



BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Minutes of the meeting held on the 24th November 2014

14/11 Attendance

11.1 Present

Mr J Pallett	Chair
Mr C Arntzen	
Mr J Bateman	
Mrs M Chamberlain	
Professor M Clarke	
Mr T Clarke	
Mrs O Fielding	
Professor D Green	Vice Chancellor
Mrs A Hooper	
Mr W Hudson	
Mr D Iddon	
Mrs A Leonetti	
Dr D McDougall	
Mr M Newitt	
Mr Z Padda	
Mr T Patrickson	
Rev'd Dr A Pettersen	
Mrs C Richardson	
Mrs S Speck	
Mrs J Swan	
Dr R Woolley	

11.2 In Attendance

Mr R Bonham	Director of Finance
Miss A Clarke	Vice President, Students' Union
Ms H Johnstone	Assistant University Secretary
Mr M Richardson	Head of Worcester Business School (for agenda item 3)
Mr J Ryan	University Secretary
Mrs G Slater	Director of Personnel (for agenda item 14)

11.3 Apologies

Mr D Dale	
Dr H Forland	Pro Vice Chancellor (International)

11.4 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

11.5 Papers to be received without discussion

The Chair advised the Board that unless a member specifically requested they be discussed the following papers would be taken without discussion:

- 9.1 Report from Academic Board [BG14/22]
- 11.1 Report on 2014 award ceremonies [BG14/24]
- 12.1 Annual Sustainability Report [BG14/25]

14/12 Minutes

12.1 The open minutes of the meeting held on the 6th October 2014 [BG14/13] were confirmed as a correct record.

12.2 There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

14/13 Board Briefing

13.1 Mr Richardson, Head of the Worcester Business School, provided the Board with a briefing on Curriculum Development which will be key to recruitment at the University in the future.

13.2 Mr Richardson advised the Board that the University needed to be more adapt at using reliable market information. Whilst Curriculum 2013 had been well received and well managed there was still further work to do especially in rationalising the range of joint honours degrees available. The opportunity to move from Joint Honours to Single Honours in the second year has been introduced and a range of electives developed. Members noted that Mr Richardson had been meeting with colleagues across the University to develop and improve curriculum development across institutes. The rules arising out of the introduction of Curriculum 2013 are very process driven and these can make creativity and innovation more challenging for course teams. Whilst the new electives have proved to be popular with first years this is not the case with second years and needs rethinking. The role of Worcester Weeks will also be reviewed over the current semester.

13.3 Discussions with colleagues had identified three routes through which to improve recruitment to the University: new international and European markets, market penetration, and product development. The enthusiasm for inter-disciplinary courses has improved and there are real opportunities for work-based learning across the institutes. The part-time portfolio needed further work and the development of 'Integrated Masters' programmes is being explored.

13.4 Members discussed how research could inform teaching. It was noted that individual staff's research areas were often very focussed and so had a limited impact on a module. Teaching staff need to keep up to date but the more research that is happening in the University the more the culture of academic research will be enhanced and this will inspire students. In terms of market research the Board noted that the University monitored trends in UCAS applications, the course content of successful degrees through the websites of other Universities, external examiner experience at other institutions, information gleaned at conferences and through subject networks. The University also collects student feedback not only through the National Student Survey and internal student surveys but through module and course evaluation and StARs Forums.

13.5 The Board asked about new course development and noted that any courses being developed currently would be available from September 2016. Mr Richardson advised that there was still a conversation happening around the possibility of introducing Engineering, and it was felt that Social Sciences had potential for development. In relation to the new 'Integrated Masters' course the plan is to develop the rules by Christmas 2014 with approval in January. Institutes will then have until Easter to develop their proposals for approval with marketing starting in May.

