

Board of Governors

Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 April 2016

Present:

Andrew Scarborough (Chair)

David Baker

Sue Dutton

Richard Horsley

Sylvia Hughes

Ron Mendel

Mark Mulcahey

Nick Petford

Martin Pettifor

Nick Pitts-Tucker

Nick Robertson

John Skelton

David Watson

Apologies:

Victor Agboola, Margaret Gardner and Sara Goodwin

In attendance:

Nick Allen (Executive Officer), Jane Bunce (Director of Student and Academic Services), Robert Griggs (Waterside Project Director), Mark Hall (Director of Finance), Wray Irwin (Head of Centre for Employability Engagement), Miriam Lakin (Clerk), Terry Neville (Chief Operating Officer), and David Prynn (Assistant Clerk).

57/16 Welcome, Apologies and Quorum

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

58/16 Declarations of Interests

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

59/16 Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 March 2016

59.1 Members sought clarification that minute 315.2 should be held in the confidential minutes. It was agreed that the minutes would be amended to reflect the change.

Action: Clerk

59.2 Subject to the agreed amendment, the Board **approved** the minutes presented in Paper A as a true record of the meeting held on 23 March 2016.

60/16 Matters Arising

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

60.2 HEFCE Funding

The Director of Finance reported that details of the HEFCE funding to the University had been received. He stated that HEFCE funding would be in line with what had been forecast. He noted that there would be a reduction in student opportunity funding but this had been budgeted for in his 2016/17 projections.

60.3 Updates on Advancement

In relation to minute 304.2 members requested that Changemaker information be included in regular updates about Advancement to be provided to the Board.

Action: Clerk

60.4 Risk Register

The Chief Operating Officer noted that reporting of current and target risk as opposed to gross and net risk had previously been agreed by the Board. It was agreed that this revised presentation of risk resolved the action arising from minute 315.2.

60.5 Reports from Deans

In relation to minute 317.5, the Chair clarified that the Waterside development was predicated on maintaining current on-campus student numbers. The Deans would therefore be asked to report on any plans to grow in other areas, or to rebalance the portfolio of courses in order to maintain student numbers.

61/16 Access Agreement with the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) and Bursary Update

61.1 The Head of the Centre for Employability Engagement and the Director of Finance presented the approach to completing the Access Agreement with OFFA (Paper C) and an update on bursaries (Paper D). It was explained that the Access Agreement was not yet in its final form.

61.2 Members questioned whether bursaries could be useful to support the recruitment of students from disadvantaged and minority backgrounds. It was noted that the evidence shows that in the UK market, bursaries have limited influence on an applicant's choice of institution. However, it was reported that these groups could be supported well through Access Agreement funding once they had begun studies at the University. In addition, the Director of Finance also noted

that funding for students in financial hardship was always available through an application process.

61.3 It was noted that there may be an option to use bursaries to improve postgraduate recruitment, and that the use of bursaries and scholarships is important for recruitment in both undergraduate and postgraduate overseas markets.

61.4 The potential to use funding through the Access Agreement and bursaries to attract and retain students from backgrounds which are under-represented in HE nationally, for example white males from backgrounds of socio-economic disadvantage, was noted.

61.5 The key areas and activities in which Access Agreement funding would be focused were explained.

61.6 Members noted the distribution of neighbourhoods in and around Northamptonshire which are categorised as having low participation in HE. It was reported that the University is working with other bodies to improve participation from these areas.

61.7 It was noted that encouraging aspiration to HE is one of the main challenges for the sector, and confirmed that this is a theme throughout the Access Agreement document.

61.8 It was noted that the needs of part-time and mature students are also addressed through the document. It was agreed that a further breakdown of the age range of part-time students would be circulated to the Board electronically for information.

Action: Head of the Centre for Employability Engagement/Clerk

61.9 Members noted the importance of a good experience and dedicated teaching during Year One in order to grow the confidence and competence of students and improve their retention. It was noted that the move to blended learning and to Waterside would support this.

