

## ACADEMIC BOARD

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board held on Wednesday 18 May 2016.

**Present:** Steve West (Chair), Martin Boddy, Lauren Conen, Lucy Dumbell, Robert Elvin, Manuel Frutos-Perez, Alex Gilkison, Georgina Gough, Jane Harrington, Catherine Hobbs, Lynne Lawrance, Mandy Lee, Helen Lloyd Wildman; Glenn Lyons, Lamine Mahdjoubi, Stuart McClean, Jo Midgley, Paul Olomolaiye, Adam Pinfold, Jack Polson, Milena Popova, Darren Reynolds, Jan Richardson (for Steven Neill), Jeanette Sakel, Fiona Tolmie, Donna Whitehead, Aylwin Yafele

**In attendance:** Tracy Chalk, John Clarke, Chris Gledhill (Clerk), John Lanham (for AB16.05.3.4), Alastair Osborn, Tracy Willis

**Observers:** Jodie Anstee, Delia Bean, Ahmd Emara (SU), Jamie Jordon (SU)

**Apologies:** Jason Briddon, Rachel Cowie, Steven Neill, Rosie O'Neill, Glenn Parry, Peter Rawlings, Rachel Sales

### AB16.05.1 Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed Tracy Chalk, Director of Strategic Marketing and Communications to the meeting. Also welcomed were Ahmd Emara, the incoming President of the Students' Union and Jamie Jordon, VP, Education.

On behalf of Academic Board, the Chair expressed his sincere thanks to the Jack Polson, SU President and Lauren Conen, VP Education, for their contribution to a number of significant improvements at UWE Bristol and wished them well for the future.

### AB16.05.2 Emerita/Emeritus Professorships

AB16.05.2.1 Following detailed presentations of commendation, Academic Board granted Professor Emeritus/a status to:

- i. Professor Vyv Salisbury
- ii. Professor Peter Rawlings
- iii. Professor Robin Hambleton
- iv. Professor Martin Bigg.

### AB16.05.3 Minutes and Matters Arising

*Paper AB16/05/01 was received*

#### AB16.05.3.1 Minutes

Subject to corrections to the details of attendees, apologies received and the correction of the title of the Faculty of *Environment* and Technology, the minutes of the meeting held Wednesday 2 March 2016 were **approved**.

#### AB16.05.3.2 Min AB16.03.2.4 refers: Faculty Boards

Members noted that a meeting had taken place earlier that day of the new Faculty Board working group. Members' attention in particular was drawn to:

- Faculty of Business and Law – the Faculty had established a feed-forward lunch initiative due to start week commencing 6 June 2016, timed to take place prior to the meetings of the Faculty Board, at which staff were invited to raise matters of praise or concern and feedback from the meetings would be shared through the Faculty newsletter. Members of the Faculty Executive

were excluded from these lunches. Academic Board requested an update on the first lunch.

**Action: PVC/Executive Dean, FBL and Vice Chair of Faculty Board**

- AB16.05.3.3 – Faculty Board elections would be re-run as soon as possible for those Faculties without a full complement of membership;

**Action: Governance team**

- Cycles of board/committee business from the Board of Governors and its committees through to Academic Board, its committees and the Faculty Boards would be published on the intranet so that the full year of business was visible and could be added to as and when further business became known. This would assist Faculty representatives in their engagement with colleagues.

**Action: Governance team**

- AB16.05.3.4 Min AB16.03.9 refers: Vice-Chancellor's Report – Apprenticeships  
*Paper AB16/05/02 was received*

Members received an update from the Associate Dean, Partnerships and noted the following:

- An apprenticeship was a way of studying or training combined with paid employment at a range of educational levels (2-7), with levels 2-4 being typically FE and 5-7 HE;
- The importance of understanding that the term 'apprenticeship' defined how a learner could combine education with employment, rather than the level of learning;
- Government's adoption of the "Trailblazers" model in which employers and employer groups design or decide what should be covered in an apprenticeship;
- Employers would have access to funding support and would be able to 'shop' for their provider of choice;
- 3,000,000 apprenticeship starts were planned during the current parliament;
- An apprenticeship was appropriate for those who knew the direction in which they wanted to go in terms of career;
- Apprenticeships could become a significant portion of business for UWE Bristol and the University had a strong position, given its heritage, in relation to its key regional competitors/traditional universities; this would require some challenging discussions with the University's FE partners;
- Apprenticeship was defined in a 'Standard' comprised of 3 aspects: Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours, developed through the combination of education and employment;
- Changing landscape in that these Standards were currently approved by BIS/Skills Funding Agency (SFA), but a new Apprentice Institute was being established to provide oversight across the UK at all levels;
- Employer Levy – put in place for both public and private sector large employers with payrolls of over £3m and set at 0.5% of payroll (UWE Bristol will pay £600,000. Details include:
  - employer pays a third of the fees, government pays two-thirds
  - employer able to use their levy contribution to pay for all of their post-16 apprenticeships, but not for any non-apprenticeship education or training
  - smaller businesses under the payroll threshold will be able to access the levy funding to support their own apprentices;
- all political parties had subscribed to this initiative;

- there were a number of opportunities and challenges for UWE Bristol to consider, but the University was aiming to secure registration with the SFA by the summer 2016;
- The expected publication in July 2016 of a document setting out the Apprenticeship landscape for levels 2,3,4, and 5 for technical and professional education (TFE), details anticipated:
  - 4 pathways – to be college- and employer-based, with equivalent end-points
  - 15 employment areas
  - occupational standards
  - oversight by the Apprentice Institute
  - interface with levels 6, 7 and 8.

