



BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Minutes of the meeting held on the 24th November 2010

10/11 Attendance

11.1 Present

Mr J Pallett	Chair
Dr H Barrett	
Mr M Collins	
Ms O Fielding	
Professor D Green	Vice Chancellor
Mr S Lewis	
Mr M Newitt	
Mr T Patrickson	
Mrs J Quallington	
Mrs J Swan	
Mr P Swinburn	
Professor T Thompson	
Mr P West	

11.2 In Attendance

Dr M Doughty	Pro Vice Chancellor (Resources)
Mrs P Finch	Director of Finance
Professor R Foskett	Deputy Vice Chancellor
Ms A Hannaford	Director of Information Learning Services
Ms H Johnstone	Assistant to the Registrar & Secretary
Mr J Ryan	Registrar & Secretary
Ms G Slater	Director of Personnel

11.3 Apologies

Mr J Bateman	
Ms J Bruce	
Professor M Clarke	
Professor J Low	
Mr L Probert	
Mrs E Spalding	
Dr M Stowell	Director of Quality and Educational Development

11.4 Membership

It was noted that an advertisement for potential independent governors would appear in local newspapers from the end of November with a closing date of 12th January. Members were asked to contact the Registrar should they identify someone as a suitable candidate.

11.5 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

11.6 Papers to be received without discussion

Members requested that paper BG10/16, the report from the Personnel Committee, should be discussed.

10/12 Minutes

12.1 The minutes of the meeting held on the 4th October 2010 [BG10/08] were confirmed as a correct record.

12.2 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the Agenda

10/13 Chair's Business

13.1 The Chair thanked the Vice Chancellor, on behalf of those governors who were able to attend, for the presentation on the impact of the Browne Review and the Comprehensive Spending Review. Members noted that there would be a special meeting of the Board on the 17th January when members would give initial consideration to the level of fees the University would set from 2012.

10/14 Vice Chancellor's Report [BG10/09]

The Vice Chancellor presented his report to the Board and drew members' attention to the following:

14.1 Current position

The University has been very successful over the last year. Income has risen by 25% and the University has declared a healthy surplus for 2009/10 despite some large exceptional items being included in the accounts.

14.2 Future position

Commissions for courses funded by the NHS have been, as expected, reduced by 16%. It is expected that the HE White Paper will include proposals on the future of teacher training, with an increased emphasis on training carried out in schools. The situation regarding TDA income and numbers is currently unclear. The Vice Chancellor circulated some tables which demonstrated how the University's income was made up and the anticipated impact on the University's HEFCE income as a result of the CSR.

It is clear that maintaining the high level of demand for places at the University will be key to its future success. Work has been commissioned to restructure the University's website and

there will be a major launch of this in March. The Vice Chancellor identified four key areas he felt were important in attracting future students:-

- Quality of education provision
- Financial package (e.g fees, scholarships)
- Employability (including Earn While You Learn)
- Values of the University

It is proposed that the Board should discuss the University's fee and finance package for 2012 onwards at the special meeting on the 17th January before a final decision is made at the Board meeting on the 7th February. This will enable the University to be in a position to promote its finance package to potential applicants at the UCAS event at the end of March.

Members suggested that if the fees are to increase then the University will need to be able to demonstrate the key features of its offer, to confirm the value of choosing UoW as a destination. The Vice Chancellor responded that the University will need to be innovative in creating opportunities for students which will be seen to add value to their course e.g. Earn While You Learn, mentoring by existing students, the new Joint Library and History Centre

14.3 White Paper on Higher Education

It is anticipated that the White Paper on Higher Education will be published in the New Year. Once this has been received the University will complete its review of the current Strategic Plan and discussion of the new Strategic Plan, 2012-2017.

14.4. Well-Being Centre

Members noted that the Well-being Centre was due to open in January. There has been interest expressed by a number of groups in hiring space in the Centre including cardiac rehabilitation organisations and the Alzheimer's Association.

14.5 The Board received the report.

10/15 Financial Matters

15.1 Annual Accounts 2009/10 and the Management Letter [BG10/10]

15.1.1. The Director of Finance presented the accounts and advised the Board that an exceptional item of £7.12m (see note 11 of the accounts) had been included in the accounts. The expenditure relates to preliminary planning and design costs incurred in the development of the second phase of the city centre campus, which has been paused pending the consideration of future requirements and opportunities. However, the Board was pleased to note that having taken into account the exceptional item a surplus of £1,193,000 had been achieved. The Chair of Audit Committee advised the Board that the Committee had queried the treatment of the extraordinary expenditure with the external auditors and they had confirmed they were content with the approach taken.