61.10 The Board welcomed and approved the approach to the Access Agreement, and noted the bursary update.

62/16 Human Resources Annual Report to the Board

62.1 The Director of Human Resources presented Paper E, the Human Resources Annual Report. She explained that improvements to data collection had improved the report's accuracy.

62.2 Members requested further analysis of the academic staff by age, gender, ethnicity and role, with the ability to assess the career trajectory of different groups of staff. It was agreed that this would be included in future annual reports to the Board.

Action: Director of HR / Clerk

62.3 Members noted the advantages and disadvantages of using temporary staff, particularly with regards to managing the transition towards reorganisation. It was explained that the use of temporary staff was more common for administrative roles.

62.4 In response to a question on the number of academic staff with a teaching qualification, it was explained that work was underway to ask staff to disclose relevant qualifications. It was explained that it is a requirement for all new academic staff to have or engage with a teaching qualification. It was also noted that work is being out to assess the correlation between student satisfaction as measured by the National Student Survey, and staff holding qualifications. It was noted that monitoring teaching qualifications against sector averages may give a useful indication of the readiness to teach in new ways which will be important to ensure the success of the Waterside campus.

62.5 Members discussed the recruitment of staff from BME backgrounds or declaring a disability. It was confirmed that best practice in recruitment is followed, and that roles are advertised as widely as possible. It was noted that there may be examples of good practice elsewhere in the sector which could be used by the University to increase the diversity of its staff.

62.6 Members asked about the number of grievances and disciplinary actions. It was explained that there were low level largely because of the strong emphasis by the University and the Staff-side on informal resolution wherever possible and that collection of the data had recently begun. This would be added to future iterations of the report.

Action: Director of HR

62.7 The importance of ensuring good oversight of the action plans for Equality and Diversity and Health and Wellbeing was noted. It was reported that the Board would receive a report on Equality and Diversity in the new academic year.

62.8 It was noted that the statistics on voluntary staff turnover were presented both in the HR Report and in the Operating Plan Interim Review (Paper G). It was reported that further work is being undertaken to ensure that effective use is made of the data gathered from exit interviews. It was noted that further consideration is needed of the institutional KPI on staff turnover, and particularly of what level of turnover would be considered healthy.

62.9 The Board welcomed and approved the Human Resources Annual Report to the Board.

The Waterside Project Director joined the meeting.

63/16 Implementation of Reorganisation

63.1 The Director of Human Resources gave an oral update on the implementation of the reorganisation of academic schools into faculties. Members were informed about the recruitment of Deans and Deputy Deans.

63.2 It was reported that there had been a series of roadshows to which all staff were invited. These had given staff the opportunity to input their ideas. It was reported that a business case was being developed for consideration by the University Management Team at its next meeting. It

was reported that once a proposal had been agreed, consultation with staff would open for 45 days. Members suggested that it would be helpful to have a written report on this and it was agreed that the business case would be presented to the Board at its next meeting so that the Board's comments could be gathered as part of the consultation process.

Action: Director of HR

63.3 It was reported that staff are being kept informed via emails and the Unify weekly staff newsletter, and that once the business case and consultation are launched, there will also be a communication plan for these.

64/16 PAC Minutes and Update on Waterside Project

64.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Project Assurance Committee (PAC) held on 12 April 2016 and Waterside update report (Paper F) were received.

64.2 The Board noted encouraging progress with communications. It was reported that the Committee had noted the importance of engaging leaders and managers to deliver the transition to Waterside.

64.3 It was agreed that in future the PAC paper on the academic work stream would be circulated to Board members.

Action: Clerk

Items 64.4 – 64.6 are contained in the confidential section of these minutes.

64.7 The Board welcomed the PAC minutes of the 12 April and the Waterside Update.

The Waterside Project Director and Director of Student and Academic Services left the meeting.

65/16 Operating Plan Interim Review 2015-16

65.1 The Chief Operating Officer presented the Operating Plan Interim Review 2015-16 (Paper G).

65.2 It was noted that good progress was being made in many areas, and that challenges remained in others, for example encouraging students to participate in extracurricular activities. It was suggested that these could become more attractive to students if they were linked to future career development.

