



BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Minutes of the meeting held on the 9th May 2011

10/29 Attendance

29.1 Present

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

29.2 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
Professor C Robertson	Head of Institute of Education (for agenda item 2)
Mr J Ryan	Registrar & Secretary
Ms G Slater	Director of Personnel
Dr M Stowell	Director of Quality & Educational Development

29.3 Apologies

Professor G Elliott	Director of Regional Engagement
Professor J Low	
Mrs J Swan	

29.4 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

10/30 Strategic Discussion

- 30.1 The Vice Chancellor and the Head of the Institute of Education briefed the Board on the current position on Initial Teacher Education, and the possible future developments on the University.
- 30.2 Members noted that the government was considering the balance between the proportion of initial teacher education located in university and schools. The discontinuation of the bursary for 3rd class degree applicants has contributed to an overall fall in applicants and a specific fall in science discipline applicants of 40% this year nationally.
- 30.3 Professor Robertson advised the Board that there was uncertainty over whether schools would be able to train the same number of students in future. The University has placements at 500 schools in the region and not all of these can take students every year. The Institute has been in contact with Headteachers and identified those who are considering applying for teaching accreditation. 5 groups of schools have come forward who are applying to be Teaching Schools and have asked the University to be in partnership with them. In some cases they would like the University to provide CPD and accreditation at Masters level and in others they do not want the responsibility of being the accredited provider and will look to the University to support them in this regard.
- 30.4 It was noted that the position was still very unclear and funding for teacher training in 2012/13 had not yet been announced. There had also been a delay in the conformation of student numbers for 2011/12 which had resulted in a number of applicants withdrawing.
- 30.5 The Board thanked Professor Robertson for her presentation and congratulated her and her team on a positive approach in a very difficult climate. It was recognised that ITE was a very important part of the University's provision and a secure future for it was therefore a significant consideration.

10/31 Minutes

- 31.1 The minutes of the meeting held on the 7th February 2011 [BG10/29] were confirmed as a correct record.
- 31.2 There were no matters arising which were not covered elsewhere on the Agenda.

10/32 Chair's Business

- 32.1 The Chair asked the Board to join him in congratulating Mr Swinburn on his recent election as a county councillor. However, this position means that Mr Swinburn is unable to continue as a member of the Board. The Chair thanked Mr Swinburn for his contributions to the Board and Finance & Development Committee.

10/33 Vice Chancellor's Business

The Vice Chancellor presented his report [BG10/31] and updated members as follows:-

- 33.1 Institutional Audit: the University has been advised that the outcome of the Institutional Audit will commend the University for good practice in a number of areas. There will be only a small number of advisable recommendations. A draft report is anticipated shortly with the final version to be published in the summer. This represents an excellent outcome for the University.
- 33.2 Undergraduate Fees: The University has submitted its Access Agreement to OFFA and announced its proposed fees for 2012/13. There has been little public reaction to the level of the University's fees which places it in the lower quartile of institutions who have announced their fees so far. Many similar institutions are charging more or the maximum fee. The government will shortly be launching a public information campaign to explain the new fee system. It is evident that there is general confusion amongst the public and this has been in evidence at recent Open and Visit Day events.
- 33.3 Nursing and Midwifery numbers: as previously reported the West Midlands Strategic Health Authority has cut nursing numbers by 17% and midwifery numbers by 16% for 2011. After a vigorous campaign the midwifery numbers have been reinstated. The Vice Chancellor as Chair of Universities West Midlands is taking forward a campaign to have the nursing numbers reinstated. To date the response from MPs across the region has been positive.
- 33.4 University Men's Basketball: for the fifth time in seven years the Men's Basketball team has won the British Universities Sports Association championship. The University is about to be designated the European Centre for Basketball Research. This is a very positive development.
- 33.5 Facilities: the refurbishment of the Garage is now nearly complete. Work on the Riverside building is progressing well.
- 33.6 University Finances: the University finances will show a healthy surplus at the end of 2010/11. However, 2011/12 looks to be a leaner year as has been predicted for some time.
- 33.7 Worcestershire County Council Sale of Books: it was noted that the Council had sold a quantity of its library book stock and there had been concerns raised in the local press about whether it was prudent to sell some of the books. The University was not consulted over the sale; if it had been it would have recommended against the sale of some of the rarer books. The matter has raised concerns over the governance arrangements for the new library and how the partnership will work. Once the building of the Joint Library is complete the detailed arrangements for the joint running of the site will come into effect, however there are no such arrangements for the current period. The Registrar confirmed that under the new arrangements a jointly appointed Library Services Manager would be appointed as well as a Building Services Manager. The Director of ILS advised the Board that the University's position over the book sales had been made clear and she and her staff are now being consulted over future sales.
- 33.8 The Board received the report.
- 10/34 Students' Union Report [BG10/32]**
- 34.1 The President Elect of the Students' Union presented his report and advised the Board that the Students' Union would be submitting the StARs scheme for a NUS award. This year 1 in

17 students is a student representative compared to 1 in 85 in 2009/10 which is an excellent achievement.

34.2 The Board received the report.

10/35 Reports from Committees and Academic Board

35.1 Academic Board [BG10/33]

35.1.1 The Registrar presented the report from Academic Board and drew members' attention to the report on outcomes of the Student Learning Experience Conference. A number of workstreams had been established to take forward a number of issues arising out of the conference.

