

UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Minutes of the sixteenth meeting held on 15 July 2010

Present	Mr Andrew Bentley	Chair of Governors
	Mr David Baggott	Independent Governor
	Mr Stephen Ball	Independent Governor
	Professor David Barrett	Staff Governor
	Mr Clem Brohier	Independent Governor (item 3 onwards)
	Mr Adam Calvert	Student Governor
	Dr Geoffrey Copland CBE	Co-opted Governor
	Professor Les Ebdon CBE	Vice Chancellor
	Dr Roger Holdom	Independent Governor
	Dr Yasmin Jetha	Vice Chair of Governors
	Dr Martin Lockett	Co-opted Governor
	Ms Jill Millns	Co-opted Governor
	Mrs Gita Patel	Independent Governor
	Mr David Pearson	Independent Governor
	Dame Denise Platt	Independent Governor
	Ms Carol Richmond	Independent Governor
	Ms Julie Sadlier	Student Governor
Councillor Raja Saleem	Co-opted Governor	
Mr John Sentinella	Staff Governor	
Mr James Shea	Staff Governor	
Apologies	Ms Tabitha Aldrich Smith	Co-opted Governor
	Mrs Jane Creasy	Independent Governor
	Mr Jeff Halliwell	Independent Governor
	Mr Paul Wells	Independent Governor
Attending	Ms Kate Boulter	Assistant University Secretary
	Dr Jim Franklin	Registrar
	Mr Ajay Gowda	Deputy President, Student Union (Elect)
	Mr Donald Harley	Deputy Vice Chancellor (Resources)
	Professor Ashraf Jawaid	Deputy Vice Chancellor (External Relations)
	Professor Mary Malcolm	Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)
	Ms Lyndsay Murphy	President, Student Union (Elect)
	Mr Adrian Parry	University Secretary
Professor Andrew Slade	Pro Vice Chancellor (Research and Enterprise)	

UB253 Introduction

- 253.1 The Chair welcomed Mr James Shea and Mr John Sentinella to their first Board meeting. Mr Shea and Mr Sentinella had been elected to the Board as the representatives of the academic staff and the professional support staff respectively.
- 253.2 The Chair also welcomed Ms Lyndsay Murphy, Student Union President Elect and Mr Ajay Gowda, Student Union Deputy President Elect. Both were attending this meeting as observers.

UB254 Quoracy

- 254.1 The Clerk confirmed that the meeting was quorate and could proceed to business.

UB255 Conflicts of interest

255.1 None of those present declared a conflict of interest in relation to the matters on the agenda.

UB256 Constitutional and membership matters

256.1 The Board received a report that provided an update of membership and constitutional matters.

256.2 RESOLVED: The Board:

- (a) Noted the current vacancy on the Board of Governors for a co-opted member.
- (b) Noted that Mr James Shea had been elected to the Board as the representative of the academic staff and that Mr John Sentinella had been elected as the representative of the professional support staff.
- (c) Noted that Ms Lyndsay Murphy and Mr Ajay Gowda would join the Board as student governors.
- (d) Agreed that Mr Clem Brohier should be appointed to the Board as an independent governor and as a member of the Resources and Employment Committee.
- (e) Agreed that the terms of reference of the Remuneration Committee should be amended to enable the Chair of the Audit and Compliance Committee to attend as an alternate member if any member of the Remuneration Committee was unable to attend meetings of that Committee.

UB257 Minutes of previous meetings

257.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors held on 13 May 2010 were agreed as an accurate record.

257.2 The minutes of the emergency meeting of the Board of Governors held on 15 June 2010 were agreed as an accurate record.

257.3 The Chair expressed his gratitude to all members who had attended the emergency meeting of the Board of Governors. This had enabled a contract to be concluded with Campus Living Villages for the construction of the new student residences at Luton. The Chair also thanked Dr Roger Holdom and Professor David Barrett for attending on 1 July 2010 to sign the contract on behalf of the Board.

UB258 Matters arising

258.1 (237.2) The University was engaged in correspondence with the McManBerg Institute in Denmark. This concerned detailed arrangements for the running-out of contractual arrangements between the Institute and KCC with individual students in Denmark and the extent of the University's responsibilities for those students.

258.2 (237.2) The Academic Board would consider an action plan at its October 2010 meeting to take forward the recommendations arising from the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) audit. This action plan would be brought to the November 2010 Board meeting for information.

