

Board of Governors

Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 January 2019

Present:

Sylvia Hughes (Chair)

David Baker

Sue Dutton

Rafael Garcia-Krailing

Jeff Halliwell

Richard Horsley

Frank Jordan

Edward Lord

Gemma Lovegrove

Lee Machado

Mark Mulcahey

Nick Petford

Martin Pettifor

Nick Robertson

John Skelton

Apologies:

Sara Goodwin, Nick Pitts-Tucker, Ann Shelton-Mayes

In attendance:

Emma Finlay (Governance Assistant), Miriam Lakin (Clerk), Deborah Mattock (Director of HR, Marketing and International Relations), Mairi Watson (Dean of Business and Law) for item 5

To item 20, and for item 23.1

Jane Bunce (Director of Student and Academic Services), Mark Hall (Director of Finance), Terry Neville (Chief Operating Officer)

01/19 Welcome, Apologies and Quorum

01.1 The Chair welcomed those present, noted apologies and confirmed quoracy.

02/19 Declarations of Interest

02.1 No declarations of interest were received in addition to those held on file by the Clerk's Office.

03/19 Minutes of Previous Meeting

03.1 The Board approved the minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2018 as a true record of that meeting, with a change to item 239.5.

04/19 Action List and Matters Arising

04.1 The Board received and noted Paper A on actions arising from previous meetings. Additional comments were received on the following:

04.2 Presentation of New Risk Model (Minute 128.2)

The Clerk noted that she would follow up with the Chair of the Audit Committee on a suitable date for presentation of the model to that committee.

Mairi Watson, Dean of Business and Law, joined the meeting.

05/19 Faculty of Business and Law

05.1 The Board received and noted Paper B, comprising key performance indicator data for all four faculties.

05.2 The Dean of the Faculty of Business and Law gave a presentation which covered the following areas:

- The nature of the faculty
- An analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the faculty and the response the faculty was making to these
- Financial outturn at the end of 2017/18
- Student recruitment data
- Data on the performance of different subject areas against a selection of key performance indicators in the operational plan and how improvements were being sought.

05.3 Members asked about the relationship between the faculty's academic offer and the University's social purpose and Changemaker Challenges. The Dean of Business and Law advised the Board that this was something the faculty continued to develop, for example considering ways to integrate Changemaker into the modules as part of curriculum redesign.

05.4 Members asked whether the focus on social impact attracted students. The Dean of Business and Law advised the Board that embedding and articulating the chance for students to have a social impact was very attractive to them. She noted that many students came from disadvantaged communities and that the social impact agenda often corresponded to their personal experience.

05.5 Members asked about the increase in graduate employability for the Law programme and whether there was good practice that could be used in other courses. The Dean of Business and Law advised the Board that the Faculty had invested in a number of Graduate Tutors in Law. These were former students

who helped to bridge between staff and students, as new students could find it challenging to approach academic staff directly, possibly because of perceived social difference. In this way the faculty was helping to improve and strengthen relationships that would ultimately make students more successful. Graduate Tutors were also helpful in providing early interventions with students considering leaving their courses.

05.6 Members asked about the strength of the University brand to compete in the market place and whether the offer was sufficiently differentiated, noting that competitors seemed able easily to increase the number of places offered. The Director of HR, Marketing and International Relations advised the Board that the main competitors in the area of Business and Law had extensive provision and were pursuing growth agendas. The Vice Chancellor advised the Board that the University closely monitored the recruitment trends of competitors.

05.7 It was noted that overall graduate employability was of concern. The Dean of Business and Law agreed that faster improvement was needed. She noted that the measure was taken six months after graduation, and some courses, for example in events and hospitality and in law, did not lead to graduate employment within that timescale as further training was needed. It was noted that a different approach to measuring graduate employability was about to be adopted nationally, and this could have a positive impact on the statistics. She reported that staff in the faculty were considering how to raise student aspirations about what they could achieve after an undergraduate degree and encourage them to have a clear direction. A nuanced approach was required, working with students at course level.

05.8 Members asked about the level of interest amongst businesses in the county in working with the University. The Dean of Business and Law advised the Board that this was tied to the Changemaker Challenges, and that most contacts were to carry out small pieces of research.

05.9 In terms of research, the Dean of Business and Law stated that the Faculty's REF performance was a concern. She advised the Board that the Faculty struggled to recruit and develop staff quickly enough to generate adequate research income.

05.10 Members asked whether the Doctorate in Business Administration was an area of growth. The Dean of Business and Law advised the Board that fees for the DBA had been increased, and that it was experiencing growth at a slow pace. Changemaker Scholarships had been introduced which offered a one third fee discount for those with an interest in undertaking a Changemaker project in Northamptonshire. There were also around 60 students through a partnership arrangement. Whilst this was an exciting area, it did present challenges for supervisory capability and required active researchers.

05.11 Members asked whether the University would benefit from having a dedicated building for the Business School to give it a strong identity. The Dean of Business and Law advised the Board that the Waterside campus encouraged collegiate working and a greater focus on students and she did not believe the move had had any negative impact on recruitment. She invited Board members to visit the Faculty.

