

UNIVERSITY BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY, 30 JANUARY 2009

Present: Mr AJ Frost (Chair)
Dr B Astin; Dr P Barnwell; Ms M Barron, Prof P Curran; Mrs J Dawson;
Mr C Elder; Mrs K Everett; Mr J Harper; Rev Dr D Hart; Mr D Hines;
Prof T Husband; Mr T Lee; Mrs F McMillan; Dr E Mytton; Prof N Petford;
Mr M Riordan; Mr F Ruffle; Mr G Smith; Mr R Spragg; Mr G Sturdy; Ms S
Sutherland; Prof J Vinney; Mr D Willey

In Attendance: Mr N Richardson (Secretary & Registrar)

Apologies: Mr G Rayment (Committee Secretary)

The Chair welcomed Ms Mandi Barron, Mrs Joanna Dawson and Mr Roy Spragg to the meeting.

In their absence, Members thanked Ms Zoya Zuvcenko and Mr Simon Smith for their service to the Board and wished them every success for the future.

Members were informed that Mr Derrick, who had recently retired from the University Board, has been awarded an OBE for 'Services to engineering in the South West and to International Trade'.

ACTION

1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 31 OCTOBER 2008

1.1 Minutes of the University Board Meeting (31 October 2008)

The Minutes were approved.

1.2 Matters Arising

Minute 2.2.3: Members were informed that diary commitments prevented Mr Steve Egan from presenting to the Board on current HEFCE issues. Instead, the PVC (Resources) will make a presentation on IT developments.

2 BOARD MATTERS

2.1 Board Membership

Further to the recommendations of Nominations Committee, Members approved the appointment of Mr Julian Francis and Dr Peter Rawlinson as Independent Members of the University Board for an initial three-year term, with effect from 1 March 2009.

Members also approved the appointment of Ms Hannah Scott as a Co-Opted Member of the University Board, also for an initial three-year term, with effect from 1 March 2009.

Members noted that Prof Christine Hallett, Vice Chancellor of Stirling University, would be meeting the Chair and the VC shortly to discuss the possibility that she would join the Board to replace Prof Husband. Subject to the outcome of that

meeting, Members approved the appointment of Prof Hallett as a Co-Opted Member of the University Board, also for an initial three-year term, with effect from 1 October 2009.

Finally, Members approved the appointment of Mr Chris Appleton as an external member of Audit & Risk and Remuneration Committees. Mr Appleton will serve on these committees with the intention that he becomes a full member of the University Board when a suitable vacancy arises.

2.2 Mentoring

Members noted that mentoring would be provided for new and recently appointed Members. Arrangements were in place for Ms Barron and Mrs Dawson (Mrs Sutherland), Rev Dr Hart (Mr Frost) and Mr Spragg (Mr G Smith).

Volunteers were sought to serve as mentors to the other new Members. Anyone willing to undertake this role was asked to contact the Chair.

Members

3 STRATEGIC REPORTS

3.1 Strategic Overview

The VC reminded Members that the University is now at the half-way point on the journey to the vision set out for 2012. Over the past three years the University had focussed on the development of current academic staff and the recruitment of new, appropriately qualified, academic staff.

During that period, the University has received a clean bill of health from the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and seen a substantial improvement in quality research output as defined by the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). BU also has a stronger external profile, a new branding, improved student experience and is better placed in the league tables. In addition, curriculum changes, including the introduction of "pathways" are already over 50% complete.

However, whilst the University is well on the way to achieving the 2012 vision, there is much still to do and challenges remain, including the need to make very substantial reductions in costs and, consequently, to ensure the successful restructuring of Professional Services and Schools. Other challenges include the need to improve the income streams from BU's research and enterprise activities and ensuring the success of the new Executive Business School.

Members congratulated the University Executive Team (UEG), and all the rest of University staff, on the achievements to date.

3.2 Impact of the International Economic Situation

Members noted the paper presented by the Director of Finance and thanked her for her analysis of the possible impact of the current international economic situation on the University.

3.3 Review of Budgets and Five Year Financial Plan

Members noted the paper presented by the Director of Finance, which provided details of the review of the 2008-09 budget and of the five-year financial plan. There was no significant change to the total budgeted surplus of £345k for 2008-09.

Members were informed that, on the basis of the revised budget position for 2008-

09, the review of the five year financial plan was underway and that, currently, major changes to the plan were not anticipated. The revised five-year financial plan will be provided to Members as soon as possible.

Members noted the fact that enterprise income was down and that the current financial situation could impact on the University's loan facility with Lloyds (which is being carefully managed) as well as on the cost of energy, where every effort is being made to secure the best financial deal for the University.

Members also noted that the financial benefits of the Professional Services review will begin to impact in 2009-10 and be more fully realised in 2010-11. In the meantime, possible restrictions on full-time undergraduate student recruitment for 2009-10 may also impact on the University's financial situation next year.

3.4 'Widget Co' (Intellectual Property)

(Commercial in confidence)

3.5 Professional Services Review

The Pro Vice Chancellor (Resources) reminded Members that the Professional Services review, which had begun in June 2008, aimed to reorganise the University's plethora of Professional Services into five major services, each under a Director. For the three new services where vacancies exist, the Director posts have been advertised externally and interviews will take place in late April. Members of UEG are serving as Acting Directors until the vacancies are filled. It is intended that the anticipated savings resulting from the review will be generated beginning in 2009-10.