UB259 Vice Chancellor's report on current issues

259.1 The Board received a report from the Vice Chancellor that provided a summary of current issues that were of importance to the University and the higher education sector.

259.2 The following points were made in discussion:

- (i) It was anticipated that the Browne Review would be published in October 2010. It was expected that the Review would recommend that tuition fees should be increased but it remained unclear whether it would recommend a graduate tax.
- (ii) The University anticipated that it might experience a cut of up to one-third of its public funding following the Comprehensive Spending Review. It had constructed a series of financial scenarios to model the impact of a variety of reductions in public funding.
- (iii) The Board recorded its congratulations to Dr Chris Johns in recognition of the National Teaching Fellowship that he had been awarded.
- (iv) The University would seek pro bono advice from Kirk Reynolds QC to help to resolve the dispute over dilapidation costs with the landlord of The Spires. The University now undertook a thorough condition survey of all leased properties before it concluded contracts.
- (v) The University's position in national league tables had fallen. This was disappointing and was chiefly attributable to the way that universities' expenditure on capital items had been averaged over three years by those who compiled the tables.

259.3 RESOLVED: The Board noted the report.

UB260 Review of the Instruments and Articles

260.1 The Board received a report that provided a summary of the progress made with the review of the University's Instruments and Articles of Governance.

260.2 RESOLVED: The Board noted the report.

Strategy and Forward Planning

UB261 Annual operating plan 2010-11

261.1 The Board received a report that provided a draft of the University's annual operating plan for 2010-11 and a progress report that detailed achievement against the objectives identified in the 2009-10 annual operating plan. The annual operating plan for 2010-11 would be finalised in November 2010 in the light of the HEFCE funding settlement for 2010 and the recommendations of the Browne Review.

261.2 RESOLVED: The Board noted the report.

UB262 Internationalisation strategy

262.1 The Board received the University's internationalisation strategy. This had been developed partly in response to the recommendations made by the QAA in their report following the institutional audit conducted in November 2009.

262.2 The following points were made in discussion:

- (i) The University would also develop an international strategy to stand alongside the internationalisation strategy. The international strategy would not be placed in the public domain because it would contain information that was commercially sensitive and would be of value to competitors.
- (ii) There were plans for 300 international students to undertake work placements within the University during 2010-11.
- (iii) The University's total investment in international activity should be regularly monitored. This monitoring should not be limited purely to recruitment costs but should also include the costs associated with the teaching, administration and pastoral care of international students.
- (iv) The income per student from TNE activity was not as high as the income per student from the direct recruitment of international students. Consequently, the relationship between cost and income from TNE activities should be closely monitored.
- (v) International students made a significant contribution to the cultural wealth of the University. International recruitment was not undertaken solely for economic reasons. The presence of people from a diversity of cultures and countries within the University offered students the opportunity to establish a lifelong network of international friendships and contacts.
- (vi) The strategy needed to be written from a student perspective rather than from a business plan perspective. It needed to encompass activities and aspirations for all campuses and for all faculties. At the moment, it appeared to emphasise activities at Luton and within only two of the four faculties.
- (vii) Consideration should be given to the proportion of international students that was desirable within the University population to ensure that international students received a UK university experience.
- (viii) The University's network of contacts with overseas institutions created opportunities to promote and deliver research. There were currently 25 international students studying PhDs at the University. This number would increase significantly over the next few years as a consequence of the forging of international collaborative relationships.
- (ix) The European Union should be included within the internationalisation strategy.

262.3 RESOLVED: The Board approved the internationalisation strategy

UB263 Environmental sustainability and carbon reduction strategy

263.1 The Board received the University's draft environmental sustainability and carbon reduction strategy. The Resources and Employment Committee and the Student Experience Committee had considered and commented upon the draft.

263.2 The following points were made in discussion:

- (i) HEFCE's interest in environmental sustainability extended beyond carbon reduction and encompassed all aspects of the sustainability agenda.
- (ii) Targets for carbon reduction had been set for the higher education sector as a whole and not for individual institutions.

