



ACADEMIC BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on the 22nd October 2008

08/01 Attendance

1.1. Present

Professor D Green (Chair), Mr D Antell, Mr W Bowen-Jones, Mr M Donovan, Dr M Doughty, Professor J Elkin, Professor G Elliott, Dr N Evans, Mr D Flint, Ms M Gamble, Mrs A Hannaford, Ms K Hanson, Mr A Hemming, Mrs L Jones, Dr J Keene, Mr J Martin, Mr T Maxfield, Professor J Newbury, Mr M Newitt, Professor A Payne, Mr R Prout, Mrs J Quallington, Mr M Richardson, Professor C Robertson, Dr I Scott, Dr M Stowell, Professor D Upton

1.2. In Attendance

Ms H Johnstone (Minuting Secretary), Mr J Ryan

1.3. Apologies

Mr A Hemming, Mr K Pickess

1.4. Membership

The Chair welcomed the new members, Mr Bowen-Jones, Mr Donovan, Dr Evans, Professor Newbury, Mr Newitt, Professor Payne and Dr Scott, to their first meeting of the Board.

08/02 Minutes

2.1. The minutes of the meeting held on the 2nd July 2008 [AB 08/01] were confirmed as a correct record.

2.2. Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the Agenda

2.2.1. Ofsted Inspection [minute 32.1 refers] – members noted that the report on Initial Teacher Education (Primary) had now been published. A celebratory event had been held for staff in the Institute of Education. Members of the Board congratulated the Institute's staff on an excellent achievement.

08/03 Vice Chancellor's Business

3.1. Vice Chancellor's Report [AB08/02]

The Vice Chancellor presented his report to the Board and updated members as follows:-

There will be an inaugural College of Fellows lecture in March. John Bedington, the Government's Chief Scientist has agreed to deliver the annual QinetiQ lecture in March 2009.

- 3.2. Chair's Action
The Chair advised the Board that he had approved a new set of disciplinary procedures pertaining to the behaviour in residential halls via Chair's Action.

08/04 Student Recruitment [AB08/04]

- 4.1. The Registrar reported that recruitment for Nursing and Midwifery courses had been good with the exception of Mental Health which had not quite reached its target. A decision had been made to over recruit to Adult Nursing in order to cover any lower recruitment in January. This is an excellent result given the problems in previous years.
- 4.2. Recruitment to TDA funded courses has also been good although there are still some shortfalls in some secondary subjects. The Head of Institute reported that to date there had been no withdrawals from the Primary courses and few in other areas.
- 4.3. As at the 15th October 2008 1701 new students had registered on HEFCE funded courses which is the largest year group the University has had. Recruitment to UMS courses is up by approximately 15% and Foundation Degrees by more than 30%. The increase in Foundation Degree students is partially due to the success of the Foundation Degree in Learning and Teaching being delivered in the South West.
- 4.4. The number of home students on postgraduate course, excluding PGCE, remains modest at 35. A review of the postgraduate course offer will be taking place, this will include reviewing frameworks and inhibitors to success at postgraduate level.
- 4.5. International recruitment has remained static with 74 new students registered. There will be no MBA delegation from China this year. The International Centre is following up students who opt to attend an alternative institution. The majority appear to be making their decisions based on the financial package available but there is also evidence of some University's accepting entry from those with a lower level of qualification.
- 4.6. The improved arrangements for electronic registration have resulted in 1277 more students being registered as at the 17th October 2008 than at the same time in 2007. Reminders have been sent to those students showing as provisional and lists of these students will be sent to departments and partner institutions in an attempt to maximise the position by the census date, 1st December. Partner institutions will be advised that they will only receiving resources for those students registered as at the 1st December.
- 4.7. Members noted that a return to HESA of 4000 students as at the 1st December may be achievable but this will depend on the level of wastage that can be included in the return.
- 4.8. The application cycle for 2009/2010 has started and the first UCAS tracker report shows the University's applications increasing by 100%, although it is too early in the cycle for this data to be of significance. Attendance at the Open Day in September was considerably up from the previous year.
- 4.9. The Registrar reported that the Recruitment Action Group had discussed conversion and how this can be improved. It had been agreed that a pilot scheme for a more institute based Visit Day would be carried out in the Business School. The group had also recommended that communication with applicants should be improved with an increased use of email.
- 4.10. The Board received the report.

