



BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Minutes of the meeting held on the 4th July 2011

10/38 Attendance

38.1 Present

Professor T Thompson	Acting Chair
Dr H Barrett	
Mr J Bateman	
Ms J Bruce	
Professor M Clarke	
Ms O Fielding	
Professor D Green	Vice Chancellor
Mr S Lewis	
Professor J Low	
Mr M Newitt	
Mr T Patrickson	
Mrs E Spalding	
Mrs J Swan	
Mr P Swinburn	
Mr P West	

38.2 In Attendance

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

38.3 Apologies

Miss H Anglin
Mr J Pallett
Mr L Probert
Professor G Elliott

38.4 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

10/39 Strategic Discussion – Worcester Arena

- 39.1 Professor Elkin made a short presentation to the Board on fundraising over the last two years. It was noted that the fundraising had been driven through the Endowment Committee, on which three nominees of the Board served. Key successes have been the establishment of the Bosch scholarship scheme and a donation from Mr Richards to establish a further 100 £1k scholarships. It is anticipated that the focus of the work of the Committee will continue to be around scholarships for the time being. Professor Elkin observed that there needed to be a change of culture and recognition that although the University has constructed a number of large buildings in recent years this did not mean it was cash rich.
- 39.2 Mr Donovan made a short presentation to the Board on the Worcester Arena. Members noted that the Arena will accommodate 2000 people which compared to the maximum of 200 currently in the University's Sports Centre. The Board noted that grants had so far been awarded by Sport England, England Basketball and Badminton England. The University's senior management propose to submit an application for further borrowing to HEFCE in October, then a decision on whether to proceed with the borrowing will be made by the Board at its November meeting. Construction is scheduled to commence in January 2012 which is key as the Sport England grant needs to have been spent by the 31st March 2013. It is anticipated that the construction will be completed by Autumn/Winter 2012.
- 39.3 Members noted that the first priority of the Arena will be to expand the student body but it is anticipated that there will be capacity for some community use. It was noted that provided the work commenced in January it would be possible to allocate all the funds from the Sport England grant by the deadline particularly as costs associated with enabling work already carried out could be counted. It was noted that any grant requirements would not impact on the core student business.
- 39.4 The Board thanked Professor Elkin for her work over the past two years and Mr Donovan for taking the Arena project forward.

10/40 Minutes

- 40.1 The open minutes of the meeting held on the 9th May 2011 [BG10/40] were confirmed as a correct record.
- 40.2 There were no matters arising which were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

10/41 Vice Chancellor's Business [BG10/41]

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

- 41.1 The work undertaken over the last three years has resulted in a significant and quantifiable improvement in student retention and achievement. Following the main examination boards (i.e. before resits) the proportion of students progressing without conditions has risen from 44.1% to 51.63%, an increase from 1339 to 1746. The proportion of students failing more than 30 credits has dropped from 14.1% to 7.63%, a drop from 428 to 258 students. Student academic performance has improved with the number of students being awarded a First Class Honours degree rising from 60 in 2010 to 95 in 2011.. In addition the number of students in year 1 and 2 who have achieved five As or more has risen from 44 to 71 with a further increase to this anticipated after the summer examination boards.

Members welcomed this news and asked that an email should be sent to staff thanking them for their contribution to this remarkable achievement.

- 41.2 Applications are at an all-time high of 13,085 with the number of applicants to the University up by 10.44% on the previous year (compared to a national increase of just over 1%). The recent open day was a success with 1022 potential students registering compared to 649 at the same event in 2010. A number of innovations were introduced including the Parents Guide focussing on financial matters and Earn As You Learn literature. The University commissioned independent research with potential students and their supporters and this has indicated that the University's approach to the new fee regime is well regarded.
- 41.3 Whilst the Board was sorry to learn that the University's nursing places for 2011-12 had been reduced by 17.5% it was pleased to note that the midwifery numbers had been restored with the addition of two extra places.
- 41.4. The University has received the draft report on the Institutional Audit by the QAA. The report states the QAA's confidence in the "soundness of the institution's present and likely future management of the academic standards of the awards that it offers." The QAA team identified seven areas of good practice. The report will be published in August when the University will be in a position to make the commendations public.
- 41.5 The White Paper on Higher Education was published on the 28th June and contains detailed proposals to de-regulate higher education in England. These include proposals for the de-regulation of approximately 65000 places for those students scoring AAB+ and the reallocation of 20000 places to institutions whose average fee, including waivers, is equal to or less than £7500. It is anticipated that the University will lose around 130 places but should be in a position to bid for some of the reallocated places.
- 41.6 The University has been successful in securing an increasing number of research contracts equivalent to approximately £1m in the current academic year.
- 41.7 The Board received the report.

10/42 Financial Matters

42.1 Forecast Outturn 2010/11 [BG10/42]

- 42.1.1. The Director of Finance presented a forecast outturn for 2010/11 to the Board. Members were pleased to note that a £3,655,000 surplus was predicted prior to the release of the revaluation reserve. This figure also takes into account £720,000 in respect of summer works. A contingency for FRS17 of £2,748,00 also remains in the budget.
- 42.1.2. Members noted that the Finance & Development Committee had approved an amendment to the University's Accounting Policies so that computer purchases would in future be treated as revenue expenditure as opposed to capital.
- 42.1.3 The Board received the report.

