

ACADEMIC BOARD

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board held on Wednesday 17 December 2014.

Present: Steve West (Chair), Martin Boddy, JJ Clark, Lauren Conen, Clayton Davies, John Deane, Jon Dovey, Manuel Frutos-Perez, Alex Gilkison, Jane Harrington, Theda Hlaing, Lynne Lawrence, James Lee, Mandy Lee, Glenn Lyons, Lamine Mahdjoubi, Jo Midgley, Chris Moore, Steven Neill, Paul Olomolaiye, Glen Parry, Callan Powers, Peter Rawlings, Charlie Roper, Jeanette Sakel.

In attendance: Gaynor Attwood, John Clarke, Rachel Cowie, Alastair Osborn.

Apologies: Jason Briddon, Noel Burchell, Paul Dowdall, Benjamin Drew, Sarah Green, Bernhard Gross, Catherine Hobbs, Dylan Jones-Evans, Adam Pinfold, Darren Reynolds, Rachel Sales, Rosie Scott Ward, Aniko Varadi, Tracy Willis.

AB14.12.1 **Membership and Terms of Reference**
Paper AB14/12/1 was received and noted.

AB14.12.2 **Minutes of the last meeting**
Paper AB14/12/2 was received.

Members approved the minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2014.

MATTERS ARISING

AB14.12.3 Student Voice Working Group
Members noted an update from the Director of Academic Services on the work of the group including preparation for the 2015 student surveys and in particular that the Group would also be looking to develop recommendations around the development of student feedback activities in the future, including the level and format in which it was collated. Members were also invited to provide information on actions taken in response to student feedback which could be utilised for the ongoing *#YousaidUWEdid* campaign.

AB14.12.4 Online assessment and module design
The Chair informed members that Academic Board would consider both online assessment and module design again later in the year.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

AB14.12.5 **Innovative approaches to teaching and learning**

AB14.12.5.1 Faculty of Environment and Technology
The Executive Dean and Pro Vice-Chancellor of the Faculty highlighted that the Faculty continued to place an emphasis on learning technologies which was culminating in the development of a 'grass roots' mooc for the City of Bristol. Members received a presentation¹ from the Faculty Learning Technologist on the

¹ Most presentations given at Academic Board may be accessed by staff and students at:
<http://goo.gl/nwiJhA>

development of the MOOC which had been designed to signal new approaches to teaching and learning in the Faculty and to accelerate learning in the field.

AB14.12.5.2 The development centered on leveraging Faculty expertise to present a coherent programme that capitalised on Bristol's status as the 2015 European Green Capital, but could be applicable to the environmental movement more widely. Based on the Blackboard Open Project, enrolment was anticipated to be in the region of three to four thousand people and it would be launched in the middle Bristol's year as European Green Capital.

AB14.12.5.3 During subsequent discussion members noted that the new programme:

- i. would not be credit bearing;
- ii. provided a technology enhanced learning 'sandbox' for the institution and potential synergies with programmes in the Faculty of Health and Applied Sciences would also be explored;
- iii. potentially utilise the Mozilla badge system as a form of recognition for participants;
- iv. would benefit from the input of Masters students and the University's Green Leaders.

AB14.12.5.4 Faculty of Arts and Creative Industries
Executive Dean and Pro Vice-Chancellor highlighted that the Faculty had focused on developing the practice elements of its portfolio, in particular within humanities subjects which traditionally challenged practice led approaches to curricula development.

AB14.12.5.5 The Faculty's approach, which had seen extensive growth whilst maintaining tariff, was outlined by the Head of the Department for Arts and Cultural Industries who highlighted that:

- i. the move towards more programmatic structures had increased the level of ownership felt by both staff and students and in turn contributed to a sense of partnership and encouraged peer learning and interaction;
- ii. open days emphasised research led teaching and the mix between subject specific and skills development content of the programmes;
- iii. Programme reviews specifically sought to identify the desired student outcomes with the curriculum and assessment following. Student feedback was also closely considered throughout the programme life-cycle.

AB14.12.5.6 During ensuing discussion members noted that the Faculty also took an approach to student retention that started with applicants by running closed and moderated social media spaces facilitated by a recent graduate and student reps. In turn this had provided a further level of insight into the student experience.