- 13.6 Members noted that the University's website had been re-launched and the number of hits on the 'Finding a Course' page had significantly increased. Ten Graduate Ambassadors had been appointed who were working with potential students at partner institutions and in particular those studying Access courses. The new Mathematics course has started to attract applications but it will take a while to build up a sufficient reputation in this area.
- 13.7 The Board discussed the ways in which the University could assess its reputation and how it was perceived by potential students. It was noted the University's standing in league tables was important in some areas particularly international recruitment. However, it will be important to build further on long term relationships with schools and colleges which will in turn improve the University's reputation and hopefully result in these organisations advising more and more of their students to apply to the University.
- 13.8 Members asked whether each Institute had a clear view of its proposed growth over the coming period. It was noted that each department has to produce a planning statement with a 3 year planning horizon which includes curriculum development. These planning statements are discussed at the University Executive Away Day in January and are followed up with planning meetings in February and March when departments bid for the resources they require in the coming year.
- 13.9 A further report would be made to the February 2015 meeting of the Board.
- 13.10 The Board received the report.

14/14 Vice Chancellor's Business

- 14.1 The Vice Chancellor reported that significant reshaping of the University's leadership was under way due to the retirements of Professor Foskett (Deputy Vice Chancellor) and Dr Doughty (Pro Vice Chancellor - Capital Development) over the summer and the retirement of Mr Ryan (University Secretary and Pro Vice Chancellor (Students)) in July 2015. In August 2014 Dr Heather Foskett joined the University as Pro Vice Chancellor (International) and in February 2015 Dr Sarah Greer and Mr Chris O'Malley will join the University as Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic) and Pro Vice Chancellor (Business and Development) respectively. There are two further appointments to be made in the current academic year: Pro Vice Chancellor (Student and Staff Engagement) which will incorporate some aspects of the current University Secretary & Pro Vice Chancellor (Students) role and will be advertised before Christmas and University Secretary/Clerk to the Board of Governors which will be advertised in January/February.
- 14.2 Applications have improved although it is too early to establish whether the decrease in 2013 will be fully reversed. Attendance at recent Open Days had increased. The redesign of the website had been very successful and it was now more accessible to mobile phones and tablets which will assist with recruitment.
- 14.3 The results of the REF are due on the 16th December. The University is preparing its press response but it is anticipated that the institution will be in the top 5 improved Universities which will be very important for reputation. A series of workshops are being organised which will focus on each of the Areas of Distinction identified in the Strategic Plan and to build on the excellent work undertaken to date.
- 14.4 Three new Professors of Education have been appointed and interviews will be held for a Professor of Disability Sport in December.
- 14.5 Dr David Broster and Ms Mehreen Mirza have been appointed as Joint Acting Heads of the Institute of Humanities and Creative Arts until the end of the 2014/15 session.
- 14.6 The Vice Chancellor has been appointed to the HEFCE appointed national Quality Assessment Review Steering Group which will lead and shape the debate about how best quality assessment of HE should be conducted in the future.

14.7 The Board received the report.

14/15 Financial Matters

15.1 Final Accounts 2013/14 and Management Letter [BG14/16]

- 15.1.1 The Director of Finance reported that the annual audit process had gone smoothly although there had been a last minute change of view on capitalisation by PricewaterhouseCoopers.
- 15.1.2. The accounts show that income grew in the year by 9.4% to £79m; part of this increase was due to the inclusion of the third year of higher fees. A surplus of £6.4m (8.1%) has been achieved which is an excellent achievement and higher than the recommended level of surplus. The balance sheet shows that the University has £23m in the bank with £11.5m loan funding available to draw down if required.
- 15.1.3 The Audit Committee had discussed the impact of the pension deficit on the accounts. It was noted that the deficit related to the Local Government Pension Scheme which was based on equities and therefore fluctuated. A full report on all the pension schemes will be presented to the Personnel Committee and then the Board in the New Year.
- 15.1.4 Members noted that the accounts for UW Wrenbridge LLP, on the advice of the external auditors, had not been included in the group accounts. The discussions with Wrenbridge Land over the disbursement of profits from the Sanctuary deal are still ongoing and therefore the company's accounts have not been finalised for 2013/14. The University has advised HEFCE of this decision.
- 15.1.5 The Board noted the reports from the Finance & Development and Audit Committees which had considered the Final Accounts and Management Letter and recommended them for approval to the Board.