3.6 Periodic Performance Review

Members noted the paper presented by the Deputy Vice Chancellor, which covered the period to the end of December 2008. Members were informed that, whilst significant risk remained, there had been a marginal recovery in enterprise performance. However, research performance showed a significant improvement as did the outlook for the recruitment of international students.

Members noted that a review of the KPIs had been undertaken and the review had concluded that, with minor amendments, the system remains fit for purpose, effective and helpful.

In thanking the team for its work, Members recommended that further thought be given to the use of the "traffic light" system within the reports.

DVC

3.7 Estates Strategy

Members noted that, in response to the changing curriculum (cf 3.1 above), new lecture theatre and flexible seminar space is required by August 2010.

Given the timescales involved, Members agreed that authority be delegated to Strategy & Resources Committee in respect of decisions on the detailed proposals.

4 NATIONAL PAY NEGOTIATIONS 2009

(Confidential)

5 UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE GROUP REPORTS

5.1 Outcomes from the QAA Institutional Audit

The Pro Vice Chancellor (Education) informed Members that the interim result of the recent QAA audit of the University and our Partner Institutions had been received and indicated that QAA had “confidence” in the University’s management of quality and standards; the highest accolade awarded by QAA.

It was anticipated that the University will receive the draft report in early February, which will be checked for matters of factual accuracy, with the final report being published in April.

Members expressed their thanks for the work done in preparation for, and during, the audit by the late PVC (Academic), her successor and all the academic and Professional Services staff involved throughout the University.

5.2 Outcomes and Initial Analysis from the Research Assessment Exercise 2008

Members noted the report presented by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research & Enterprise), including the fact that BU was the fourth most improved UK University and that 80% of the University’s research output submitted for the RAE contains work rated as internationally excellent; a resounding endorsement of BU’s commitment to becoming a more academically-led University.

BU had entered 111 staff in 10 Units of Assessment (UoAs) for this periodic review of research activity.

It is hoped that the excellent outcome of the RAE will result in the University receiving additional quality research (QR) funding.

Members noted that the full RAE report will be presented to Research & Enterprise Committee.

Members congratulated all involved in the RAE.

5.3 Student Accommodation Project: Update

(Commercial in confidence)

5.4 Executive Business School

Members noted that the Executive Business School project is on track both in relation to the completion and fit-out of the building and also in relation to the development of, and recruitment to, MBA and other Masters Programmes for 2010 entry. The new facility will open in September 2009.

Members were informed that the early income projections for the Executive Business School may have been overly optimistic and that a paper addressing this issue will be presented to an appropriate meeting of Strategy & Resources Committee.

Members noted that interviews for the post of Dean of the Business School had taken place and that a suitable candidate had been identified. It is anticipated that outstanding contractual issues will be resolved and that the appointment will be announced shortly.

6 COMMITTEE REPORTS

6.1 Audit & Risk Committee (30 October 2008)

The minutes were noted.

6.1.1 Risk Register

Members noted the updated Risk Register, including the fact that risks R1 and R31 are now shown as “amber rising”, reflecting changes referred to in sections 3.6 and 4 above.

6.2 Human Resources Committee (17 December 2008)

The minutes were noted.

6.2.1 Information & Consultation of Employees

In relation to the Information & Consultation of Employees (ICE) regulations, Members noted that one of the employee representatives on the embryonic ICE Forum still refused to accept the draft ICE agreement. If this situation continues it will be necessary to conduct a ballot of all employees.

6.3 Strategy & Resources Committee (18 December 2008)

The minutes were noted.

6.3.1 Revised Treasury Management Policy

On the recommendation of Strategy & Resources Committee, Members approved the revised Treasury Management Policy.

6.4 Nominations Committee (4 December 2008)

The minutes were noted.

6.5 Research & Enterprise Committee (30 October 2008)

The minutes were noted.

6.6 Student Experience Committee (26 November 2008)

The minutes were noted.

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

7.1 Somerset Universities Partnership Project (SUPP)

Arising from minute 6.1.1 of the 31 October 2008 Board Meeting, and in light of the possible development of a new HE Centre at Cannington under the auspices of SUPP, Mrs McMillan invited the Board to consider a visit to view the Cannington site.

Chair/S&R

7.2 BU Foundation

Members were informed that the first meeting of the Trustees of the University's new endowment trust, the BU Foundation, had taken place in December 2008. The Trustees are the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Board, Prof Richard Conder, the Vice Chancellor, the Deputy Vice Chancellor and the Director of Finance.

7.3 Future Topic for Presentation to the Board

The President of the Students' Union offered to make a presentation to Members on the work of the Students' Union.

7.4 Change of Date for Autumn Board Meeting

Members noted that the autumn Board Meeting would now take place on Friday, 13 November 2009.

7.5 Members' Retirement

Members noted the retirement of Mr Harper and Prof Husband from the University Board, thanked them for their outstanding service to the Board and the University and wished them a long and happy retirement.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Friday, 24 April 2009 at 9.30am in the Boardroom, Poole House, Talbot Campus.

Please note that this meeting will have to conclude by 11.50am as it is followed by the AGM, which commences at 12.00noon.

Noel DG Richardson
Secretary & Registrar
30 March 2009

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