35.1.2. Members also noted that Academic Board had approved a proposal to award Honorary Bachelor of Arts degrees to recipients of the Certificate of Education between 1950 and 1975. The awards would be made at special ceremonies in 2012. Members welcomed this initiative.

35.1.3. Members received and noted a report on University Scholarships awarded in 2010/11 to students for extra-curricular activities and agreed that the broad range of activities represented was very impressive.

35.1.4. The Board received the report.

35.2 Audit Committee [BG10/34]

35.2.1. The Chair of the Committee presented its report. Members' attention was drawn to the statement that the Board had a primary responsibility for monitoring the institution's risk management. The Audit Committee is tasked with monitoring risk and ensuring that the appropriate risk management measures are in place. The Committee had considered the annual risk report and noted the uncertain climate the institution was operating in. It was noted that a new Risk Register will be devised once the new Strategic Plan 2012-17 is published. The Chair commended the Report to the Board as evidence that the management of risk was being taken seriously and managed responsively.

35.2.2. The Audit Committee had considered the outcome of a recent audit on Data Protection and Freedom of Information compliance and staff awareness of the two Acts. Awareness and understanding was high in those areas where personal data was handled although this was not the case across the whole institution. A programme of awareness raising and training will be carried out.

35.2.3 The Board received the report.

35.3. Finance & Development Committee [BG10/35]

35.3.1. The Registrar reported that the Committee had received and considered the five year financial forecasts before their submission to HEFCE, a copy of the forecasts was transmitted to the Board. The Board was reminded that the University had chosen to take the opportunity to submit the forecasts in April 2011 rather than the 1st December 2011. The forecasts incorporated the Board's decision regarding fee levels for 2012/13. Members noted the reduction in the grant from HEFCE of £3m in 2011/12. The University continued to work on increasing income from other sources to offset this reduction, as well as making further efficiency savings.

35.3.2. The Committee also transmitted to the Board the forecast outturn for 2010/11 financial year as at the 28th February 2011. The forecast has changed little since the last report and shows a forecast surplus of £3,364,000. Members noted that the contingency for FRS17 of £3,468,000 remained in the budget. To date no provision had been made for summer works as these were yet to be finalised. This would impact on the final outturn but there would still be a healthy surplus

35.3.3. The Committee received the report.

35.6 Personnel Committee [BG10/36]

35.6.1 The Director of Personnel presented the report and advised members that the Committee had received an update on collective bargaining which was transmitted to the Board for information.

35.6.2. Members were advised that the trades union had submitted a request for a pay award of 5% to match RPI. It was likely that industrial relation in the HE sector would worsen and that further action would be taken. The Board, initially through the Personnel Committee, would continue to monitor the robustness and fitness for purpose of the national system of collective bargaining.

35.6.3 The Board received the report.

35.5 Nominations Committee [BG10/37]

35.5.1 The Registrar advised members that as a result of the recent advertisement for independent governors and subsequent interviews, the Nominations Committee recommended three individuals for membership to the Board: Ms Maggie Blyth, Mrs Anna Hooper and Mr Zad Padda. The appointment of the three individuals will fill the vacancy on the Board from the retirement of Mr Duncan at the end of the 2009/10 session and of Ms Bruce and Mrs Spalding at the end of the current session. There was now a further vacancy following Mr Swinburn's election as a Councillor.

35.5.2. The Committee had offered a second term of office to Mr West which he had accepted. Mr Probert had also been offered a second term of office but as a co-opted governor rather than an independent one.

35.5.3 The Registrar reported that the Board was unanimous of their support of Mr Pallett for appointment to a second term of office as Chair. The Board formally approved the recommendations of the Committee.

10/36 The Complete University Guide [BG10/38]

36.1 The Registrar presented a report on the Complete University Guide and the University's position in it. Members noted this was the first league table to be produced each year and is published in the Daily Telegraph. As with other league tables this table is compiled from data in the public domain.

36.2 Members noted that the University officers felt that league tables might have an increase of significance in the future given the rise in tuition fees and the anticipated increased involvement of parents in applicants' choices.

- 36.3 The Board noted that the University's overall position in the table was disappointing and had dropped by 4 places from the previous year. However there were a number of areas where the University's position had improved: entry standards; good degrees (these have risen in recent years from 45% to 54.4%); degree completions (rising from 80% to 84%). It is hoped that these trends will continue and reflect the substantial investment in these areas.
- 36.4 University officers are looking at the other areas very carefully. Whilst no progress can be made against the RAE benchmark until the next round of submissions work will be carried out to review how data is returned, especially in relation to staff and financial returns A small group, chaired by the Registrar and Secretary has been established.
- 36.5 Despite the University's poor showing in league tables it continued to attract record numbers of applications and this was partly attributed to good reports being given by its students. The Chair reminded the Board of its previous stance in response to league tables of not starting or stopping projects just because it may influence the league tables. Members agreed that it was important to maintain the right balance between capital and student experience initiatives.
- 36.6 The Board received the report.

10/37 Date of Next Meeting

37.1 4th July 2011

..... (Chair)

..... (Date)