15.1.6 The Board approved the Final Accounts for 2013/14.

15.2 Annual Accounts for UW Developments Ltd [BG14/17]

- 15.2.1 The Director of Finance presented the accounts to the Board. It was noted that the only work put through the company in 2013/14 related to finalising the Arena and the Company had made small loss.
- 15.2.2 Members noted that the University would be instructing the Company to carry out the refurbishment of Orchard House. Although this would have some VAT issues attached this approach would mitigate the impact of changes to gift aid rules.
- 15.2.3. The Board noted the reports from the Finance & Development Committee and Audit Committee which had considered the Company's accounts and recommended them for approval to the Board.
- 15.2.4 The Board approved the Company's final accounts for 2013/14.

15.3 Annual Accounts for UW Enterprises Ltd [BG14/18]

- 15.3.1 The Director of Finance presented the accounts to the Board. It was noted that the company had been originally established to manage the commercial activities of NPARU which had to be reported to AWM as part of the grant award. Due to changes in EU legislation a large contract had been lost which had resulted in the company making a loss. The Company's Board of Directors were reviewing the need to channel the commercial activities of NPARU through the company now that the AWM outputs had been met.

15.3.2 The Board noted the reports from the Finance & Development Committee and Audit Committee which had considered the Company's accounts and recommended them for approval to the Board.

15.3.3 The Board approved the Company's final accounts for 2013/14

14/16 Assessing Financial Sustainability (ASSUR) [BG14/19]

16.1 The University Secretary presented the report to the Board advising it was the second year the report had been prepared in keeping with a new framework introduced by HEFCE. The submission of the return continues to be on a voluntary basis and the guidance has not altered significantly. Discussions about the further development of the framework are continuing.

16.2 The report for 2013/14 shows some improvement as a result of the excellent final accounts. All the areas of performance have been rated amber or green. Members noted that there was currently no way of benchmarking the University's performance and the results would not be published.

16.3 The Board received the report and approved the draft report for submission to HEFCE.

14/17 Report from Audit Committee [BG14/20]

17.1 The Chair of the Committee presented the report to the Board. It was noted that the external auditors had been impressed with the Finance team's preparation of accounts in advance of the audit.

17.2 The Audit Committee reports that it has received the Students' Union's accounts and members had discussed the organisation's reliance on grants from the University. The Students' Union had also received £50k in loan towards pension contributions.

17.3 The Board noted the positive annual report from the Internal Auditors and that a follow up audit of Cash-handling at the Arena had been carried out which showed significant progress against the recommendations in the original audit report.

17.4 The Chair also presented the Annual Report of the Audit Committee which provides the opinion that the Board of Governors 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.

17.5 The Board received and approved the report.

14/18 Report from Finance & Development Committee [BG14/21]

18.1 The University Secretary presented the report to the Board.

18.2 Members noted the student recruitment information which suggested some of the decrease in 2013 had been reversed; however members recognised that it was still too early in the cycle to be sure. Application for Nursing and Midwifery had decreased; this is an area in which the University is normally over-subscribed so it is not a cause for concern at present. Art and Design, which had not recruited well in 2014, had seen a significant increase in applications.

18.3 The Board received the report.

14/19 Report from Academic Board [BG14/22]

19.1 The Board received this report without discussion.

14/20 Report from the Students' Union [BG14/23]

- 20.1 The President reported that subsequent to a recent bye-election the Students' Union now had a full Executive.
- 20.2 550 students have registered for V-records to date with some students having completed 200 hours volunteering already.
- 20.3 The Vice President, Education reported that 570 students have registered as StARs which is 120 more than the previous year. The Pro Vice Chancellor (Students), along with the Vice President, are visiting all the Institute Boards to raise awareness of the scheme. To date 210 new StARs have attended training and a second session is being organised. The first StARs Forum has been held, which focussed on academic tutoring.
- 20.4 The Vice President, Student Activities, reported that she had attended a recent Women in Sport conference which had focussed on the lack of influential female role models in sport. A campaign will be run in the Students' Union in semester 2. The BUCs competitions are underway and to date Women's Rugby is undefeated and Men's Rugby is also doing well in its new higher league. A Sports Forum is being established for sports club committee members to raise issues and concerns and a similar forum will be established for Societies.
- 20.5 The Board received the report.

14/21 Graduation [BG14/24]

- 21.1 The Board received the report without discussion.

14/22 Annual Sustainability Report [BG14/25]

- 22.1 The Board received the report without discussion.

14/23 Date of Next Meeting

- 23.1 Monday 9th February 2015

..... (Chair)

..... (Date)