



ACADEMIC BOARD

CONFIRMED

Minutes of the Academic Board held on Wednesday 9 October, 2019.

Present: Martin Boddy, Sally Clark, Elizabeth Cleaver, Sonja Dragojlovic - Oliveira, Hazel Edwards, Marc Griffiths, Jane Harrington, Sam Louwers, Candida McCabe, Fidel Meraz, Ray McDowell (for Donna Whitehead), Fidel Meraz, Christopher Moore, James Murphy, Jane Ojiako, Paul Olomolaiye, Precious Onyenekwu Tatak, Favour Oweisana, Jeanette Sakel, Sarah Todd, Patricia Voaden, Steven West (Chair) Neil Willey.

In attendance: Jodie Anstee, Jason Briddon, Rachel Cowie, Chris Gledhill, Katie Jenkins, Heather Moyes (Secretary), Amanda Oliver (Deputy Secretary).

Apologies: Paul Bennet, Peter Clegg, Lisa Cole, Mandy Lee, Carinna Parraman, Jane Roscoe, Nicholas Ryder, Aylwin Yafele.

AB 19.10.1 WELCOME and APOLOGIES

AB 19.10.1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and announced the following new members:

Sam Louwers (undergraduate student representative)
Favour Oweisana (undergraduate student representative)
Lisa Cole (postgraduate student representative)
Gerry Rice (representative Associate Dean L&T)
Hazel Edwards (representative Associate Dean Research)

He noted that apologies had been received from:

Paul Bennet, Peter Clegg, Lisa Cole, Mandy Lee, Carinna Parraman, Jane Roscoe, Nicholas Ryder and Aylwin Yafele

No declarations of interest were received.

AB 19.10.1.2 Academic Board Terms of Reference

Members were asked to receive the Terms of Reference for Academic Board. It was noted that:

- The Director of Student Success Services' title has now been revised to Director of Library, Careers and Inclusivity;
- Under "Administration" reference would be made to co-opted members serving a maximum three year term of office.

Academic Board accepted the Terms of Reference based on these changes and the inclusion of “up to two co-opted members with voting rights”.

The Chair also highlighted the forthcoming elections for Committees and Boards in the new Academic Governance Structure and asked for the Board’s support in promoting these.

AB 19.10.2 **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING NOT ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA**
Paper AB19/10/02 and Paper AB19/10/03 were received.

AB 19.10.2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 3 July, 2019 were **approved** as a true and accurate record, subject to the inclusion of the Chair on the attendance list.

ACTION: Deputy Secretary

AB 19.10.2.1.1 The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 17 September, 2019 were **approved** as a true and accurate record subject to the following changes:

- Changing the reference under Faculty Boards from Student Vice President to an SU elected officer;
- Clarifying that the agreement that elected members are subject to three-year terms starts this academic year;

AB 19.10.2.2 There were no matters arising from the list of actions.

AB 19.10.2.3 **Matters Arising/Actions**
Paper AB 19/10/04 was received
It was noted that the annual report on Complaints and Appeals would be presented to the December Academic Board.

ACTION: Deputy Secretary

AB 19.10.2.4 **Chair’s Actions**
Paper 19/10/05 was received
Members noted Chair’s Actions taken since July Academic Board.

AB 19.10.3 **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

AB 19.10.3.1 **Update from the Vice-Chancellor**
Paper AB 19/10/06 was received

AB 19.10.3.1.1 The Vice-Chancellor informed Academic Board that it was Jane Harrington’s last meeting and asked that thanks were recorded to Jane, on behalf of Academic Board, for her fantastic contribution over the last 27 years. He wished well in her new role as Vice Chancellor of the University of Greenwich.

Academic Board members were advised that:

- The University was projecting a new student intake above target with all Faculties expected to exceed their targets for home/EU undergraduate recruitment. For international students, the Vice Chancellor, reported

that the University had received 1,763 deposits which was significantly above the September target. In response to the projected increase he reported that new and innovative approaches to student accommodation were being piloted;