AB14.12.5.7 Faculty of Business and Law
Members welcomed a video presentation introduced by the Executive Dean and Pro Vice-Chancellor of the Faculty outlining three innovative approaches taken within the Faculty including:

- i. an audit simulation programme designed to support students practice the theory in order to meet high PSRB expectations;
- ii. the development of pebblepad as an e-portfolio supporting student assessment in Law to provide a log of students' learning journey; and

- iii. Team Entrepreneurship which unlike a traditional programmes took a active, problem centred approach to student learning based on a pedagogic approach of facilitation to support the student to establish and run companies as part of the programme.

AB14.12.5.8 Hartpury College

The Dean of the Associate Faculty provided an overview of the staff development approach being adopted at the College which was not traditionally seen within more traditional higher education institutions, this included:

- i. unannounced peer teaching observation, which included provision for reviews themselves to be moderated. This had been welcomed by staff and was coupled with a mirror of the UWE Teaching Awards;
- ii. Learning and Teaching Grants for staff that were engaging students on pedagogic projects, some of which had also been showcased at Higher Education Academy Events.

AB14.12.5.9 During discussion the Chair noted that the University continued to consider peer observation options and the experience of colleagues at Hartpury College would be valuable to inform the debate within the institution. Members also noted that peer feedback could extend beyond teaching observation to include written assessment feedback provided and both, if used prudently could be a highly effective staff development tool.

AB14.12.5.10 Faculty of Health and Applied Science

Members received a presentation from the Executive Dean and Pro Vice-Chancellor of the Faculty highlighting that:

- i. Student Surveys were a proxy for how the Faculty engaged with students and to that end work continued to reenergize Student Rep/Staff Fora and develop thematic discussions within the Faculty to encourage continuous incremental improvement;
- ii. Similarly to colleagues in the Faculty of Arts and Creative Industries the practice oriented approach had been embedded and supported with significant investment that included high-fidelity mannequins and a simulated hospital ward and a forensic science house. In both cases students benefited from instant feedback;
- iii. Psychology had developed additional feedback mechanisms to support in-year improvements to be made to the student experience and, again, a partnership approach with the students had begun to evolve.

AB14.12.5.11 The Chair thanked colleagues for their contributions and emphasised that it would be critical for those in leadership roles to continue the conversations, identifying the links between areas in order to develop interesting and academically stretching programmes that provided clear career pathways.

AB14.12.6 Approaches to Survey Engagement

Members noted an update from the Director of Academic Services that the 2015 surveys would be launched on 26 January and materials would be designed to complement the continuing #YousaidUWEdid campaign. Activity would also be coordinated between the center and faculties to ensure the best possible coverage.

AB14.12.7 Release of Unconfirmed marks to students

Paper AB 14/12/3 was received.

AB14.12.7.1 During discussion members noted that in January 2012 Academic Board endorsed the early release of marks to students which was subsequently fully implemented in January 2014. There was also considered to be a strong recommendation from students that the practice continue.

AB14.12.7.2 Students also highlighted that they would also like to know when marks were released and this provided an opportunity to further remind them of the unconfirmed context. To that end work would take place to automate emails to students upon release of marks and that could in-turn link to media explaining assessment cycle.

AB14.12.7.3 Whilst recognising that timely release of marks, albeit unapproved, created challenges in a some areas members **approved** the recommendations that the practice be continued with steps taken to improve communication.

AB14.12.8 Visiting Fellows

Paper AB 14/12/3 was received.

AB14.12.8.1 The Chair highlighted that the discussion centered on linking industry individuals to the University and there were a suite of academic titles which could be used, some controlled through Academic Board.

AB14.12.8.2 Members agreed that a title supporting industry engagement could be useful and requested the Vice-Chancellor to engage and develop advisory boards and allow a local pilot that takes note of the processes used elsewhere and assures individuals are genuinely engaged. The Executive Team would release further guidance, including a standard letter and Faculties participating in the pilot would be required to keep a register of titles awarded.

Action: Chair

AB14.12.9 Academic Performance Indicators

Paper AB14/12/4 was deferred to the following meeting.

ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

AB14.12.10 Hartpury College variant regulations

Paper AB14/12/5 was received

Members **approved** the variant regulations for the associate college, noting that there would be a requirement on the college to undertake some of the processes outlined manually.

AB14.12.11 UWE Futures Foundation Award

Paper AB14/12/6 was received.