42.2. Draft Budget 2011/12 [BG10/43]

- 42.2.1 The Director of Finance presented the draft budget for 2011-12 and advised members that as anticipated this would be a particularly challenging year with a surplus of only £120,000 predicted. The budget included a provision against FRS17 of £1,500,000.
- 42.2.2. The Board was advised that the University's officers had taken a highly cautious approach to the budget but anticipated that with the work currently being undertaken income for the year would be higher than anticipated. A 1% job vacancy factor has been included and it is thought that this will be achievable given a slower changeover of staff in the current economic climate.
- 42.2.3 Members noted that the budget had been carefully considered by the Finance & Development Committee [note the report of the Committee agenda item BG10/48]. It was also noted that the budget demonstrated that the University could afford to service its debt in a challenging financial year.
- 42.2.4 The Board approved the draft budget.

10/43 Corporate Planning Statement [BG10/44]

- 43.1 The Registrar presented the draft Corporate Planning Statement for 2011/12 to the Board. Members noted the progress against the key strategic priorities in 2010/11 and the strategic priorities identified for 2011/12.
- 43.2 It was noted that the Corporate Planning Statement would be sent to HEFCE by the 1st December 2011 along with the annual accounts and other key documentation. The CPS will be updated prior to submission to take into account any developments during the first half of the session.
- 43.3 The Board approved the draft Corporate Planning Statement, noting that the final version would be presented to the Board in November, prior to its submission to HEFCE.

10/44 Students' Union [BG10/45]

- 44.1 The President of the Students' Union presented the report of the Union. Work is underway on planning for the coming academic year. A Raise and Give week will take place to coincide with the Children in Need campaign. There will be a '*World Festival*' which will give students, both home and international, an opportunity to show off their cultures and food.
- 44.2 The Students' Union has met with the Head of the Institute of Sport and Exercise Science to discuss ways of improving sports clubs and the possibility of improving support for elite sport whilst at the same time providing more opportunities for students who wish to play recreational sport.
- 44.3 The Vice President Education will be working to engage more students from partner colleges including implementing the course representation scheme
- 44.4 It was noted that the Students' Union was aiming to diversify its income through negotiating commercial activities with Tramps and Berrys. It was hoped that there would be sufficient funds raised from the re-negotiations to fund a Volunteer Co-ordinator.
- 44.5 The Board received the report.

10/45 Reports from Committees

45.1 Personnel Committee [BG10/46]

45.1.1 Ms Bruce presented the report of the Committee and thanked the Registrar, Director of Personnel and members of the Committee for their support during her tenure as Chair.

45.1.2. The Board received the report.

45.2 Audit Committee [BG10/47]

45.2.1. The Chair of the Committee presented the report to the Board. In particular members were asked to consider the recommendation in the report regarding the Effectiveness Review of the Board of Governors. The Board approved the following recommendations:

- Use of the CUC “Framework for Identifying Governing Body Effectiveness in Higher Education” but to concentrate on only two of the three main elements namely ‘The Enablers of an Effective Governing Body’ and ‘Working Relationships and Boardroom Behaviour’
- Use of relevant but amended sections of the Questionnaire to maximise the scope for qualitative responses
- Use of follow-up structure interviews subsequent to the administration of the Questionnaire
- A special meeting of the Board to consider and agree outcomes
- The inclusion of Mr R Sykes, Head of the University’s Leadership Group to facilitate the review working closely with the Chair of the Audit Committee and Registrar
- The review to be undertaken in Spring 2012.

45.2.2. Members noted that given the importance of the University’s compliance with the UUK/Guild HE Code of Practice for the Management of Student Housing a further follow up audit of this area would be carried out over the summer.

45.2.3. The Board noted that the Committee had approved the external audit plan.

45.2.4. The Board received the report.

45.3 Finance & Development Committee [BG10/48]

45.3.1. The Registrar presented the report from the Committee. Members noted the report on student recruitment for 2011/12. The Board was particularly pleased to see the improvement in conversion rates and members hoped that the University’s success would continue into the clearing and confirmation period.

45.3.2 The Board received the report.

10/46 HEFCE Assurance of Institutional Risk [BG10/49]

46.1. The Board noted the letter from HEFCE which advised that the funding council’s view was “our overall assessment at this time is that the University of Worcester is not at higher risk.” Members noted that this assessment was similar to recent years.

10/47 Any Other Business

47.1 On behalf of the Board, Professor Thompson thanked Ms Bruce, Mrs Spalding and Mr Swinburn for their valuable contribution to the Board particularly Ms Bruce for her work as Chair of Personnel Committee and Mrs Spalding as Vice Chair of the Board. A presentation was made.

10/48 Date of Next Meeting

48.1. Monday 10th October 2011

..... (Chair)

..... (Date)