- (iii) The draft provided a good starting point but primarily focussed upon the University's estates strategy and physical infrastructure. The strategy needed to be more holistic in nature. For example, it should address organisational culture and the behavioural changes that would be necessary amongst staff and students.
- (iv) A timescale for the implementation of the activities necessary to deliver the strategy should be identified and included within the narrative. The University needed to measure its current environmental performance to ensure that targets were meaningful and achievable within realistic timescales.
- (v) The University was well-placed to fund any activities that were required to improve its environmental performance. This was a growing agenda that was assuming increasing importance. It was better to these tackle issues sooner rather than later.
- (vi) The development of a pro-active approach to environmental sustainability would be a unique selling point for the University and could be a valuable marketing tool. A strategy that was reactive or responded only to a compliance requirement would not realise these benefits.
- (vii) The University should look for examples of good practice in the private sector where much activity in this area was already underway.
- (viii) The strategy would need to include coverage of procurement.
- (ix) A reporting mechanism would need to be established to enable governors to monitor the progress of the strategy. Oversight of the strategy did not rest easily within the remit of a single committee of the Board as it would need to embrace and be embedded within all aspects of University activity.
- (x) Consideration might be given to the establishment of a specific governors' sub-committee to scrutinise and monitor the progress of the strategy.
- (xi) The Student Union should be involved in promoting the strategy to students.
- (xii) The strategy must be developed by the Executive as this was a management responsibility. Governors could be invited to contribute specialist knowledge to the development of the strategy if this would be helpful.

263.3 RESOLVED: The Board agreed that:

- (a) The draft provided a good starting point for the development of an environmental sustainability and carbon reduction strategy.
- (b) The Executive would further develop the strategy and the finalised strategy would be submitted to a future meeting of the Board.

Items for approval

UB264 Revenue and capital budget 2010-11

264.1 The Board received a report that detailed the capital and revenue budget for 2010-11.

264.2 The following points were made in discussion:

- (i) A revaluation of the University's estate had not been undertaken since the 1990s. The revaluation had been undertaken at the suggestion of the University's external auditors.

- (ii) The revaluation of the University's estate had increased the University's net asset value significantly. This strengthened the University's balance sheet.
- (iii) The budget made prudent assumptions about the number of international students to be recruited.
- (iv) The University continued to invest in new staff appointments in response to increases in student numbers.
- (v) The University was exploring consortia purchasing arrangements to obtain larger discounts.
- (vi) NHS income was anticipated to decline from £9.1 million in 2009-10 to £8.8 million in 2010-11.
- (vii) The University may face an in-year funding cut in 2010-11 following the Comprehensive Spending Review. This was because the academic and financial year started at different points.
- (viii) This was a resilient and carefully crafted budget. There were still some uncertainties surrounding some public funding streams but the budget had been carefully scrutinised at committee level and there could be confidence that it was robust.

264.3 RESOLVED: The Board approved the budget for 2010-11.

UB265 Student Union block grant

265.1 The Board received a report that detailed the proposed Student Union grant for 2010-11.

265.2 The following points were made in discussion:

- (i) The attribution of the costs associated with the relocation of the Student Union to the Campus Centre had been agreed.
- (ii) The inflationary uplift to the grant was likely to be in the region of 0.4%.
- (iii) The Student Union had received a 9% increase in grant for 2009-10. The proposed grant for 2010-11 had been determined on the basis of the current financial climate.
- (iv) The Student Experience Committee had considered the proposal and was supportive.

265.3 RESOLVED: The Board approved the Student Union block grant for 2010-11.

UB266 Revised student code of conduct and disciplinary procedure

266.1 The Board received a report that proposed revisions to the student code of conduct and disciplinary procedure.

266.2 The following points were made in discussion:

- (i) The revisions would enable the University to deal more effectively and proportionately with instances of low level student misconduct.
- (ii) Members of the Student Experience Committee had reviewed the revisions and those made over the last 12 months to ensure that they were consistent.

- (iii) It might sometimes be necessary to inform other agencies and organisations if a student was dismissed from the University for disciplinary reasons. This requirement should be reflected in the revised code of practice.

266.3 RESOLVED: The Board agreed the revisions to the student code of conduct and disciplinary procedure subject to the inclusion of an additional amendment to reflect point (iii) above.

UB267 Academic Board

267.1 The Board received a report of the business conducted at the meeting of the Academic Board held on 9 June 2010.

267.2 In discussion, it was noted that the University had established new collaborative partnerships with Preston University in Ajman in the United Arab Emirates and with the Northampton Teacher Training Partnership.

