

Board of Governors
Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 May 2016

Present:

Andrew Scarborough (Chair)

Victor Agboola

David Baker

Sue Dutton

Sara Goodwin

Richard Horsley

Sylvia Hughes

Ron Mendel

Nick Petford

Nick Robertson

John Skelton

Apologies:

Margaret Gardner, Mark Mulcahey, Martin Pettifor, Nick Pitts-Tucker and David Watson

In attendance:

Jane Bunce (Director of Student and Academic Services), Simon Denny (Director of Research, Impact and Enterprise), Robert Griggs (Waterside Project Director), Mark Hall (Director of Finance), Wray Irwin (Head of Centre for Employability Engagement), Miriam Lakin (Clerk), Deborah Mattock (Head of HR & Marketing),

Terry Neville (Chief Operating Officer), David Prynne (Assistant Clerk) and Ann Shelton Mayes (Executive Dean of Education).

77/16 Senate Representative to the Board

77.1 The Board received Paper A and noted that Senate had agreed to extend the term of the serving Senate representative to the Board until 31/07/2016, bringing future terms of office into alignment with the academic year.

78/16 Welcome, Apologies and Quorum

78.1 The Chair welcomed members and noted the apologies that had been received.

79/16 Declarations of Interests

79.1 There were no additions made to the standard Declarations of Interest held in the Clerk's Office.

80/16 Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 April 2016

80.1 The Board approved the minutes presented in Paper B as a true record of the meeting held on 20 April 2015.

81/16 Matters Arising

81.1 The Board received and noted Paper C on actions arising from previous meetings. Additional comments were made on the following:

81.2 Analysis of Academic Staff by Age, Gender, Ethnicity and Role

The Clerk reported that further analysis had been circulated electronically.

82/16 Research Impact, Enterprise, Advancement and Changemaker Challenges

82.1 The Director of Research, Impact and Enterprise presented a progress report on Research, Impact, Enterprise and Advancement (Paper D). On research, he reported that the University had met its numerical targets for 2015-16 and had made encouraging progress towards its 2016-17 targets.

82.2 The relationship between research activity and income was discussed. It was reported that research grants pay for staff time, and bring a range of benefits to the University such as building capacity and reputation.

82.3 Members noted information about the units into which research in the University is now organised, and arrangements for the leadership and budgets of these.

82.4 The Board discussed the development and effectiveness of the professoriate. The Director of Research, Impact and Enterprise reported on a new development programme which will be compulsory for Associate Professors and will be offered to Professors.

82.5 Members congratulated the Director of Research, Impact and Enterprise and all involved for the sound progress which had been made on the development of research in the University.

82.6 The Board noted the range of social impact activity taking place in the University, and its national and international reputation in this area.

82.7 Members received an update on progress on the Changemaker Challenges from the Head of Centre for Employability Engagement. The contribution of work on the Changemaker Challenges to building the reputation of the University in the region was noted, for example through engagement with the County Council on certain areas of work. The importance of the Challenges to the development of the University's brand and the ability to recruit students was also noted.

82.8 The University's enterprise work was noted. It was reported that data collection about enterprise activities had been improved, and that this would lead to clearer reporting.

82.9 The developing situation in regard to local and regional enterprise development agencies was noted, and the Board asked to be updated as necessary.

82.10 The Board noted progress on the advancement agenda, and in particular towards gaining pledges to invest in the charitable bond. It was also suggested that Independent Financial Advisors could promote the advantages of investing in the bond.

82.11 The Board welcomed the update and thanked the Director of Research, Impact and Enterprise and the Head of Centre for Employability Engagement for the update.

The Director of Research, Impact and Enterprise and the Head of Centre for Employability Engagement left the meeting.

83/16 Academic Quality and Standards Committee Annual Report

83.1 The Executive Dean of Education presented Paper E, the Academic Quality and Standards Committee Annual Report to Senate 2014-15. She explained that the report had been through academic sub committees and approved by Senate. The report was retrospective for the academic year 2014-15.