15.1.2 The Registrar advised the Board that a new feature of the accounts was the inclusion of a public benefit statement. This was as a result of HEFCE becoming the principal regulator for Universities under the Charities Act, 2006.

15.1.3 Members queried what the University's contractual commitment would be in relation to the Joint Library and History Centre and how this would be accounted for. The Director of Finance advised that advice was being sought from the external auditors' PFI experts. It is

anticipated that the unitary charge will be split into two elements: the asset cost and the service costs.

15.1.4 The Board noted the Management Letter and that the external audit service had provided a clean opinion of the accounts.

15.1.5 The Board approved the Accounts and Management Letter for onward transmission to HEFCE.

15.2 UW Developments Ltd [BG10/11]

15.2.1. The Registrar reported that the Finance & Development Committee had received the accounts and reviewed the financial performance of the wholly owned subsidiary company. It was noted that a profit of £3,110,000 had been donated by the Company to the University.

15.2.2 The Board received the accounts.

15.3 UW Enterprises Ltd [BG10/12]

15.3.1. The Registrar reported that the Finance & Development Committee had received the accounts and reviewed the financial performance of the wholly owned subsidiary company. It was noted that the company had made of loss of £140k, in line with previous expectations.

15.3.2. The Board received the accounts.

15.4 Financial Forecast for 2010/11 [BG10/13]

15.4.1. The Director of Finance reported that it was the University's normal practice to produce five year financial forecasts. However, due to the current uncertain position in the sector HEFCE has indicated that institutions may choose to delay the submission of their five year financial forecasts until April. Therefore, the University has decided to delay submitting its five year forecast until such time as the financial position is clearer.

15.4.2. The Board considered the financial forecast for the current year, 2010/11. It was noted that a conservative approach had been taken which included a contingency of £2.8m against only recruiting 50% of the UMF ASNs and a reduction in the HEFCE grant for the current year. Salaries have been reviewed and the allowance for this has been reduced slightly. However the salary budget had been set at 100% and it was very unlikely that this would be the final outturn. A further provision of £1m has been included against FRS17. Members of the Board were pleased to note that a surplus of just over £2m was forecast.

15.4.3. The Vice Chancellor advised the Board that the Five Year Financial Forecasts may be presented to the February Board meeting as University officers may wish to approach HEFCE for permission to draw down further funds from the Barclays loan to assist with funding the arena.

15.4.4. The Board received and approved the financial forecast.

10/16 Corporate Planning Statement [BG10/14]

16.1. The Registrar presented the updated Corporate Planning Statement to the Board. Members were reminded that the Board had received the draft CPS in July. Comments and suggestions arising out of the Board's consideration of the CPS had been incorporated and these were shown as track changes.

- 16.2. It was also noted that a short paragraph had been added to the start of the CPS to set the document in context.
- 16.3. The Board welcomed the amendments and approved the CPS for transmission to HEFCE as part of the annual return.

10/17 Students' Union [BG10/15]

- 17.1 The President of the Students' Union presented the report from the Union. Members noted that the Students' Union had responded to press queries regarding the Browne Review by stating their concern over the proposals which they believed went against the widening participation agenda and would result in students incurring heavy amounts of debt. However the President confirmed that the student body welcomed the introduction of financial support for part time students.
- 17.2 The Students' Union has nearly completed the Student Written Submission for the QAA Institutional Audit and this will be submitted on time.
- 17.3 The President reported that he had attended a meeting of the Neighbourhood Watch and work is underway to build a partnership with the organisation to address 'town and gown' issues.
- 17.4 The Students' Union Board of Trustee has met for the first time and a new Constitution is being developed which will reform the governance of the Students' Union and enhance its democratic structure to improve participation.
- 17.5 The Board was pleased to note that the new food provision in the Dive Bar had been well received.
- 17.6 Members noted that the start of the sports season had gone well. Members of the Men's Rugby, who had been banned from competing at the start of the semester, had been reinstated and had fulfilled all the requirements of their ban being lifted.
- 17.7 The Vice President – Education & Welfare reported that around 100 student representatives had been trained in the new StARS programme. The training programme and information on the scheme is available on line for University students at partner organisations and the Vice President confirmed that he would be visiting partner institutions to carry out training.
- 17.8 Members noted that a community event had been organised by the Vice President in conjunction with Student Services and West Mercia Police. The event was primarily to launch the One Community project which is being run in conjunction with West Mercia but also to highlight the work of the Students' Union in the community. Members of the University Community Forum had been invited to attend.
- 17.9 The Board received the report and congratulated the Vice President Education & Welfare on the StARS training programme.