08/05 Research Degrees Awarding Powers [AB08/05]

- 5.1. The Board received a draft application and a covering paper concerning the proposed date of the application. Members agreed that the application was of a high quality and presented a good case.
- 5.2. Members noted that the QAA would be providing further guidance for applying for research degree awarding powers although it was unlikely that the guidance would be available before Christmas 2008. However the advice from the QAA has been that the University should proceed with its application, rather than wait for the further guidance. It was noted that the further guidance related to data that ACDAP will expect to see in future applications for RDAP. Once the guidance is received this data will be collated so it is ready for the scrutiny visit.
- 5.3. Both the Universities of Birmingham and Coventry are fully supportive of the University's application.
- 5.4. Academic Board unanimously approved the application and agreed that the submission should be made in time for the December ACDAP meeting.

08/06 National Student Survey [AB08/06]

- 6.1 The Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement presented an overview of the University's results from the National Student Survey 2007.
- 6.2. The University's response rate has increased to 59% from 55% in 2007, equivalent to 630 students. There has been an overall improvement in the results for teaching, organisation and management, learning resources and personal development. The results for assessment and feedback and overall satisfaction have stayed the same as in 2007.
- 6.3. The Vice Chancellor commented that the results were reasonably good. However, whilst the University was placed in the top third of Universities, it had previously been in the top quarter and is no longer the best in the West Midlands. Two key areas that the University needs to look at are placements, particularly in the Institute of Health, and learning resources.
- 6.4. The Head of Information and Learning Services advised the Board that her staff were looking carefully at the results and the comments behind them to see how they could improve the service further. In particular the service was looking at the percentage spend for journals as opposed to books and electronic books. The University's spend on journals is higher than many other institutions. There was also a question over the level of book purchase by students; this seems to be lower than other institutions. Members noted that there were differences between the Institutes in their scores for learning resources. The Director of ILS advised that the service is reviewing its spending to see if this was significantly higher in one area than another.
- 6.5. The Director of Quality and Educational Development noted that the University's scores are not improving as rapidly as some other institutions. It is important that action is taken as soon as possible in order for it to have an impact on next year's results. Each institute is being asked to look at their results and to draw up an action plan which will be incorporated into their Annual Monitoring Reports. The Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee will review the action plans and report back to Academic Board.
- 6.6. Members agreed that it was important for the University to feedback to students how it has responded to the survey and it was agreed that the format ILS had used for feeding back to students earlier in the year had been very successful. Members also

agreed that it would be beneficial if areas of good practice could be identified and shared between Institutes.

- 6.7. The Board received the report.

08/07 Semester Dates [AB08/07]

- 7.1 The Registrar presented the proposed semester dates for 2009/2010 to the Board. In 2009 the A level results will be published later and UCAS are also introducing a 'period of adjustment' whereby applicants with better than anticipated results will have an opportunity to 'trade up' to another institution. The adjustment period will end on the 31st August and this would leave only two weeks before induction if the dates for 2009/2010 were based on the same pattern as 2008/2009. There have also been concerns expressed that the University's early start affects its ability to recruit students making late decisions.
- 7.2. Taking the above into account the Board was asked to review the semester pattern for 2009/2010. In particular it was proposed that semester one starts a week later, with induction w/c 21st September and teaching starting w/c 28th September. This would be achieved by reducing the number of teaching weeks in the semester from 12 to 11 weeks in semester one.
- 7.3. The Registrar also advised the Board that as a result of various discussions about retention and achievement there would be a consultation about the timing of reassessment with a proposal that it should be moved from September to July. The result of the consultation would be brought to the next meeting of the Board.
- 7.4. The Board approved the recommendation in for an amended semester pattern for 2009/2010, when Welcome Week would commence on Monday 21st September and teaching on semester based courses commencing 28th September 2009.