83.2 It was noted that while the University performed well, there had been a fall in response rates to the National Student Survey. It was explained that a collegial approach is being taken with the Students' Union to promote the National Student Survey to students within the guidance issued by HEFCE. The importance of promoting an understanding of the NSS to students from early in their courses was noted. It was reported that the National Union of Students is

encouraging a boycott of the NSS next year due to the potential link of the NSS to the ability to raise tuition fees through the proposed Teaching Excellence Framework.

83.3 The Board welcomed the Academic Quality and Standards Committee Annual Report to Senate 2014-15.

The Waterside Project Director joined the meeting.

84/16 Waterside Update

84.1 The Waterside Project Director presented Paper F, an update on the Waterside project. He explained that there had been no May meeting of the Project Assurance Committee (PAC).

84.2 It was noted that the academic building site had been handed over to contractor VolkerFitzpatrick on the 12 May.

Items 84.3 – 84. 5 are contained in the confidential section of these minutes.

84.6 It was noted that an agreement with the County Council had been reached for the development of the former Vulcan Works site on Guildhall Road.

84.7 The Board noted the Waterside Update.

85/16 Waterside Energy Centre Contract

85.1 The Waterside Project Director presented Paper S, on the contract for the Energy Centre.

Item 85.2 is contained in the confidential section of these minutes.

85.3 The Board agreed the signature of the Energy Centre contract by the Chair or his delegate and one further governor as soon as the contract was ready.

The Waterside Project Director left the meeting.

86/16 Period 9 Management Accounts and Student Applications

86.1 The Director of Finance presented the Management Accounts at 30 April 2016 (Paper G).

86.2 It was noted that the variance to budget for the year to date was £9,572k favourable. The University was therefore on course to meet its budgeted surplus.

86.3 The Board noted a schedule of outstanding debt, and improved debt recovery mechanisms which had been put in place.

86.4 The Board discussed student application statistics. The University's success in using social media for marketing was reported. The Director of Human Resources and Marketing reported on the annual 'brand track' exercise which gathers feedback from and about different forms of advertising to provide an analysis of the effectiveness of marketing spend. The effectiveness of increased investment in the Schools Liaison Team was also noted.

86.5 Members asked if the University could recruit additional students in summer 2016. It was explained that the capacity of the Waterside Campus was based on current student numbers. A potential tension between raising entry requirements and continuing to encourage widening participation was noted. The success and expansion of the Foundation Year offer to applicants was also noted.

86.6 The Board approved the management accounts at 30 April 2016.

87/16 HEFCE Annual Assessment of Institutional Risk 2016

87.1 The Vice Chancellor presented HEFCE's Annual Assessment of Institutional Risk 2016 (Paper H).

87.2 Members noted that due to the scale of borrowing and the current assessment measures it was expected that HEFCE's assessment of institutional risk would remain unchanged for the longer term.

87.3 The Board noted HEFCE's Annual Assessment of Institutional Risk 2016.

88/16 Report from the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer

88.1 The Board received a report from the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer (Paper I).

88.2 Members were alerted to sector wide industrial action regarding a pay dispute on 25 and 26 May.

88.3 The Board noted the recent publication of a government white paper on 'Higher Education: success as a knowledge economy', and the potential impact of this on the sector and the University.

88.4 The Board noted the report.

89/16 Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy

89.1 The Board received Northamptonshire's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2020 (Paper J).

89.2 It was reported that the University had taken a lead role in drafting the Strategy, an indication of the strong role the University now plays in the County as a result of the Changemaker Challenges. Members congratulated those from the University who had been involved for their achievement in aligning different groups in support of the Strategy.

89.3 The Board noted the Northamptonshire health and wellbeing strategy.

90/16 Organisational Review Update

90.1 The Head of HR and Marketing presented an update on the Organisational Review (Paper K).

90.2 It was reported that the first phase of the organisational review would be completed by the end of May 2016 and work was underway to complete the business case for phase two.

90.3 Members welcomed the report and asked about succession planning and leadership development. It was reported that internal recruitment to six of the eight posts in phase one was an illustration that good succession planning was in place. It was also reported that, with support from HR, Deans in the new faculty structure would be responsible for ensuring that they had a succession plan in place. The importance of work to support effective middle management was noted.

