

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

 Minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2015

Present

Bernard Laverty	Independent member	Chair of the Board
Lesley Munro		Clerk to the Board
Martin Ainscough	Independent member	
Richard Benjamin	Independent member	
John Cater	Vice-Chancellor	Ex-officio
Graeme Collinge	Independent member	
Clive Edwards	Independent member	
Lisa Greenhalgh	Independent member	Chair: Audit Committee
Bill Johnson	Support staff member	Elected
Jade McDonald	Student member	Elected
David Owen	Independent member	Deputy Chair & Chair of Resources Committee
Simon Pope	Independent member	
Louise Robinson	Independent member	
Steven Rouke	Students' Union President	
George Talbot	Academic staff member	Academic Board nominee

In attendance

Mark Allanson	PVC (External Relations)
Lynda Brady	PVC (Student Experience) & University Secretary
Steve Igoe	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Paul Malone	Students' Union General Manager

Apologies

Evelyn Carnegie	Academic staff member	Elected
Rob Green	Independent member	

Absent

Denise Walker	Independent member
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BG.15.001 Welcome to new members

The Chair welcomed Graeme Collinge and Louise Robinson to their first meeting of the Board.

BG.15.002 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest specific to the meeting.

BG.15.003 Chair's Announcements

There were no Chair's Announcements.

BG.15.004 Chair's Action

There was no Chair's Action to report.

BG.15.005 Minutes of the previous meeting

Received: Document BG/001/15

Noting that Simon Pope had given apologies, the minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2015 were agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

BG.15.006 Action Log

Received: Document BG/002/15

The Clerk introduced the Log noting that an update on the follow-up actions emanating from the CUC Code Gap Analysis would be carried forward to this year. In relation to the Terms of Reference for the WLBC Forum, it was noted that the constitution of this group had changed following the local elections and it was agreed that time should be allowed for the new dynamic to develop before considering further action.

Noting that a full report on the government's PREVENT strategy would be presented to the next meeting, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) and University Secretary provided a verbal update confirming that the duties for universities under counter-terrorism legislation had come into force last week – somewhat earlier than expected. The duties were especially concerned with policies and procedures for speakers, chaplaincy support, IT and communications

policies and staff training. It was noted that HEFCE had been appointed to monitor compliance and had issued a consultation document on the arrangements very recently which emphasised an individualised and proportionate methodology. The first step for the institution would be to produce a Risk Assessment and associated Action Plan with a full Self-Assessment required in January 2016. The Pro Vice-Chancellor indicated that the University's approach would be geared to the protection of vulnerable students.

The Action Log was received.

BG.15.007 Matters arising not included elsewhere on the agenda

There were no other matters arising.

SECTION A ITEMS

BG.15.008 Confirmation of Standing Orders

Received: Document BG/003/15

Noting no major changes to the documentation, **the Board approved the Standing Orders for 2015/16.**

Action: Clerk

BG.15.009 Board Self-evaluation

Received: Document BG/004/15

Members considered the documentation presented by the Clerk which summarised attendance and membership aspects, the business conducted over the year and the schedule of business for the coming year. The possibility of further recruitment to the Board was due to be discussed at Nominations Committee and it was noted that a new report on Equality and Diversity was in development for presentation at a future meeting.

It was agreed that performance had been satisfactory and noted that a full effectiveness review was scheduled for 16/17. **Revised Terms of Reference were approved** to take account of the new CUC Code and the recently agreed Scheme of Delegation.

Action: Clerk

BG.15.010 Use of the University Seal

Received: Document BG/005/15

Use of the University Seal during 2014/15 was noted as documented. In response to a member's question, it was noted that preparatory work for the demolition of the Hawthornes and Slack House Cottages was well underway.

BG.15.011 Minutes of Committees

.01 Audit Committee (14 September 2015)

Received: Document BG/006/15

The Chair of Audit introduced the minutes drawing attention to the following points:

- Satisfactory committee evaluation;
- Receipt of a report on the University's compliance with the HEFCE Data Management Code of Practice;
- Two internal audits which were classed as low risk, providing substantial assurance.

The Audit Committee minutes were received.