08/08 Professorial Titles

- 8.1. Conferment of the title of Professor on Ms Antonia Payne [AB08/08]

The Board noted that the Appointments Panel for the post of Head of Institute of Humanities and Creative Arts had conferred the title of Professor of Visual Arts on Antonia Payne.

- 8.2. Conferment of the title of Professor on Dr John Newbury [AB08/09]

The Board noted that the Appointments Panel for the post of Head of Institute of Science and the Environment had conferred the title of Professor of Biosciences on Dr John Newbury.

- 8.3 Conferment of the title of Professor on Mrs Chris Robertson [AB08/10]

The Board noted that on the recommendation of the Professorial Titles Sub-Committee the title of Professor of Education had been conferred on Mrs Chris Robertson by Chair's Action.

08/09 Reports from Committees

- 9.1. Academic Governance Committee [AB08/11]

- 9.1.1. The Registrar presented the report from the Committee and requested that Academic Board approved the Committee's recommendation to amend the terms of reference for ASQEC and its sub-committees. The Board approved the recommendation.
- 9.1.2. The Board received the report.

9.2. ASQEC [AB08/12]

- 9.2.1. The Director of Quality and Educational Development presented the report from the Committee and requested that Academic Board approve the partnership agreement with the Birmingham Centre for Art Therapies as per the Committee's recommendation. The Board approved the recommendation.
- 9.2.2. The Board also noted the mid-cycle follow up report to the QAA Institutional Audit.
- 9.2.3. The Board received the report.

9.3. Research & Knowledge Transfer Committee [AB08/13]

- 9.3.1. The Vice Chancellor presented the Committee's report to the Board and drew members' attention to the Leverhulme Trust's invitation to the University to participate in its Visiting Fellowship scheme. The closing date for nominations to the Scheme is the 3rd November 2008.
- 9.3.2. Members noted the success of the Joint Innovation Day held with Coventry University. It was noted that there will also be a Joint Innovation Day with the University of Gloucester which will focus on research and knowledge transfer but will also look at learning and teaching and student support.
- 9.3.3. The Board noted that the amount of student business received by the Research Degrees Board had grown during the year. The research student body numbers 100 students, which is very healthy.
- 9.3.4. Members noted that an integrated Research and Knowledge Transfer Strategy is being developed by the Graduate Research School and the Business Development Office.
- 9.3.5. The Board received the report.

08/10 Effectiveness of Academic Board [AB08/13 & AB08/14]

- 10.1 The Board received a summary of the individual responses to the effectiveness questionnaire. The responses reflect that much of the Board's business is delegated to its sub-committees.
- 10.2 The responses had revealed a concern about the lack of opportunity to discuss major strategic issues. It was agreed that there should be discussion about a major strategic issue at the start of each Board meeting; this was an approach that had been adopted by the Board of Governors and had worked well.
- 10.3 Members considered the Board's terms of reference and whether the Board had discharged its responsibilities in 2007/2008. The Board concluded that it had fully discharged its responsibilities during 2007/2008.

08/11 Change of Institute Name [AB08/15]

- 11.1 The Board received a recommendation that the Institute of Health, Social Care and Psychology should be renamed the Institute of Health and Society from the start of 2009/2010.
- 11.2 The Institute had reviewed its title as a response to the review of Institute title which took place at the end of 2007/2008. The Institute feels that the proposed title fully reflects the work of the Institute.
- 11.3 The Board approved the change of title.

08/12 Research Centres

- 12.1 Members of the Board noted the recent discussion around the location of NPARU and MARRC within the Institute structure.
- 12.2 The Board received a recommendation that NPARU should be transferred from the Institute of Health, Social Care and Psychology to the Institute of Science and the Environment but that the Unit would continue to work closely with the Institute of Health, Social Care and Psychology. The Board approved the recommendation.
- 12.3 The Board received a recommendation that MARRC should be located in the Institute of Sport and Exercise Science. The centre will continue to work across the departments particularly in developing its motion analysis work. A report will be made to the Board later in the year on the designation of the Centre.

08/13 Date of Next Meeting

- 13.1. Wednesday 28th January 2009

..... (Chair)

..... (Date)