05.12 The President of the Students' Union advised the Board that the Students' Union was aware of exciting feedback from students about the work of the Faculty of Business and Law, for example embedding work-related placements during the first year. This helped students to develop effective networks, which could lead to future opportunities and elevate the brand of the faculty.

05.13 The Chair congratulated the Dean of Business and Law for her success to date and thanked her for an interesting and informative presentation.

Mairi Watson left the meeting.

06/19 The Public Sector Equality Duty and the Role of the Board

06.1 The Board received and noted Paper C, which set out information about the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Board's role in carrying this out.

07/19 Staff Equality and Inclusion Rolling Action Plan and Progress

07.1 The Board received and noted Paper D, the Staff Equality and Inclusion Action Plan and Progress.

07.2 The Director of HR advised the Board that the action plan was presented annually and provided an update on priorities, activities and progress. Members asked about the number of actions with an amber rating. The Director of HR advised the Board that actions which were green and were therefore addressed and embedded were removed from the plan. The amber actions showed work in progress. The Director of HR also advised the Board that those actions which were required by legislation were prioritised. The HR team were currently involved in the development of an Equality and Inclusion Charter, and preparing a Gender Pay Gap Report.

07.3 Members asked about the level of risk in relation to legislative compliance. The Director of HR advised the Board that there were no red or amber ratings in relation to legislative compliance.

08/19 Financial Forecast for HMT

08.1 The Board received and noted Paper E1, a Financial Forecast for HMT.
Minutes 08.2 – 08.11 are in the confidential section of these minutes.

09/19 Scenario Planning for Reduced Fees

09.1 The Board received and noted Paper E2 which covered scenario planning should student fees be reduced as a result of the Augur Review of Post-18 Education Funding.

Minutes 09.2 – 09.5 are in the confidential section of these minutes.

09.6 The Board noted that the paper contained a number of recommended actions following the publication of the Augur review.

10/19 Minutes of the Treasury Committee held on 12 December 2018

10.1 The Board received and noted Paper F, the minutes of the Treasury Committee held on 12 December 2018.

10.2 A member of the Treasury Committee confirmed that the majority of the actions arising had been covered by papers for the current Board meeting. However, a schedule of loan repayments was still outstanding would be very useful to the Board.

11/19 Changes to Pension Scheme Contributions

11.1 The Board received and noted Paper G, a report on changes to pension scheme contributions, and noted the financial implications for the University. The Director of Finance confirmed that the financial implications had been accounted for in papers E1 and E2.

12/19 Management Accounts

12.1 The Board received and noted Paper H, the Management Accounts as at 31 December 2018.

Minutes 12.2 and 12.3 are in the confidential section of these minutes.

12.4 Members asked about the issue of student non-continuation to the next year of study. The Board was advised that the Executive were investigating the data and its implications. It was agreed that the Board would receive a report in due course.

Action: Director of Student and Academic Services

12.5 Members suggested that a review of catering provision might provide an opportunity to advance the University's social purpose offering for example by providing employment or working with a local supplier.

12.6 Members asked about income from international students. It was noted that overseas student numbers were below budget in some faculties. The Director of Finance advised the Board that the budget focused on income rather than student numbers. The Director of HR, Marketing and International Relations advised the Board that the income from overseas students was on target, even though there was a small drop in student numbers.

13/19 UCAS Applications and Decisions

13.1 The Board received and noted Paper I, a report on UCAS applications to the University and decisions taken in response.

13.2 The Director of HR, Marketing and International Relations advised the Board that data was not exactly comparable between the current and previous year as it was captured on a different day. She reported that according to the most up to date figures available, applications to the University were 9% less than in the previous year.

13.3 Members asked whether the University was losing market share to competitors. It was confirmed that this was likely to be the case, and that several of the University's competitors were pursuing growth agendas.

13.4 Members were supportive of the marketing plans set out in section three of the paper which enabled the University to redirect marketing resources to

targeted areas. Members suggested that the University should approach North West Railways to see if any initiative was possible to make travel more attractive for students.

13.5 The Director of HR, Marketing and International Relations advised the Board that there had been a high number of students attending open days, and that Discovery Days focusing on converting applications to firm acceptances were also planned.

13.6 Members noted the competitive context in which the University's Marketing Team was operating and stated that it was achieving much with less resources than competitors.

14/19 Report from the Vice Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer

14.1 The Board received Paper J, a report from the Vice Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer.

14.2 The Vice Chancellor advised the Board that there had a negative press story about a presentation he had given about the data available from the new smart campus systems and its potential in helping to understand and predict student behaviour and preferences. He advised the Board that the University was fully cognisant of potential GDPR issues arising from this. He agreed to show the Board the presentation at its March meeting.

14.3 Members asked whether the University had suitable policies to cover the use of this data, for example in the case of student disciplinarys. The Director of Student and Academic Services confirmed that policies were in place and that student consent to data usage for specific purposes was sought as part of the enrolment process.