*Dr. Lanham left the meeting.*

AB16.05.3.5 Min AB16.03.20 refers: Confidential Matter  
*Paper AB16/05/03 was received*

This item is recorded as a confidential minute.

## ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

**AB16.05.4 Vice-Chancellor's Update**  
*Paper AB16/05/04 was received*

AB16.05.4.1 Members received an update from the Vice-Chancellor and noted the following in particular:

AB16.05.4.2 *HE White Paper 'Success as a knowledge economy: teaching excellence, social mobility and student choice*

- Published on 16 May 2016, the White Paper had few changes from the Green Paper, although it was evident that the 600+ responses to the consultation had been noted, with a number of identifiable additions suggested by the University Alliance. The sector should be confident therefore, that the White Paper provided opportunities to demonstrate and pursue excellence within its institutions;
- Government's intention was clear in that:
  - students lay at the heart of the system
  - they should receive high quality teaching and learning
  - academic programmes should be research-led and research-informed
  - students should have access to transparent and current information to allow them to make informed decisions about university and thereon to graduation;
- Announcement was expected that day in the Queen's Speech of legislative time to allow the White Paper to become law;
- The White Paper improved competition in the sector, making it easier to set up "high quality" universities in order to give students more choice;
- The quality bar would be set high to safeguard the reputation of the sector as well as to create a level playing field in how institutions would be regulated and monitored;
- Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) would be the subject of a technical consultation for years 2, 3 and 4:
  - Year 1 – successful QAA audit allows inflation of fees by RPI
  - Year 2 – metrics will be piloted and institutions invited to participate; the pilot could lead to an inflation uplift

- Years 3 and 4 – will be linked to reputational gain (metrics and contextual data), similar to a REF-type model;
- Regulation – the new regulator, the Office for Students (OfS) would assume some elements of HEFCE and OFFA - and the authority to grant degree awarding powers and university title would transfer from the Privy Council to the OfS;
- The Secretary of State would have the power to designate the agencies for quality assurance;
- UWE Bristol would focus on responding to the TEF technical consultation, which would be led by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost.

**AB16.05.4.3** *HEFCE's plans for a revised approach to Quality Assessment*

- HEFCE published plans in March 2016 for a revised operating model for quality assessment in HE, with the intention for the plans to be introduced in 2017/2018 and transitional arrangements in 2016/2017;
- The results of the tender for 6 packages of work to support the revised process were: 4 lots of activity given to QAA, 1 given to the Leadership Foundation in Higher Education (LFHE) and 1 to HEFCE.

**AB16.05.4.4** *Strategy 2020 mid-point review*

- The strategy was published in 2013, since when a number of things had moved on both externally (removal of student number cap and the recent White Paper and TEF) and internally (a number of large strategic programmes, Research Strategy, new senior team in place and new brand);
- The first phase of 3 years of the strategy had been envisaged to focus on foundation building and regaining position in a competitive HE environment and this second phase was due to focus on transforming UWE Bristol to achieve its ambitions;
- This mid-point review would provide an opportunity to assess the University's current position and the distance yet to cover, as well as providing a means to further engage colleagues in Strategy 2020 more locally: for them, their area of work and how they would contribute to the overall direction of travel;
- A wide range of stakeholder groups were engaged in the mid-point review including VCAB, senior managers, UWE Business Fellows, Board of Governors and its Strategic Planning and Performance Committee, as well as Students' Union, Professoriate, Strategy 2020 Staff Voice Group and Academic Board;
- The University was also undertaking the same review in its external environment to ensure that it was fully engaging with the audiences it served.

**AB16.05.4.5** The Vice-Chancellor remarked upon the imperative of ensuring that S2020 was delivering for everyone at UWE Bristol and he invited Academic Board Members to form several groups to consider Strategy 2020 in light of the following questions:

1. Since the strategy was launched, what things feel most different to you?
2. What does the pace of change feel like, e.g. too fast, too slow, about right?
3. How confident do you feel that we will achieve the ambitions set out in S2020?
4. What barriers might we need to address?
5. What are the gaps to address or opportunities that may help us achieve S2020?
6. Any other thoughts, comments or questions?

**AB16.05.5** **Strategy 2020: Mid-Point Review – Initial Feedback**

AB16.05.5.1 Members were invited to share highlights of discussions.