BG.15.012 Provisional Financial Outturn 31 July 2015

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor gave a verbal report on the year-end financial outturn, highlighting income at £123.9 million (£115.4 million 2013/14), cash balances at £29 million (£21 million 2013/14) and a surplus of £24.2 million (£17.9 million 2013/14) which was above budget projections. Expenditure was noted at £100.3 million (£97.9 million 2013/14) representing a low cost slippage given the considerable increase in pension contributions.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor recorded his thanks to all staff involved in achieving a fast closedown of the accounts with no significant issues raised by the auditors. It was expected that the surplus, at 19.5% of income, would be the best in the sector and provided a high level of security for the University during a turbulent time for higher education.

In response to a member's question it was noted that the receipt of student income in three tranches during the year did present some challenges in terms of the phasing of expenditure, especially in relation to capital projects and also had an adverse effect on investment, although this was minimal given the current poor rates of return.

Members congratulated the University on an excellent outcome noting that the full financial statements would come to the next meeting of the Board for approval.

BG.15.013 The University's Collaborative Provision

Received: Document BG/007/15

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) and University Secretary introduced the report drawing attention to the more selective approach adopted in developing deep level partnerships with institutions that were strategically aligned and reputation enhancing. In this context, activity in the Faculty of Health offered particular opportunities to work at a high level with associated professions. International partnerships remained limited to a small number of long-standing arrangements with prestigious institutions.

In response to a member's question, it was noted that all arrangements were subject to a full risk assessment and due diligence examination to ensure both academic credibility and long-term financial sustainability.

The report on Collaborative Provision was received.

BG.15.014 WLBC/EHU Forum: 10 July 2015

Received: Document BG/008/15

The Chair introduced the notes from the last meeting noting the change in membership following local elections. This change had impacted on discussions which were becoming more relevant and suggested a more positive future for the forum. It was noted that an updated version of the 2010 Regeneris report on the economic impact of the University had been presented by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and had been well received. Discussions on the use of Section 106 monies had been revived and University input sought in relation to local economic strategies and enterprise initiatives. Whilst student spend in the immediate locality was significant, it was noted that University procurement impacted more widely on the NorthWest region. The

Vice-Chancellor had emphasised the need for more local opportunities for graduates and the benefit that could be derived from the establishment of business incubator units.

In response to a member's question, it was noted that the University was now involved with both the Liverpool and the Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnerships and the potential for some funding towards a proposed new Technology Hub on campus was being explored. The Vice-Chancellor indicated he was also exploring the potential for collaboration with Lancaster University through the Lancashire LEP Health Innovation Fund.

The minutes of the WLBC/EHU Forum were received.

BG.15.015 Academic Board Committee Structure

Received: Document BG/009/15

The Vice-Chancellor introduced the document which outlined changes to the Academic Board committee structure establishing the Academic Quality committee as a full committee of Academic Board in recognition of its importance within the academic community. He also highlighted the move to include more elected representatives within the committee structure, designed to encourage engagement at all levels in the University.

The report on the Academic committee structure was received.

BG.15.016 Annual Report from Academic Board

Received: Document BG/010/15

The report on business over the last year was received.

SECTION B ITEMS

BG.15.017 Vice-Chancellor's Report

Received: Document BG/011/15

The Vice-Chancellor introduced his report which concentrated on two main areas of concern:

.01 Initial Teacher Training

The changes in government policy were beginning to bite with the percentage of ITT provision in Universities now reduced to 51%. Whilst opportunities for Primary and Early Years provision remained relatively stable in the short term, the removal of specific University allocations for Secondary PGCE created a very competitive market for popular subjects where Schools were likely to dominate. Recruitment to shortage subjects would remain challenging for all providers.

Recognising the need for swift action, the Vice-Chancellor indicated that arrangements were underway to promote PGCE opportunities to final year students with appropriate subject specialisms across North West universities with a view to securing early recruitment commitments. Given the policy environment, the importance of the diversification of provision in the Faculty of Education was noted as a key priority.

.02 BIS Policy Statements

In relation to policy announcements from the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, it was noted that there was likely to be a further relaxation of process to allow University designation to new private providers alongside the potential for Further Education Colleges to become Higher Education Institutions. The Department was expected to make a significant contribution to austerity savings with implications not only for University funding but for the future of associated bodies such as the Research Councils, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).

In response to members' questions, it was noted that the current turbulence in Teacher Training policy was impacting on the attractiveness of the profession as a career option and that this could have a long-term effect on teacher supply. It was critical that the University recognised the policy challenges and developed alternative strategies to maintain viable recruitment routes.

