1** The Deputy Academic Registrar present the paper and reminded the meeting that at the end of last year the Board of Governors had set Academic Board some areas they wanted reviewed with a subsequent annual report on progress. The paper identified success stories and also plans for future improvements.

**AB13.05.4.5.2** It was noted that the Board of Governors were really engaging with the student experience and what that looks like in terms of academic quality and how students feel engaged in all parts of the university. The Board were very keen for the university to ensure they are tracking students beyond the institution and will continue to revisit this progress. The Board intended to continue with the Student/Governor and Staff/Governor forums so that they could hear directly from both staff and students.

**AB13.05.4.5.3** A student representative asked on the progress around the suggestion that there should be a second student representative on the Board of Governors. The meeting was advised that discussions had taken place over this but that the view of the Chair and of the Board of Governors was that they did not want to increase the membership but wanted to work hard at making sure that the forums were really engaging and influencing the Board of Governors. This should enable them to engage with the key agendas and to get a view from the whole university rather than individuals. The Students' Union did assist in constructing the agenda and so were engaging with the Chair and the rest of the Board.

**AB13.05.4.5.4** The Chair advised that a number of Vice-Chancellors were looking at the Governor forums and how this had impacted on the student experience. Other institutions were looking to take this forward as it was considered innovative.

**AB13.05.4.5.5** It was suggested that there were challenges around lack of engagement and timing with student feedback. This year, the aim was to focus attention on the results of the SES so that changes could be made that impacted on the current student body. At present, the response rate for the SES is not high, however, the Chair suggested that if the university could demonstrate that feedback given was having an impact and that it was worth doing we would get better engagement.

**AB13.05.5** **TO DISCUSS**

The meeting undertook a discussion session around putting the 2020 Strategy into Practice. Round table discussions took place in the areas of

Research, International, Practice-orientated, Culture change and Technology Enhanced Learning. The main areas of discussion are outlined below:

#### **AB13.05.5.1**

##### **Research**

- Clarification is required over the entitlement to professorial, QR and personal research time
- Prioritising research resources; flexibility required to deal with changing priorities
- How we distribute QR monies; SPUR awards – establish bridging money for researchers awaiting funding; clarify who SPUR is for (university or researcher)
- Quality of research; all or select members of staff - research centres - associate members of research centres
- Partnership centred; funded by QR money; no formal agreement; how to explore outcome of research
- Teaching and the student experience; external funded bursaries; open research centres more to students
- PG studentships – cross disciplinary
- Offer VC Fellowships

Points to be referred to the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee

#### **AB13.05.5.2**

##### **International**

- Students are competing globally so best to engage them internationally
- UWE could make better use of students and alumni as ambassadors
- Increase focus on direct international recruitment
- UKBA environment challenging
- Curriculum could be more global; benchmarking against other countries
- Could use technology better; join up students
- Encourage students to spend time abroad; scholarships; VC scholarships
- Global engagement; comparisons of student learning; comparisons of curriculum at approval stage; joint degrees with other global institutions
- How can we facilitate internationalisation and make sure we have the right staff; focus on those who want to engage with us
- Focus development against strategy
- Develop summer programmes; have to find ways of making part of the university agenda from both sides.

Points to be referred to Global Executive Committee , and Faculty Curriculum Approval Panels as appropriate

#### **AB13.05.5.3**

##### **Practice-orientated**

- Definition of practice-orientated; what matters is how we introduce students to practice; challenge is not sending out a message of the institution being vocational
- Students realising that they are developing particular skills; may be

more ready to accept this due to current fee situation

- Delivering accessible curriculum; appropriate spaces – real world facing – creating a working environment - space needs to be more industry facing
- Credibility and partnerships; credibility of staff important to students; staff training and ideas
- Working both in and out of university
- Enablers; don't make enough use of alumni
- Relationships with partners should be visible to students
- Regard PSRBs as partners; work with them to set their agenda too
- Co-creation – creating partnerships

Points to be referred to Academic Quality and Enhancement Committee and Faculty Curriculum Approvals Panels as appropriate

#### **AB13.05.5.4 Culture change**

- Staff need more of a sense of belonging/community so that everyone understands what the university is about and how they contribute; happy staff mean happy students
- Staff to be more active externally to understand that we do things that we can be proud of
- Redevelopment of the campus
- Understanding what we are about and where we are going to get to
- Communication; making time and inclination for conversations; making better use of staff timetabled time; engaging staff with different communities in the university
- Focusing on what is important in the university
- Need to be bold; start with strategy – engage and deliver; university campaign of pride in the institution

Points to be referred to HR

#### **AB13.05.5.5 TEL**

- Engaging staff with strategy; scholarship time to develop TEL
- Ensure ADP inductions have TEL embedded
- Ensure TEL embedded in all UWE business
- Technology in everything we do
- Ensure staff have the skills to embed in practice; self diagnostic to appraise skill level
- Need to focus efforts on the world of work
- Consider remote presentations / online meetings
- Make sure technology is easy to use
- Helping staff will help students; PALs could help staff with technology as mentors (could pilot next year)

Points to be referred to the Technology Enhanced Learning Group

**AB13.05.5.6** The Deputy Academic Registrar commented that the Board's sub-committees could be used to take some of these suggestions forward or in some instances using task and finish groups could be appropriate. It was acknowledged that some of the work was already underway. .

#### **AB13.05.6 ITEMS TO NOTE**

**AB13.05.6.1 Vice Chancellor's Update**

The Chair gave a verbal report and reminded the meeting that recent publications were available in terms of the 2020 Strategy and the regular VC update. There was a lot of excitement and energy across the sector being put into submissions for the next comprehensive spending round and budgets for 2015-16. It was very likely there would be further cuts and that these may affect some areas currently seen as being protected, e.g. widening participation, research.

**AB13.05.6.1.1** The UUK position would be resistance to cuts and the Alliance and other mission groups would support a similar position. The Chair confirmed to the meeting that the market place was still rather challenging and the university would have to focus on the Strategy as a way of protecting the institution against any extremes that may happen.

**AB13.05.6.1.2** The meeting was remind that the university had been through a process of identifying Honorary Graduates by trying to identify individuals who had made a significant contribution and had an impact in the region. Faculties and Professional Services are asked to put forward nominations and a committee looked at the profiles and made decisions. This year twenty candidates had been discussed and eight identified. So far six individuals had confirmed that they are pleased to accept an Honorary Degree, although the names were confidential and not yet in the public domain.

**AB13.05.6.2 Minutes of Academic Board Sub Committees**

*Paper AB150506 was received and noted*

The minutes from the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2013 were noted.

**AB13.05.7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

It was brought to the attention of the meeting that UWE had risen two places in a recent university guide and that the institution had done well in the region. This was a result of hard work that had been done by all in the institution and shows that the university is making progress. It was agreed that the National Student Survey could have a significant impact on league table positions and could significantly impact placings on an annual basis. It was also noted that when ranked by graduate prospects some faculties were performing extremely well.

**AB13.05.8 DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

26 June 2013, 3A22, Frenchay Campus.



ACADEMIC BOARD

**COMMITTEE NAME**

Meeting date: Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2013

**ACTION SHEET FROM THE MEETING HELD 1<sup>st</sup> May 2013**

Minute	Substance	Actioning Officer	Reporting Deadline
<b>AB13.05.1</b>	Chair to report any actions taken subsequent to the meeting	Steve West (VC)	26 June 2013