65.3 The growth in research income was noted and welcomed by the Board.

65.4 The Board noted the Operating Plan Interim Review 2015-16 and welcomed the format for use in future reports.

66/16 Period 7 Management Accounts

66.1 The Director of Finance presented the Management Accounts at 31 March 2016 (Paper H).

66.2 It was noted that the variance to budget for the year to date was £8,954k favourable. The University was therefore on course to meet its budgeted surplus.

66.3 Members noted the potential financial and reputational risks of overseas academic partnerships. It was noted that, as this income stream would be an important focus of growth, the Board should receive further information in due course on how the risks are being managed, and an assessment of the risk appetite of the University in this area.

66.4 The Board noted the encouraging student application statistics presented in the paper. It was noted that the University's student recruitment activity was in line with the best practice in the sector, and that this improved the chance of recruiting well.

66.5 It was reported that the income growth profile of the Innovation Centre was behind budget and that strategies for growth were being

considered. It was reported that the ICON building had achieved 60% occupancy and was trading profitably

66.6 The Board approved the management accounts at 31 March 2016.

67/16 Students' Union Management Accounts at 31 January 2016

67.1 The Director of Finance presented the Students' Union Management Accounts at 31 January 2016 (Paper I).

67.2 Members noted the commercial performance of the Students' Union during the first sixth months of the year, and its distribution of funds to grow and enhance its membership.

67.3 The Board noted the Students' Union Management Accounts at 31 January 2016.

68/16 Report from the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer

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

68.2 Members were alerted to a communication from the University and College Union to the Vice-Chancellor, and noted the risk of industrial action beginning in May 2016.

69/16 Scheme of Delegation

69.1 The Clerk presented the Scheme of Delegation (Paper K). A number of comments and amendments were agreed by the Board.

69.2 It was agreed that a version including these amendments would be presented to the Board for final agreement.

Action: Clerk

70/16 Audit Committee Minutes

70.1 The Chair of Audit Committee presented the minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2016 (Paper L).

70.2 The Board received the minutes of Audit Committee held on 3 March 2015.

71/16 Nominations Committee Minutes

71.1 The Chair of Nominations Committee presented the minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2016(Paper M).

71.2 Members noted the appointment of John Skelton as Deputy Chair of PAC.

71.3 The Board received the minutes of Nominations Committee held on 23 March 2016.

72/16 Re-Appointment of Members of the Board

72.1 The Chair presented a recommendation for the re-appointment of members of the Board (Paper N).

72.2 The Board agreed the reappointment of Sylvia Hughes, Mark Mulcahey, Martin Pettifor and Nick Pitts-Tucker for the period 31/07/2016 to 31/07/2019.

72.3 The Board thanked the reappointed members for their service to date and their willingness to continue.

73/16 Signing of Documents Under Seal

73.1 The Board ratified the signature of a document under seal as set out in Paper O.

74/16 Any Other Business

74.1 Letters from UCU

The Chair reported that he had received two letters from the Executive of the Northampton Branch of the University and College Union. One was copied to the Chair of the Board, and one received directly. A response to the second would be prepared.

74.2 Project on the Medieval University

It was suggested that students could be involved in a project to create a performance telling the story of the medieval University of Northampton. It was suggested that this could coincide with the opening of the Waterside campus. The Vice-Chancellor agreed to identify appropriate contacts in the University.

Action: Vice Chancellor

74.3 Notes from Court on 10 March 2016

The Board received the notes of the Court meeting held on 10 March 2016, and noted that these have been presented in a newsletter format. It was noted that the Clerk is working on a proposal for a different approach to Court.

75/16 Confirmation of Availability of Papers

The following papers were confirmed as confidential to the meeting:

Paper F –PAC Minutes 12 April 2016 and Update on Waterside Project

Paper K – Draft Scheme of Delegation

Paper M – Nominations Committee Minutes 23 March 2016

76/16 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 18th May at 10.15am in Sunley Conference Centre.