- A final version of Strategy 2030 had been shared with all staff and an external launch would take place in February to coincide with the Bristol Distinguished Address Series. He highlighted that a series of supporting strategies and plans were in development which contained more detail on the approach and actions the University would take to deliver the strategic priorities identified. Academic Board were informed that they would be engaged in the development and approval of supporting strategies, plans and Key Performance Indicators. (KPIs). He emphasised that the KPIs would assist with alignment of reporting to sub-committees and Board of Governors. He also noted tracking and performance monitoring for Strategy 2030 would start at the beginning of the 2020/21 Academic Year;
- The University continued to have a sector leading role in supporting mental wealth and had recently launched a series of wellbeing modules for students. The Vice Chancellor reported that a priority for the University was to widen the Mental Wealth Strategy to include staff mental health within the context of a Healthy University;
- UWE Bristol was one of more than 50 universities that had pledged to develop a Civic University Agreement (CUA). The Vice Chancellor and the PVC Research and Enterprise noted that, in response, the University was developing a civic engagement plan, with key partners, focusing on place shaping and economic impacts across the city region. The Vice Chancellor added that the University was also considering how to embed these into Strategy 2030;
- The University's Access and Participation Plan 2020/21 – 2024/25 was approved by the Office for Students in September. They were also informed that the approval letter included measures for enhanced monitoring with respect to the attainment gap for underrepresented students. The Vice Chancellor advised the Board that the University would be working with OFS to understand best practice, support available and effective interventions. He also noted that monitoring of progress against the Access and Participation Plan would be through the Access and Participation Committee and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Committee, with oversight through the Board of Governors' Strategic Planning and Performance Committee;
- UWE Bristol had been shortlisted for three Times Higher Education Awards, for:
 - Outstanding Entrepreneurial University
 - Business School of the Year
 - Outstanding Strategic Planning Team – for the NSS Taskforce
- The University's innovation centre, Future Space, had achieved some significant milestones and had reached full capacity, recently welcoming Perceptual Robotics, Absolute Robotics, Yantra Digital, Pulmo and SciFlair. The Vice Chancellor reported that the centre had generated

nearly £5m for the regional economy between August 2017 and July 2018.

AB 19.10.4

ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

AB 19.10.4.1

University Research and Knowledge Exchange Annual Report 2018-19

Paper 19/10/07 was received

AB 19.10.4.1.1

Academic Board was asked to scrutinise and approve the report.

AB 19.10.4.1.2

The PVC Research and Enterprise highlighted the successes noted in the report, including:

- A bid success rate of 32% - securing income of £24.2m, marking a significant increase on previous annual totals;
- Securing a £7.8m grant from Research England which is the University's largest research grant;
- 1,591 outputs deposited in the UWE research repository in 2018/19 with year-on-year growth from 2016/17;
- The University Enterprise Zone. This included six EU ERDF-funded projects supporting innovative SMEs – with a total project value of nearly £16m (including match-funding);
- Research investment including the VC's Challenge Fund which advertises a new round of funding in October;
- The approval, of the University's REF 2021 Code of Practice by Research England. The PVC Research and Enterprise also noted preparations for the REF 2021 submission were strong and the University anticipates work from 400 academic staff being submitted compared to 300 in 2014;
- The online ethic applications system which goes live on 11 October;
- A successful E3 funding bid which was secured under the remit of the Industrial Strategy.
- Publication of the West of England Local Industrial Strategy which offers opportunities for engagement with business and other local stakeholders in support of innovation, skills and business growth across the city-region.
- The University was re-awarded the HR Excellence in Research Award.

AB 19.10.4.1.3

The PVC Research and Enterprise reported that 16 research and knowledge exchange metrics had been tracked since 2012/13 and would be made available to the Board.

ACTION: PVC Research and Enterprise

AB 19.10.4.1.4

He assured the Board there were robust governance processes and procedures in place.

AB 19.10.4.1.3

Academic Board approved the report.

AB 19.10.4.2

Annual UWE Research Governance Report

Paper 19/10/08 was received

AB 19.10.4.2.1

The PVC Research and Enterprise advised Academic Board that the report was a condition of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity which requires the University to provide an annual report to the Board of Governors providing:

- A summary of actions and activities that had been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues (for example postgraduate and researcher training, or process reviews);
- Assurances that there are processes in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct which are transparent, robust and fair, and continue to meet the University's requirements;
- A high-level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct;
- Assurance on accountability, and measures taken to continue to support consistently high standards of research integrity.

AB 19.10.4.2.2

He highlighted actions taken to comply with the Concordat including:

- The Code of Good Research Conduct;
- The UWE Research Data Management Plan;
- Online Research and Governance and Ethics Training;
- A research Governance Record for all Faculties;
- An advisory service for individual researchers;
- Processes for dealing with allegations of misconduct. The PVC Research and Enterprise noted that there had been 1 investigation of research misconduct since 2014 which had been satisfactorily concluded.

AB 19.10.4.2.3

The Chair confirmed that the process for dealing with allegations of misconduct applies to staff and students and would include whistleblowing.

AB 19.10.4.2.4

Academic Board approved the report for Board of Governors.

ACTION: PVC Research and Enterprise/Deputy Secretary

AB 19.10. 4.3

Academic Board Annual Academic Assurance Report to Board of Governors

Paper 19/10/09 was received

AB 19.10. 4.3.1

Academic Board were advised that the purpose of the report was to provide assurances to the Board of Governors on the academic activity of the University, aligned to the Office for Students conditions of registration.