90.4 The Director of HR stated that it was hoped that phase two of the organisational review would begin before the end of May, and confirmed that phase two would have an impact on more staff than phase one. She noted that until the business case is fully developed, it would not be possible to give a number of staff likely to be affected.

90.5 The Board received the organisational review update.

91/16 Open Meetings with Staff

91.1 The Chair presented a summary of points raised during open meetings with staff (Paper L).

91.2 It was noted that the meetings were attended by a small number of self-selecting staff, and that some areas were better represented than others.

91.3 The Chair reported that two issues which had been raised most often were:

- Academic transformation, especially for courses with large cohorts, and how this was to be resourced and timetabled
- Variability of communication depending on where staff members worked.

It was also noted that staff had raised the growth of Education with Others and the importance of ensuring that quality was maintained.

91.4 It noted that in addition to the points raised in Paper L, the opportunities associated with Waterside had been discussed, for example in career development and collaborative working, and Board members had noted a sense of excitement about Waterside.

91.5 It was agreed that PAC should review the points made in the paper in relation to Waterside.

Action: Clerk

91.6 The Chair reported that he had explained in the meetings that the Board's role is not to manage the University, and therefore it would not respond directly to the comments raised, but would pass them on to the executive, and would use them to inform the Board's work to ensure that the University is effectively managed.

91.7 It was suggested that the new faculty Deans could hold faculty meetings to ensure effective communication, especially of Waterside developments.

91.8 It was reported that a further series of open meetings between governors and staff would be run in Spring 2017.

91.9 The Board received the summary of the open meetings with staff.

92/16 Amendment to the Students' Union Constitution

92.1 The President of the Students' Union presented a proposed amendment to the Students' Union Constitution (Paper M).

92.2 The Board approved the amendment to the Students' Union Constitution as set out in the paper.

93/16 Appointment of Professional Staff Governor

93.1 The Board received Paper N, a proposal for the appointment of a governor from amongst the professional staff.

93.2 The Board agreed to align the appointment of professional staff governors to the academic year.

93.3 The Board approved the appointment of Frank Jordan as professional staff governor from 19/05/2016 to 31/07/2019.

93.4 The Board noted their sincere thanks and gratitude to David Watson for his service to the Board as professional staff governor over the past six years.

94/16 Amendment to the Terms of Reference of Board Sub Committees

94.1 The Board received Paper O, a proposal that the Terms of Reference of its sub committees are amended to reflect the fact that there will be two student governors on the Board in future.

94.2 The Board approved amendments to the Terms of Reference of its sub committees as set out in Paper O.

95/16 Senate Minutes

95.1 The Vice Chancellor presented the presented the minutes of the Senate meeting held on 16 March 2016 (Paper P).

95.2 The Board received and noted the External Speaker Policy and Procedure and the Multi-Faith Chaplaincy Centre Use Policy which had been approved by the Senate on 16 March and were appended to the paper.

95.3 The Board received the minutes of Senate held on 16 March 2016.

96/16 Signing of Documents Under Seal

96.1 The Board ratified the signature of four documents under seal as set out in Paper Q.

97/16 Arrangements for Court on 10 June 2016

97.1 The Board approved the arrangements for Court on 10 June 2016 (Paper R).

98/16 Any Other Business

98.1 Leadership and Management of Health and Safety in Higher Education Institutions

It was reported that guidance had been issued by Universities Safety and Health Association (USHA) in partnership with UCEA. It contains a suggestion that governing bodies receive formal or informal training.

Action: Clerk

99/16 Confirmation of Availability of Papers

The following papers were confirmed as confidential to the meeting:

Paper B – Confidential Section of the Minutes of the Meeting on 20 April 2016

Paper F – Update on Waterside Project

Paper H – HEFCE's Assessment of Institutional Risk

Paper K – Organisational Review Update

Paper L – Open Meetings with Staff

Paper S – Energy Centre Contract Approval

100/16 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 22nd June at 10.15am in Sunley Conference Centre.