15/19 Knowledge Exchange Framework Consultation

15.1 The Board received and noted Paper K, which set out further details of a consultation on the Knowledge Exchange Framework.

16/19 Minutes of the Senate Meeting held on 5 December 2018

16.1 The Board received and noted Paper L, the minutes of the Senate meeting held on 5 December 2018.

16.2 It was noted that the Board were briefed regarding the Senate minutes at the previous meeting. In accordance with the Protocols between the Board and Senate, the Director of Student and Academic Services welcomed Board members to attend the Senate meetings. The next meeting would be on 6 February 2019. The Clerk agreed to forward the dates of the Senate meetings for 2019.

Action: Clerk

17/19 HR Policies

17.1 The Board received and noted Paper M, the revised Pay and Reward Policy and the new Staff Sexual Harassment, Misconduct and Violence Policy and Procedure.

17.2 Members queried whether the revised Pay and Reward Policy was sufficiently detailed. The Director of HR, Marketing and International Relations advised the Board that it was an overarching policy which set out the principles, and that detail was contained in specific policies. A member of the Board agreed to send comparable policy from another organisation for comparison.

17.3 Members asked about the availability of the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for the Sexual Harassment Policy. The Director of HR, Marketing and International Relations advised the Board that EIAs had been completed for both policies, and gave assurance that neither raised any issues. It was agreed that in future an EIA would be circulated with each policy for approval by the Board.

17.4 Members asked about point 6.3 of the Sexual Harassment policy which referred to the 'balance of probability'. It was noted that this was in compliance with the civil standard of proof, a lower requirement than the criminal standard.

17.5 The Board approved the following policies;

Revised Pay and Reward Policy

New Staff Sexual Harassment, Misconduct and Violence Policy and Procedure.

18/19 2017/18 TRAC Compliance

18.1 The Board received Paper N, a report on TRAC Compliance for 2017/18.

18.2 The Board approved compliance with TRAC requirements for 2017/18.

19/19 Next Steps after Board Away Day

19.1 The Board received Paper O, a report on the next steps after its recent Away Day.

19.2 The Board agreed to disband the Development Committee with immediate effect on the understanding that its business would be dealt with by the whole Board in future.

19.3 Members discussed the formation of a small working group to discuss Board effectiveness and the following members volunteered;

Jeff Halliwell

Richard Horsley

Edward Lord

Frank Jordan

Sue Dutton

Rafael Garcia-Krailing

The Director of Student and Academic Services also agreed to be a member of the working group. A paper was tabled to initiate discussions regarding Board

organisation and the working group was asked to report back to the Board with recommendations at its March meeting.

Action: Working Group

19.4 The Chair of the Audit Committee asked for the role of the Risk Workshop to be considered in the discussions regarding Board organisation.

19.5 There was a discussion regarding a reference to an 'Associate Director' role in the tabled paper. It was explained that this was an idea from discussions at the away day which would allow a level of engagement with the Board without full Board membership.

20/19 Review of the Terms of Reference of the Independent Members Appointment Committee

20.1 The Board received Paper P, a review of the Terms of Reference of the Independent Members Appointment Committee.

20.2 The Board approved updated Terms of Reference for the Independent Members Appointment Committee as set out in Paper P.

21/19 Minutes Confidential to the Board of its meeting on 12 December

21.1 The Board received and approved minutes of its meeting held on 12 December which were confidential to Board members only.

Minutes 21.2 to 21.6 are in a section of these minutes confidential to Board members only.

22/19 Ratification of Signatures Under Seal

22.1 The Board received Paper Q and ratified the signature of documents under seal as set out in the paper.

23/19 Any Other Business

23.1 USP for the University

Members and attendees were asked for feedback on a draft statement about the University to be used to encourage local businesses to engage with a series of lectures being organised by the Faculty of Business and Law. The Director of HR, Marketing and International Relations agreed to forward this to the PR team for feedback.

23.2 Graduation Ceremonies

It was noted that graduation ceremonies would take place on 9-10 February 2019.

Minutes 23.3 and 23.4 are in the confidential section of these minutes.

24/19 Confirmation of Availability of Papers

24.1 The following papers were confirmed as confidential to the meeting:

Paper B – Faculty Data Sheets

Paper D – Staff Equality and Inclusion Rolling Action Plan and Progress

Paper E1 – Financial Forecast

Paper E2 – Scenario Planning for Reduced Fees

Paper F – Treasury Committee Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 12 December 2018

Paper G – Changes to Pension Scheme Contributions

Paper I – UCAS Applications and Decisions Data as of 14/01/2019

Paper L – Senate Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 December 2018

Paper O – Next Steps from the Board Away Day

25/19 Dates of Forthcoming Meetings

25.1 Board of Governors – 20 February 2019

Remuneration Committee – 20 February 2019

Court Event – 13 March 2019

Academic Assurance Working Group – 20 March 2019

Board of Governors – 20 March 2019

Nominations Committee – 20 March 2019