

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2014

Present

Bernard Laverty	Independent member	Chair of the Board
Lesley Munro	PVC & University Secretary	Clerk to the Board
Martin Ainscough	Independent member	
Richard Benjamin	Independent member	
John Cater	Vice-Chancellor	Ex-officio
Gareth Dowling	Student member	Students' Union President
Clive Edwards	Independent member	
Rob Green	Independent member	
Lisa Greenhalgh	Independent member	Chair: Audit Committee
Stephen Hesford	Independent member	
Bill Johnson	Support staff member	Elected
John Maxwell	Independent member	
David Owen	Independent member	Deputy Chair & Chair Resources Committee
Robert Smedley	PVC & Dean of Education	Academic Board representative
Lynnette Turner	Academic staff member	Elected
Alice Walker	Student member	Elected
Denise Walker	Independent member	

In attendance

Paul Malone	Students' Union General Manager
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Apologies

Hilary Anslow	Independent member	
Michael Pinfold	Independent member	Retiring Chair of the Board
Simon Pope	Independent member	

The Chair welcomed Denise Walker to her first meeting of the Board.

BG.13.051 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest specific to the meeting.

BG.13.052 Chair's Announcements

.01 Extension of term of office

It was noted that, following consultation amongst independent members, the term of office for Hilary Anslow had been extended to the end of February 2014 or until completion of outstanding business with which she was involved.

Action: Clerk

.02 Edge Hill Students' Union Annual Report and Financial Statements

Noting this was included as a Section C item for information, the Chair thanked representatives from the Students' Union for the production of a very informative report and commended it to members.

BG.13.053 Chair's Action

There was no Chair's Action to report.

BG.13.054 Minutes of the previous meeting

Received: Document BG/038/13

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2013 were agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

BG.13.055 Action Log

Received: Document BG/039/13

Members received the Action Log noting there were no outstanding items from the previous meeting.

BG.13.056 Matters arising not included elsewhere on the agenda

There were no matters arising.

SECTION A ITEMS

There were no Section A items.

SECTION B ITEMS

BG.13.057 2020: The Shape(s) of things to come

Received: Document BG/040/13

The Vice-Chancellor introduced this workshop session which was to consider how to successfully steer the University through three different potential student number scenarios – reduction, status quo or growth. The documentation provided gave an overview of current key datasets to support discussion. The following notes represent the conclusions from the groups:

.01 Reduction in size

This was felt to be a difficult proposition that would require both a portfolio and a staffing review whilst avoiding the 'downward spiral' scenario. Whilst the group envisaged more emphasis on specialisms (an enhanced/premium offer with higher entry levels), the importance of maintaining growth potential was recognised. Specialisms could be helpful in driving alternative sources of income through the development of international activity, industry links and research. Linking 'small' with quality could support brand and reputation and the campus would continue to be a major resource that could be exploited to advantage. Managing HR issues well would be key, requiring strong strategic leadership and excellent communication. Retaining and developing the best staff would be critical to maintaining quality and ensuring an outstanding student experience.

.02 Status Quo

The group did not see this as straightforward given the current political and economic climate and the existing heavy dependence on public sector funding through DoH and DfE. Enhancing brand and reputation was seen as critical to increasing market awareness whilst the development of new markets would also be essential. More emphasis on cross-faculty work around 'themed

areas' could help in developing new provision such as food science (eg linking biology, sport and nutrition around 'healthy lifestyle'). Developments in technology could be considered but would be expensive. Clear targets for international recruitment focused on specific subject areas should be a priority.

.03 *Growth*

The group considering a growth scenario recognised that this would have to be concentrated on certain areas given the strict controls on numbers effected through the Department of Health and the Department for Education. This suggested major expansion through the Faculty of Arts and Sciences which could be bolstered by cross-faculty working. Success in maintaining the current positions in Health and Education whilst supporting growth in other areas would be dependent on having a strong brand and reputation which was also essential for the development of international and research work. A full portfolio review would be essential to identify areas capable of sustained growth (eg Business School and Computing) as well as the identification of new markets. Commitment to the further development of the campus was a pre-requisite to success (Sports Development and Students' Union building) whilst securing a robust future would require continuous improvement of the student experience.

There was some discussion about the potential of acquisition in a growth scenario but it was recognised that this would only be a possibility in certain circumstances. In particular, any acquisition would need to be a support to planned provision (probably applied in nature) and avoid the potential of picking up poorly performing or lacklustre provision with a redundant campus which would simply be a drain on resources.

In drawing together discussion, the Vice-Chancellor drew attention to the high degree of convergence amongst the three groups in terms of the key challenges and risks:

- Brand and reputation – key to all scenarios - often reflected through League Tables (eg NSS, REF). The growing importance of social media and the further development of school and alumni links was highlighted;
- Product – the importance of portfolio diversification, including cross-faculty working (eg Youth Justice, Food Science, Genetics,

Software Engineering, Music). An increased emphasis on work placements and commitment to the employability agenda was key to improving the student experience. There was potential in careful expansion of international activity including Europe and the USA.

- Markets – understanding the competition and, within the North West, the potential to feed off the Russell Group triangle whilst taking market share from poorer performing institutions was critical.

In conclusion, the Chair thanked the Vice-Chancellor and members of the Board for their contributions to an interesting discussion.

BG.13.058 Any other Business

There was no other business

SECTION C ITEMS

BG.13.059 Edge Hill Students' Union Annual Report and Financial Statements

Received: Document BG/041/13

The Annual Report and Financial Statements were received.

BG.13.060 Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 31 March 2014.