



University
of Worcester

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Minutes of the meeting held on the 7th February 2011

10/21 Attendance

21.1 Present

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

21.2 In Attendance

Dr M Doughty	Pro Vice Chancellor (Resources)
Mrs P Finch	Director of Finance
Professor R Foskett	Deputy Vice Chancellor
Professor G Elliott	Director of Regional Engagement
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

21.3 Apologies

Professor M Clarke
Mr L Probert
Dr M Stowell

21.4 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

10/22 Minutes

22.1 The minutes of the meeting held on the 24th November 2010 [BG10/21] were confirmed as a correct record.

22.2 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the Agenda

10/23 Vice Chancellor's Business

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

23.1 February Recruitment – for the first time all places for Adult Nursing, Mental Health Nursing and Midwifery are full. The University has also welcomed a cohort of a dozen students from Coimbatore in India who will be completing the second semester and dissertation element of the full-time MSc in International Management

23.2 Student Numbers – although the number of PGCE Secondary places has been reduced, the number of places on primary initial teacher education courses has been increased and the University has also been invited to bid for further, additional, primary places. This is likely to result in an overall net increase in TDA funded numbers, which would represent an excellent outcome for the University. The University has not been notified of the final number of NHS commissions for nursing and midwifery, it is still anticipated that there will be a reduction of around 16%.

23.3 2012/13 Information for Applicants – the new Prospectus is now available although it contains no information about fees until these have been approved by OFFA. It was noted that the University is preparing a separate publication which will provide details of the fees and answers questions about the financial aspect of attending University.

23.4 Worcester Bosch Donation – Worcester Bosch has donated £20k over the next three years to the University's Fundraising and Endowment Fund. Half of the funds will be used to fund scholarships to help students with tuition fees and the other half will be used to support the McClelland Wellbeing Centre.

23.5 Student Rowing – the student Rowing Club has hosted its first regatta which was attended by crews from other Universities. The event was very successful.

23.6 Widening Participation - it was noted that the funding for the Lifelong Learning Network had finished and funding for AimHigher would end in July 2011. However, the University intends to continue with this work and has been reassuring its partners of its commitment in these areas.

23.7 Institutional Audit – the Institutional Audit will take place in February and March. Members asked if there were any concerns. University Officers identified collaborative provision as an area where there would be close scrutiny of the arrangements, which is usually identified as an area of higher risk.

23.8 The Board received the Vice Chancellor's report.

10/24 Student Recruitment [BG10/23]

- 24.1 The Registrar presented the report on student recruitment for 2010/11 and 2011/12.
- 24.2 It was noted that the University had made its HESES10 return (as at the census date 1st December 2010) and returned a total HEFCE fundable actual fte of 4837 which was 24 ftes above the number required to avoid a reduction in funding. The University was comfortably within its Maximum Student Control Number.
- 24.3 The University's Maximum Student Control Number for 2011/12 is 2646. Members noted that the University proposed to seek to recruit at 2010/11 levels but with growth in areas where there were no requirements for additional resources. However, this position is being kept under review pending further information about the nature of the student number control in 2012/13.
- 24.4 The Board received the report.

10/25 Strategic Plan, 2012-2017

- 25.1 The Registrar presented a paper which outlined the University's approach and a timescale for the formulation of a new Strategic Plan, 2012-2017.
- 25.2 The Board was reminded that it had discussed the new Strategic Plan at its away day in June 2010. Members had suggested that terms used in the current Strategic Plan such as "outstanding student experience" and "a good University" needed to be unpicked. The Board had also agreed that fair access and widening participation should remain important themes and that further physical expansion and growth in the student population should not be achieved at the expense of the core value of community and student support. The idea of students as members of the University had been a recurring theme with an emphasis on partnership and participation. The University's regional role was important but it should also seek to make a direct and outstanding contribution to the development of the City of Worcester.
- 25.3 The new higher education environment will be a key factor in drawing up the Strategic Plan 2012-17 and some of the anticipated changes will not be known or confirmed until the HE White Paper is published.
- 25.4 The Board was presented with a timescale for the preparation and consultation around the new Strategic Plan which had already started with widespread consultation with staff, students and partners. The objective is that a draft Strategic Plan be presented to the Board at its November 2011 meeting.
- 25.5 Members asked that the University officers present a number of big issues/propositions for them to consider and that objectives were identified early so that strategic alternatives could be discussed by the Board before the draft document was presented. Key issues might be:
- What does it mean for the University to play a significant role in the regional economy?
 - What does it mean for Worcester to be a University city?
- 25.6 The Board welcomed the proposed process and timescale for the preparation of the Strategic Plan 2012/2017