267.3 RESOLVED: The Board noted the report.

UB268 Audit and Compliance Committee

268.1 The Board received a report of the business discussed at the meeting of the Audit and Compliance Committee held on 9 June 2010.

268.2 The following points were made in discussion:

- (i) The University would establish a shared service arrangement with the University of Hertfordshire for the provision of internal audit services. Care would be taken to fully explore issues of confidentiality and VAT before any contract was concluded.
- (ii) Changes to government policy and the potential impact of the Browne Review and the CSR were likely to require that substantial revisions were made to the Corporate Risk Register.

268.3 RESOLVED: The Board noted the report.

UB269 Resources and Employment Committee

269.1 The Board received a report of the business discussed at the meeting of the Resources and Employment Committee held on 29 June 2010.

269.2 The following points were made in discussion:

- (i) The University had attained an impressive financial performance.
- (ii) The Committee had been pleased to note the progress of the human resources strategy and had found the provision of comparative statistics useful.

269.3 RESOLVED: The Board noted the report.

UB270 Student Experience Committee

270.1 The Board received a report of the business discussed at the meeting of the Student Experience Committee held on 2 July 2010.

270.2 The following points were made in discussion:

- (i) The University's position in national league tables had declined. This was mainly the consequence of the way in which the scores and weightings for capital expenditure were calculated within the league tables. The Committee was satisfied that the student experience offered by the University had improved over the last year.
- (ii) There was scope to improve the composition of the Committee's membership. The potential to increase the number of governors in membership of the Committee should be explored.

270.3 RESOLVED: The Board noted the report.

UB271 Nominations and Honours Committee

271.1 The Board received a report of the business discussed at the meeting of the Nominations and Honours Committee held on 8 July 2010.

271.2 The following points were made in discussion:

- (i) The last Board meeting had not been quorate and insufficient apologies had been received to enable this to have been known beforehand. Governors were asked to make every effort to attend meetings and to notify the Secretariat beforehand if they were unable to attend.
- (ii) The University Secretary should contact Board members individually to ascertain their willingness to move to other committees or to serve on more than one committee. If members were able to volunteer to serve on other committees then this might avoid the need to undertake a comprehensive review and realignment of committee membership.

271.3 RESOLVED: The Board noted the report.

UB272 Remuneration Committee

272.1 The Board received a report of the business discussed at the meeting of the Remuneration Committee held on 8 July 2010.

272.2 The Chair reported that the Vice Chancellor's salary for 2010-11 had been frozen at the 2009-10 level at the Vice Chancellor's request and that the average salary increase for 2010-11 for the University's senior managers would not exceed 1%. The University had made no severance payments to senior staff during 2009-10.

272.3 RESOLVED: The Board noted the report.

UB273 Estates Sub-committee

273.1 The Board received a report of the business discussed at the meeting of the Estates Sub-committee held on 30 June 2010.

273.2 The following points were made in discussion:

- (i) The contract with Campus Living Villages for the construction of new student residences at Luton had been concluded.
- (ii) It was possible that completion of the new Campus Centre would be slightly delayed. This was attributable to time delays caused by archaeological works and the poor weather earlier in the year. Contingency plans were in-hand to deal with any delay to the opening.

273.3 RESOLVED: The Board noted the report.

UB274 Balanced scorecard

274.1 The Board received a report that detailed the University's performance against the indicators detailed in its balanced scorecard.

274.2 In discussion, it was noted in the context of indicator C9 that the Student Experience Committee had discussed how more effective mechanisms might be developed to enable student views to be articulated and collected.

274.3 RESOLVED: The Committee noted the report.

UB275 University risk register

275.1 The Board received a report that reviewed the University's corporate risk register and provided an associated commentary from each risk owner.

275.2 RESOLVED: The Board noted the report.

UB276 Matters for note

276.1 The Board received the minutes of committees held since 13 May 2010.

276.2 RESOLVED: The Board noted the minutes.

UB277 Any other business

277.1 The Board noted that this was the last meeting for Ms Julie Sadlier and Mr Adam Calvert. The Board thanked them for their contribution to its work and to the life of the University and wished them success in the future.

277.2 The Board noted the retirement of Dr Jim Franklin, Registrar and the departure of Professor Andrew Slade, Pro Vice Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) to become Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) at Leeds Metropolitan University. The Board thanked them for their contribution to the success of the University and wished them well for the future.

Adrian Parry
University Secretary
27 July 2010