Members **approved** the award noting that it built on the existing successes and would help support the development of further links to schools and employers alike.

AB14.12.12 UWE Policy and Code of Good Research Governance

Paper AB14/12/8 was received.

- AB14.12.12.1 Members noted that the Code was a requirement of the research concordat, compliance with which would be necessary in order to attract research funding. It was recognised that the Code represented the start of a significant process, with implementation being considered a long-term project.
- AB14.12.12.2 Discussion elsewhere within the academic governance structure had been supportive of the Code but had highlighted that there would be a need to ensure appropriate communication with students as it could impact on Practice and Undergraduate placements.
- AB14.12.12.3 Members welcomed and **approved** the Code requesting minor changes to the governance structure diagram and a revision to the IP statement to ensure it was clear that the University was open to work with stakeholders.

AB14.12.13 Bristol Economic Analysis Research Centre

Paper AB14/12/8 was received.

Academic Board welcomed proposals from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Business Engagement) outlining that the proposal linked into the relationship with the Local Enterprise Partnership and would extend beyond research into consultancy and **approved** the development of the Bristol Economic Analysis Research Centre.

AB14.12.14 Annual Report of Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee

- AB14.12.14.1 Members **approved** the Report of Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee and in particular congratulated colleagues on the award of two doctoral training centres. A Future report on Knowledge Exchange and Business engagement would be presented to the Board.
- AB14.12.14.2 The Vice-Chancellor noted that there would be a need to highlight the work both internally and with the local community and requested that further work be done to use it to promote, and profile, the institution. The research website which was a particularly useful portal into the University's work in this area.

AB14.12.15 Student Welfare and Conduct

Papers AB14/12/10 – 12 were received.

- AB14.12.15.1 Members warmly welcomed and **approved** the policy statement on sexual and domestic violence, abuse and harassment noting that it would be important for the institution to be take a lead given its increasing prevalence as an issue within the sector. Academic Board also welcomed steps designed to coordinate action that promoted a zero tolerance approach across the City.
- AB14.12.15.2 The Chair noted that the Conduct report provided a useful insight into cases being handled by the University and that over time the report would be developed to further support and inform policy developments.
- AB14.12.15.3 Members discussed the revisions to the student conduct policy noting in response to queries that the conduct policy was not intended to impinge on students' ability for lawful protest or freedom of speech. Academic Board **approved** the revisions to the policy and noted that the Home Office and Universities UK were continuing to work on the issue of radicalisation on campus and that legislation impacting on the Universities, and with implications for student conduct, may be introduced in the next parliament. The Chair through University Alliance continued to play a role in shaping this discussion.

- AB14.12.16 Professional law programmes – variant regulations**
Papers AB14/12/13 and AB14/12/14 were received and approved.
- AB14.12.17 UWE Bristol International College**
Paper AB14/12/15 was received and approved.
- AB14.12.18 Taylors University, Malaysia and UWE Dual Award Framework**
Paper AB14/12/16 was received and approved.

REPORTS AND UPDATES

- AB14.12.19 Update from UWE Student Representatives**
Paper AB14/12/17 was received.
- AB14.12.19.1 The Vice-President Education introduced the report and highlighted that to-date 1160 student representatives had been recruited in partnership with the University and of those sixty three per cent had received training, a level which exceeded previous years.
- AB14.12.19.2 Academic Board also noted the strong engagement of Faculties with the Student Led Teaching Awards which members may wish to further signpost to colleagues.
- AB14.12.20 Updates from Faculty Boards**
- Members noted the item had been covered as part of the discussions on approaches to teaching and learning and survey engagement.
- AB14.12.21 Vice-Chancellor's update**
Paper AB14/12/18 was received.
- Academic Board welcomed the appointment of Professor Jane Harrington, Helen Wildman and Jo Midgley to the Senior Management team of the University and also congratulated Professor Steven Neil and Dr Noel Burchell as Pro Vice-Chancellors and Executive Deans of the Faculties of Health and Applied Sciences and Business and Law respectively.

ITEMS TO NOTE

- AB14.12.22 Chairs Actions Undertaken since the last meeting**
Noted by members.
- AB14.12.23 Dates of future meetings**
All meetings scheduled to be held from 14:00 - 17:00 in the Dartington Suite.
- Wednesday 4 March 2015
Wednesday 20 May 2015
Wednesday 8 July 2015