10/26 Students' Union

26.1 Report from the Students' Union [BG10/25]

- 26.1.1 The President presented the report and members noted that discussions were being held between the University and Students' Union to refurbish the Bar/Hanger area of the Students' Union building. The general consensus seems to be to change the area into a food led area rather than a drink led one.
- 26.1.2. The remit of the Vice-President sabbatical roles is being changed for the next academic year. The two posts will be renamed: Vice President (Education) and Vice President (Student Experience). The Education post will no longer be have welfare included in its remit, this has now been combined with the sports and societies remit for which the Vice President Student Experience will be responsible.
- 26.1.4 The Students' Union has been working with the local Neighbourhood Watch to set up a collaborative scheme of Student Community Reps. These will be based in 'student heavy' roads and will provide a link between the University and the community.
- 26.1.5. The Vice President Education & Welfare reported that 530 Student Academic Reps had been recruited and there were 13 Institute Representatives in place.
- 26.1.6 The President reported that the Vice President Sports & Societies had been liaising with his counterpart at Gloucester University to arrange the Varsity match which would take place just before Easter.
- 26.1.7 It was noted that two new societies had been established: a Disabled Students Society and a Film Society. It is hoped that through diversifying the range of societies available more students will engage with the Students' Union.
- 26.1.8 The Board received the report.

26.2 Revised Constitution of the Students' Union [BG10/26]

- 26.2.1. The President of the Students' Union presented the revised Constitution to the Board. It was noted that a major review of the Constitution had been carried out in 2008 and the revisions being presented where in order to ensure that the Constitution fulfilled the requirements of the Charities Act.
- 26.2.2. The revisions had been based on a model produced by the NUS and have been considered by two meetings of the student council.
- 26.2.3. The Registrar advised the Board that under the terms of the Education Act 1994 the Board of Governors was required to approve the Constitution of the Students' Union to ensure that it was properly regulated.
- 26.2.4 Members queried whether a requirement of at least 10% of the student body to cast a vote in a Referendum was large enough. It was noted that, as in other Students' Union, participation from students in such votes and elections was low. At the recent election 15% of the student body had voted which was considered a good turnout.
- 26.2.5. Members queried whether the wording at para 4.29 relating to indemnity insurance and the liability of Trustees was clear enough. The Registrar confirmed that he would review this.
- 26.2.6 The Board approved the Constitution subject to some minor amendments.

26.3 Students' Union Code of Practice [BG10/26a]

26.3.1. The Registrar presented an updated Code of Practice to the Board for approval. It was noted that a requirement of the Education Act 1994 was that higher education institutions should take steps to ensure that any Students' Union operates in a fair and democratic manner and is accountable for its finance.

26.3.2. It was considered timely given the recent changes to the Students' Union Constitution to update the Code.

26.3.3. The Board approved the updated Code of Practice.

10/27 Reports from Committees

27.1 Finance & Development Committee [BG10/27]

27.1.1. The Board received the report from the Finance & Development Committee and noted the positive financial position on the forecast out-turn which anticipated a surplus of £3,128,000 prior to the release from the revaluation reserve.

27.2 Nominations Committee

27.2.1 The Board received a verbal report from the Registrar on the recent advertising campaign for independent governors. It was noted that there had been 29 applications made and 5 candidates would be interviewed on the 29th March for the three vacancies that will exist at the end of the current session.

27.3 Academic Board [BG10/28]

27.3.1. The Registrar presented the report from Academic Board. Members noted that the Board had received the annual report on Academic Quality and Standards for 2009/10. The report is one of the principal measures used by Academic Board to assure the quality and standards of the University's awards and is transmitted to the Board of Governors in connection with its responsibility to ensure that the University "has an effective framework – overseen by its senate, academic board or equivalent – to manage the quality of learning and teaching and to maintain academic standards."

27.3.2. Members' attention was drawn to the following points in the report:

- The overall positive set of reports from external examiners, confirming the standards set for awards and the standard of student performance; the soundness and fairness in assessment and examination board arrangements; and numerous examples of good practice;
- The assurance that where concerns have been raised by external examiners, appropriate action is in place to address the concerns raised and that such action will be monitored
- Robust arrangements are in place in Institutes for the annual evaluation of courses and the associated assessment of risk – particularly in relation to collaborative provision
- The improvement in completion and progression rates and the proportion of students achieving 'good' degrees, and the relative stability of retention rates.

27.3.3. Members noted the improved completion rates and that University officers anticipated these improving further due to the rescheduling of the summer reassessment from September to July. The Vice Chancellor commented that progression rates had improved but could be improved further especially as the University is becoming more selective. Members did note

that for many students who do not complete their course the reasons are out of the University's control e.g. personal, financial, demands on time. The Registrar reported that there were various initiatives underway to try and address some of these issues including: following up on non-submissions, contacting leavers to establish why they have discontinued, improving pre-entry information and guidance. The Board discussed whether mature students felt sufficiently engaged and how the Students' Union could help with this.

27.3.4 Members also noted the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, 2010/11-2015/16 which was approved by Academic Board and transmitted for information.

27.3.5 The Board received the report.

10/28 Date of Next Meeting

- 28.1 Special meeting of the Board 29th March 2011
- Scheduled meeting of the Board 9th May 2011

..... (Chair)

..... (Date)