AB 19.10. 4.3.2

The Deputy Director (Policy Development and Student Experience) explained that the Report incorporated the Annual Academic Board Report through which Academic Board reflects on its own performance and demonstrates its effectiveness. She also noted that the Report included an action plan which Academic Board would monitor during 2019/20.

AB 19.10. 4.3.3

Academic Board were informed that the format of the Assurance Report had been revised for 2019/20 and would be subject to further revisions for 2020/21

following the implementation of the new academic governance structure and the roll out of a consistent approach to assurance reporting.

AB 19.10. 4.3.4 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor gave an overview of the three academic assurances required as part of the OfS conditions of registration. She highlighted the assurances provided and the processes and evidence underpinning these including the achievement of TEF Gold and UWE's position in the Guardian League Table. She also drew attention to academic governance effectiveness, which required comment from Academic Board, and academic risks.

AB 19.10. 4.3.5 It was noted there were challenges around the preparation of the report as some reports were not available at the time the report was written. This included the outcomes from the University's Enhancement Framework 2018/19.

AB 19.10. 4.3.6 Members requested more context for the table on p53 i.e. the number of programmes and how many programmes external examiners report on. The Deputy Director (Policy Development and Student Experience) confirmed members that this would be addressed next year and professional body reviews would also be included in the report.

AB 19.10. 4.3.7 The Chair advised that the Board of Governors would be interested in monitoring and assurance on the attainment gap, grade inflation, how we compare with others and how improvements made. He suggested next year's report should also include information which provides assurance that the University is aware of emerging issues and future challenges and has considered actions to address these.

AB 19.10. 4.3.8 Overall members felt the report was an improvement and was easier to navigate than previous versions. Academic Board approved:

- the Annual Academic Board report, for inclusion as an Appendix to the main Annual Academic Assurance Report;
- the Annual Academic Assurance Report and action plan for onward consideration by the Board of Governors, via the Strategic Planning and Policy Committee.

ACTION: Deputy Director (Policy Development and Student Experience)

AB 19.10.4.4 Revisions to Policies relating to Student Behaviour and Health.

Paper AB 19/10/10 was received

AB 19.10.4.4.1 Academic Board were advised that the proposed framework and the revisions made to the policies had been informed by the views of staff and students and had also been endorsed by LTSEC.

AB 19.10.4.4.2 The Head of Student and Academic Policy Enhancement explained that the decision to review the policies was based on an increase in the number of student incidents at UWE and had also been informed by several high profile media cases around investigations into student misconduct across the sector.

AB 19.10.4.4.3 He highlighted that the main change was the introduction of the policy framework, which established a set of common principles underpinning all the policies and also clarified the relationships between them.

Other changes highlighted included:

AB 19.10.4.4.4

- Changes to the Student Conduct Policy and Disciplinary Procedures, including a new framework for illustrating levels of action and potential sanctions. In particular the changes to Level 1 in all policies was noted as having been very successful in avoiding escalation;
- The new formal case review process which was embedded in the policies;
- The introduction of the “fitness to study” route within the Professional Suitability Policy which aligns with practice elsewhere in the sector;
- Changes to the Fitness to Study Policy reflecting the value of academic staff involvement in discussions with the student;
- Changes to the Student Drug including Alcohol Policy. These included renaming the Policy to ‘Student Drugs including Alcohol Policy’, in line with city strategies in this area, and moving from a zero tolerance approach to use of illegal drugs to one of harm reduction. It was noted that this was supported by policy and practice of external bodies

AB 19.10.4.4.5

The Chair confirmed that the policies apply to all students irrespective of whether they live on or off campus.

AB 19.10.4.4.6

Academic Board were informed that the changes would be accompanied by a Communication Plan and training and that work was being undertaken on the specific on training required. The Head of Student and Academic Policy Enhancement emphasised the importance of induction in facilitating awareness of risk behaviours amongst students and interventions that can be applied.

AB 19.10.4.4.7

Members raised the importance of ensuring alignment between student and staff facing policies that address similar them.

AB 19.10.4.4.8

They also highlighted the importance of impartiality in decision making and not being “judge and jury”. The Head of Student and Academic Policy Enhancement reported that work was being undertaken to review how the policies link and relate to each other.

AB 19.10.4.4.9

The Chair emphasised the impact student misconduct has on staff and the importance of ensuring that the new framework and policy revisions are accompanied by appropriate training and support from staff with the right skills and expertise.