AB16.05.5.2 Feedback included:

- S2020 was felt to be as relevant now as it was in 2013 and that in the last 18 months in particular it felt as if the University was really moving towards its objective and the only question would be how much was realistically achievable between now and 2020;
- S2020 was also felt to be very active although it would be interesting to know how it felt ‘on the ground’; e.g. with lecturers, technicians, etc.;
- The first 6 to 12 months focused upon working out the Strategy in a contextualised format and during the last 18 months it had felt reassuring to be part of a university with a culture of deep-thinking about where it wants to be;
- How the Strategy would manifest itself as it affected colleagues’ working practices would be important and the need to secure early ‘sign-in’ would be key;
- Achievements so far were not being communicated/cascaded effectively through the University;
- From the student perspective, despite participating in the University’s teaching and learning strategy initiatives – e.g. employability – it was not clear that these were connected to Learning 2020;
- Some things had clearly improved – e.g. IT had significantly improved over the first phase – whilst others appeared to involve more bureaucracy, form-filling. It was hoped that this was temporary.

AB16.05.5.3 The Vice-Chancellor remarked upon the need for the Directorate to continually guard against the creation of unnecessary bureaucracy and administration around the strategic objectives.

AB16.05.5.4

- There was value to the institution in undertaking activities that were unfamiliar or riskier than the norm;
- Physical alterations being made to the University provided visible evidence to all stakeholders that change was happening;
- Curriculum Approval Panels were felt to be somewhat ineffectual and that perhaps where possible, dealing with matters locally may encourage momentum.

AB16.05.5.5 The Vice-Chancellor thanked Members for their comments and urged them to take the discussion to their areas of work for further debate and challenge, to ensure that the focus of the next phase of S2020 was meaningful.

Members were requested to communicate their feedback in full to the Head of Policy and Strategy.

**Action: Members to communicate feedback on the S2020 mid-point review to the Head of Policy and Strategy**

## ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

**AB16.05.6**      **2016/2017 Academic Governance Calendar**  
*Paper AB16/05/05 was received*

AB16.05.6.1 Members were reminded that the 2016/2017 calendar had been approved by Academic Board at the end of the previous academic year and had been communicated to students.

AB16.05.6.2 Members highlighted a number of anomalies in the calendar for correction/further investigation.

**Action: Governance Team**

**AB16.05.7**      **Academic Regulations**

AB16.05.7.1 Revised Proposal for Student Self-Certification

*Paper AB16/05/06 was received*

Members noted the following points of clarification:

- Self-certification was permissible for one opportunity, one element of assessment;
- Where there were 2 or more assessment deadlines within a 24/48 hour period, self-certification could be used only once and students would be expected to use extenuating circumstances for the remainder.

AB16.05.7.2 Members **agreed** that the proposal be monitored over its first year of implementation.  
**Action: Academic Services**

AB16.05.7.3 Subject to the above, the revised proposal for Student Self-Certification was **approved**.

AB16.05.7.4 Variant Regulations for the Institute of Engineering and Technology  
*Paper AB16/05/07 was received*

Members **approved** the recommendation to vary the classification calculation for the BEng Robotics and BEng Electronics and Computer Engineering in line with the existing variation to the BEng Electronic Engineering.

## REPORTS AND UPDATES

### AB16.05.8 Update from UWE Student Representatives

*Paper AB16/05/08 was received and noted.*

The VP Education expressed her thanks for the support received throughout her two terms of office.

### AB16.05.9 Curriculum Approvals Panels Annual Report 2014/2015

*Paper AB16/05/08 was received and noted.*

AB16.05.9.1 Members noted that this was an assurance-based report for Academic Board which outlined how the Panels had discharged their responsibilities through the year.

AB16.05.9.2 Members also noted that elements of the report relating to enhancement had been separated out and would be considered by LTSEC for recommendation to Academic Board.

### AB16.05.10 Updates from Faculty Boards

Hartpury College – the Faculty Board had discussed Hartpury's Quality Enhancement Framework and quality assurance across the piece.

Members noted that no other Faculty Board meetings had taken place since the last Academic Board meeting in March and were scheduled in June 2016.

## ITEMS TO NOTE

### AB16.05.11 Any Other Business

Amendment to Academic Regulations and Ordinances

This item is recorded as a confidential minute.

There was no further business.

### AB16.05.12 Dates of future meetings

All meetings scheduled to be held from 14:00 - 17:00 in the Dartington Suite.

**ITEMS TO NOTE**

**AB16.05.11 Any Other Business**

AB16.05.11.1 Amendment to Academic Regulations and Ordinances  
*Paper AB16/05/10 was tabled.*

Members were allowed some time to read the paper.

AB16.05.11.2 Members were informed that, following a review of the University's preparedness for supporting students through periods of disruption caused by force majeure, a number of clarifications had been identified to bring the Academic Regulations in line with the rest of the HE sector.

AB16.05.11.3 Following full and considered deliberation, Members **approved** the revised Regulation I.15.2R and **endorsed** the change of University Ordinance to the Board of Governors for approval.