10/18 Reports from Committees and Academic Board

18.1 Personnel Committee [BG10/16]

- 18.1.1. Members queried the research/teaching ratio amongst staff. It was noted that there was only a very small percentage of staff who were on research only contracts and all academics have a degree of research included in their contract.

18.1.2. Members also asked for further information on the employment of students at the University and how they could access work experience opportunities. It was noted that the University employed approximately 200 students in various roles during 2009/10. The University is in the process of developing an Earn While You Learn scheme which will provide work opportunities at the University but also outside organisations which will help them develop their employability.

18.1.3 The Board noted that the University had run the staff promotion and reward schemes for five years and these had been well received by staff. The scheme were now due for review and would be considered at the Joint Consultative Committee.

18.1.4 The Board received the report.

18.2 Audit Committee [BG10/17]

18.2.1. The Chair of the Audit Committee reported that the Committee had reviewed the Annual Accounts and Management Letter and noted the clean and unqualified opinion on the external auditors.

18.2.2. The Committee was also pleased to report that no limited assurances had been issued by the internal audit service and 44% of the internal audit reports in 2009/10 had resulted in a substantial level of assurance being awarded.

18.2.3. The Committee transmitted its Annual Report to the Board for approval before onward transmission to HEFCE. The Board noted that the Committee had concluded from its work in 2009/10 that the Board should have confidence in the adequacy and effectiveness of the arrangements in place for: risk management; internal control and governance; economy, efficiency and effectiveness; and management, control and quality assurance of data.

18.2.4. The Board received and approved the Audit Committee's Annual Report for onward transmission to HEFCE.

18.2.5 The Board received the report.

18.3 Finance & Development Committee [BG10/18]

18.3.1. The Board noted that the Committee had received and considered the Annual Accounts for 2009/10 in detail and approved them for onwards transmission to the Board.

18.3.2 The Committee reported that it has received a report on the final position on student numbers in 2009/10. It was noted that the HESA return for 2009/10 included a total active student population of 9545 (fte equivalent of 7411). The Board noted that in 2010/11 the total student numbers were likely to exceed 10,000.

18.3.3 The Board noted that the Committee had received reports from UW Developments Ltd and UW Enterprises Ltd. It was particularly noted that the Committee had received a report from the new Director of NPARU and a report on the future management of NPARU activities and finances. The Committee reported that it had approved the new approach and in particular that NPARU would move to a break-even position quicker than originally anticipated.

18.3.4. The Board received the report.

18.4 Academic Board [BG10/19]

18.4.1. The Registrar presented the report from Academic Board drawing members' attention to the report on Graduate Destinations. It was noted that there had been a good out-turn in terms of

graduate employment. However the University's position was vulnerable due to the high percentage of its graduates which had historically been recruited into the public sector.

18.4.2. It was noted that Academic Board had received a detailed report on the results of the National Student Survey. Members expressed concern at the outcome given the amount of investment the University had made in recent years in resources and facilities. It was noted that work was underway to analyse the University's position in comparison with other similar organisations and in particular, to see if there were any institutions which had notably bucked the trend of falling scores. The Registrar reported that one of the themes arising out of the results of the NSS was effectiveness of communication with students and their expectations. However results from some of the surveys carried out by the Students' Union in preparation for their Student Written Submission gave a different picture. Members agreed that the results were disappointing but noted that applications had not decreased nor had there been a large number of complaints, either of which would indicate an issue with standards and the perception of the University. Members felt that it was more important to focus on the student experience than on scores in the NSS and league tables. It was felt by some members that students' expectations are probably rising quicker than institutions can raise quality.

18.4.5 The Board also noted that Academic Board had approved the Research Degrees Regulatory Framework following the award of Research Degree Awarding Powers.

18.4.6 The Board received the report.

10/19 Financial Memorandum [BG10/20]

19.1 As a result of a request made at the previous Board meeting the Registrar presented a paper to the Board identifying how the Board would meet its obligations under the Financial Memorandum.

19.2. The Board noted each of the responsibilities and the measures in place to assist the Board in meeting those obligations. Members welcomed the inclusion of representatives of the Board at recent staff conferences and noted that Mr Newitt served as an observer on Academic Board which was an unusual arrangement in the sector.

19.3 Members were asked if there were any briefings they would welcome and it was agreed that a briefing at a future meeting on Quality Enhancement would be welcome.

10/20 Date of Next Meeting

20.1 7th February 2011

..... (Chair)

..... (Date)