AB 19.10.4.5

Academic Calendar Review 2020/2021 (Tabled Item)

Paper AB19/10/14 was received

AB 19.10.4.5.1

Members were asked to approve a minor change to the academic calendar for 2020/2021, to allow for teaching to end on 18 December followed by three weeks of vacation with assessments in January.

Academic Board approved the change.

ACTION: Academic Board Deputy Secretary

AB 19.10.5

REPORTS AND UPDATES

AB 19.10.5.1 **Summary of Quality Metrics 2018/19 NSS, PTES and PRES Results**

Paper AB19/10/11 was received

AB 19.10.5.2 The Deputy Director (Policy Development and Student Experience) advised Academic Board that:

- The University's overall NSS score had slightly dropped slightly (by 1%) to 88% overall satisfaction. This placed UWE 11th across the sector and 7th of all universities;
- 46 programmes in the NSS scored over 92% with twelve scoring 100%, five more than last year;
- The Postgraduate Taught Survey (PTES) achieved an overall score of 91%, 2% higher than last year;
- The PRES runs every other year and this year achieved 82% overall satisfaction, 2% higher than 2017;
- The Taskforce approach was driving enhancement and improvements by identifying and sharing good practice, highlighting areas of concern and agreeing actions plan in response to these. It was reported that high performing programmes in the NSS and PTES were being celebrated at an award event in October. This was in addition to being encouraged to share their good practice at University wide events, organised by the Academic Practice Directorate in October and January.

AB 19.10.5.3 The Chair advised members the metrics were considered at SPPC on behalf of Board of Governors and, while the results were good, the University needed to reduce variability. He highlighted the importance of ensuring the quality of services offered to students continues to be enhanced and the value in viewing the survey results with other metrics e.g. graduate outcomes, student representation, market progression, the attainment gap etc.

It was noted that this was done through the balance scorecard which provides a more rounded view of the student experience.

AB 19.10.5.4

Academic Board noted the report.

AB 19.10.5.5

AB 19.10.6 STANDING ITEMS

AB 19.10.6.1 Update from UWE Student Representatives

Paper AB19/10/12 was received

AB 19.10.6.1.1 The President and Vice President: Education of the Students' Union presented their recent achievements and their future work plans to Academic Board.

AB 19.10.6.1.2 They reported that since being in post they had engaged in training and development, partnership working and a range of activities which support their manifesto pledges. Their achievements included:

- Producing a 'Welcome to UWE' video introducing students to Frenchay, Glenside and Bower Aston Studios;

- Working with the Global Centre to support conversation cafés helping international students to practice their English outside of a classroom setting;
- Working with the NUS prior to the government’s announcement around their reversal of their post study visa legislation;
- Meeting with members of Wellbeing, Student Support and the Communications team to raise awareness of the Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) assessment that is available to students.

AB 19.10.6.1.3

Their future work plans included:

- Working with Careers to launch an international student careers fair and to highlight which employers are willing to recruit international students;
- Hosting a food fair with diverse food vendors and food options to expand the variety of food choices on campus;
- Raising awareness around Cyber Security as part of Cyber Security Month;
- Celebrating “Black History Month” with a range of events including “Beyond Barriers” with influential panel members from across the Black community, including panellists from both UWE Bristol and the wider community. Academic Board were encouraged to attend;
- Developing a paper on the benefits and use of nap pods in order to aid studying.

AB 19.10.6.1.4

They also highlighted the reputational risks to the University associated with International students presenting at UWE Bristol without having secured accommodation. Whilst it was acknowledged this was not the University’s responsibility it was suggested that the University explores how it can reduce these occurrences.

AB 19.10.6.1.5

The Chair acknowledged the concerns and it was reported that a considerable amount of work was being undertaken to support international students’ transition, however, it was acknowledged that there was still more work to be done.

AB 19.10.6.1.6

The Chair thanked the President and Vice President: Education for their report.

AB 19.10.7

ITEMS TO NOTE

AB 19.10.7.1

Annual Schedule of Business for Academic Board

Paper AB19/10/13 was received

AB 19.10.7.1.1

Academic Board noted the schedule of business for Academic Board meetings in 2019-2020. Members were asked to email any additional items to the Deputy Secretary.

AB 19.10.8

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

AB 19.10.8.1

Nomination for Emeritus Professor

AB 19.10.8.1.1 Academic Board approved the nomination of Professor Richard Coates, Faculty of Arts, Creative Industries and Education, to be awarded the title Emeritus Professor.

ACTION: Chair/ Deputy Secretary

AB 19.10.8.1.2 **Items of any other business**
None were raised.

AB 19.10.9

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

All meetings scheduled will be held from 14:00 – 17:00

Wednesday 10 December 2019

Wednesday 26 February 2020

Wednesday 13 May 2020

Wednesday 1 July 2020

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