The Vice-Chancellor's report was received.

BG.15.018 Capital Projects Update

Received: Document BG/012/15

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor introduced the paper highlighting the successful completion of the Sports Centre, Phase 10 residential scheme and the car park upgrade. Upgrades to the main entrance and new classroom facilities in the Wilson Centre were also noted. In relation to project budgets, an overspend of £370,000 was reported on the Sports Centre development occasioned by finishing costs although this was mitigated by savings elsewhere and VAT recovery. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor had instituted a review to fully understand the cost slippage for this particular project.

Noting the action taken, **the Board approved an additional allocation of £370,000 for the Sports Centre Development.**

Action: Deputy Vice-Chancellor

Looking to the future, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor indicated that proposals for a new Technology Hub (with the possibility of some external funding), further residential units and the provision of Geosciences laboratories would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee. He also drew attention to ongoing work to review the Estates Masterplan which would be discussed in more detail at the Board's January strategy meeting.

Action: Clerk

In discussion, the President of the Students' Union highlighted the importance of student engagement with building developments.

The Update on Capital Projects was received.

BG.15.019 National Student Survey Results 2015

Received: Document BG/013/15

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) & University Secretary introduced the report highlighting that a more co-ordinated approach had been adopted this year to improve response rates and this had been successful with the rate increasing from 67% to 73%. In terms of outcomes, most scores had improved or remained stable and the University was second in the North West taking an average of all

scoring areas but, disappointingly, the score for overall satisfaction (used by League Table compilers) had fallen by 0.05. It was a particular pleasure to note the significant increase in satisfaction with the Students' Union from 3.99 to 4.10 which was the best in the North West and well above the sector average of 3.85.

Looking at individual areas, there was significant variation between Faculties and Departments and it was reported that the results would be discussed in detail in Departmental reviews with a view to ensuring that best practice was identified and adopted.

In response to a member's question, it was noted that, whilst there had been some small improvement, the continued poor performance in Media relative to other departments was being addressed and that an appointment had recently been made with a specific student experience remit.

The need for care in the student demographic categorisation titles was noted.

Action: Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience)

The report on the 2015 National Student Survey results was received.

BG.15.020 First Destination Survey 2015

Received: Document BG/014/15

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (External Relations) introduced this report which outlined the employment outcomes for students who had graduated in 2014. Whilst the percentage of leavers in work showed a slight decline from the previous year (78.9% from 79.6%), this was still well ahead of the sector average (72.1%). First degree leavers in employment or further study had risen slightly to 93.7% placing the University 5th in the North West and the improvement in the percentage of students obtaining graduate level jobs from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (47.9% from 42.8%) was particularly heartening. The Pro Vice-Chancellor drew attention to the requirement for all Departments to have Employability Plans in place which addressed key attributes and skills.

In discussion, it was noted that, whilst this was seen as a key indicator which was likely to be included in the Teaching Excellence Framework,

the data collection methodology made the survey data less robust than other indicators.

The 2015 First Destination Survey report was received.

BG.15.021 Student Report

Received: Document BG/015/15

The Students' Union President introduced his report drawing attention to the following points:

- Recent discussions with the Executive which had led to a revised pricing policy for students in relation to the Sports Centre facilities;
- The excellent NSS score in relation to satisfaction with the Students' Union;
- Use of NSS data to identify three teaching and learning areas for focus during the year – Assessment and Feedback, Media Studies and Placements;
- Restructuring of the Course representative system to provide a common model across all Faculties;
- Discussions within NUS on the role of democracy in 'hearing the student voice'.

Executive members congratulated the Students' Union Team on the success of Freshers' Week activities.

It was noted that the Union would be involved in consideration of the PREVENT strategy.

The student report was received.

BG.15.022 Any other Business

Noting the retirement of Bill Johnson as Support Staff Governor, the Chair thanked him for his commitment and contribution over his time in office.

SECTION C ITEMS

BG.15.023 Academic Board minutes

Received: Document BG/016/15

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2015 were received.

BG.15.024 Students' Union Code of Practice

Received: Document BG/017/15

The Code of Practice 2015/16 was received.

BG.15.025 Transfer of UCISA from Charitable Trust to CCLG

Received: Document BG/018/15

The transfer was noted.

BG.15.026 Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 30 November 2015.