

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors held on 21st May 2019

18/27 Attendance

27.1 Present

Mr J Bateman OBE (Chair)
Mr J Bothamley CBE
Miss L Conn
Mrs C Di Nunzio
Mr R Dudley
Mrs D Gant
Professor D Green CBE (Vice Chancellor)
Mr M Harris
Mrs A Hooper
Mr D Iddon
Mr H Lonsdale
Dr D McDougall
Mr E Morrison
Mr Z Padda
Rev'd Dr A Pettersen
Dr S Pittaway
Miss M Price
Mr S Scriven
Mr I Smith
Mrs S Speck

27.2 In Attendance

Mr R Bonham Director of Finance & Resources
Mrs J Britton Director of Communications & Participation
Mrs A Cope Director of Human Resources
Professor S Greer Deputy Vice Chancellor
Ms H Johnstone Head of Governance and Regulatory Affairs
Mr R Renton Pro Vice Chancellor Students
Ms J Bailey Executive Assistant
Mr N Slade Director of International (Item 18/35 only)

27.3 Apologies or Absent

Professor G Agyemang
Mr C Arntzen
Ms D Beech
Mr H Jarrett
Mr N Khan

18/28 Declarations of Interest

28.1 There were no declarations of interest.

18/29 Minutes

29.1 The minutes of the meeting held on the 5th February 2019 [BG18/39] were confirmed as a correct record with the exception of Mr E Morrison being recorded as present, instead of as having sent apologies.

29.2 There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

18/30 Chair's Business

30.1 The Board held a minutes silence in respect of Dorma Urwin, the Principal of University College Worcester from 1992 to 2002 who had recently died.

30.2 University Autonomy - OfS Letter: Financial Sustainability [BG18/40a]

The Board noted the letter from the OfS to the Chair regarding the financial sustainability of the sector. It was noted that the Finance & Development Committee had received a presentation on the University's financial sustainability (Agenda item 8.2) which had addressed some of the points made in the letter.

30.3 University Admissions
[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]

30.4 CUC Pensions Consultation [BG18/40c]

Members of the Board considered and approved the proposed response to the CUC consultation on its pension arrangements position statement.

18/31 Vice Chancellor's Report [BG18/41]

The Vice Chancellor presented his written report to the Board and drew members' attention to the following:

31.1. **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

31.2 The University has been voted No 1 in the UK for Quality Education and 26th worldwide in the inaugural THE University Impact Rankings. The University was also ranked No 1 in the UK for Gender Equality and joint 4th worldwide. In addition, the University won an inaugural Guardian University award for Internationalisation and was a shortlisted finalist for its work on widening participation.

31.3 Members noted that further work would take place over the summer period to expand the simulation provision in the Sheila Scott building for health courses. Due to the growing number of Paramedicine students work will be undertaken to the playground area at the back of the former school to create an outdoor education space and improved storage for equipment.

31.4 The Board received and noted the Vice Chancellor's Report.

18/32 Students' Union Business [BG18/42]

- 32.1. The SU Officers attended their last meeting as student governors to present their written report and to introduce the new SU Officers for July 2019 – June 2020. Thanks were expressed from the entire Board to Lucy Conn, SU President, Euan Morrison, VP Education and Harrison Jarret, VP Student Activities. A warm welcome was given to Harry Lonsdale, SU President, Meg Price, VP Education and Mike Harris, VP Student Activities. The Audit Committee commented upon the impressive turnaround of the SU over the previous few years into a successful organisation.
- 32.2 The current President presented the SU report and drew members' attention to the work of the SU Advice Centre. Members noted that the Service is operating at 37% above the previous academic year and that a significant proportion of the work of the Service was supporting students in relation to matters relating to their academic studies.
- 32.3 The Board noted that the SU Leadership Elections had seen a small increase in participation on the previous year's record-breaking turnout, with 1862 students casting a total of 5208 votes for the 11 candidates.
- 32.4 The Board congratulated the Students' Union for raising £25,000 through RAG (Raise and Give) which exceeds the previous year's total.
- 32.5 The Chair of Audit Committee congratulated the SU Officers for their work over the past year and the continued transformation of the Students' Union operations since 2014/15, when the SU received a limited assurance internal audit report on its operations. The recent student surveys show that student satisfaction with the Students' Union has increased by 20% over the last 3 years, which is an excellent endorsement of the good work undertaken.
- 32.6 The Board received the report from the Students' Union.

18/33 [Access and Participation Plan \(APP\) \[BG18/42\]](#)

- 33.1 The Pro Vice Chancellor Students presented a paper setting out the regulatory changes to Access and Participation Plans. It was noted that the OfS, subsequent to a consultation, now required 5 year Access and Participation Plans, as opposed to the previous arrangement of yearly plans.
- 33.2 The new plan, for the period 2020-21 – 2024-25 would be subject to an annual impact statement. The Access and Participation Plan (APP), due to be submitted by the 1st July, would comprise of a word document of no more than 20 pages and excel spreadsheet which detailed the projected outcomes over the time of the plan, key milestones and evaluation measures.
- 33.3 Members noted that there was a clear focus in the guidance on the need to eliminate gaps between the most and least advantaged learners progressing into higher education and their subsequent progress and success. The University can demonstrate a good track record in this area with a range of programmes in place to address gaps in access, student success and progression.
- 33.4 The paper articulated the progress to date against the four-step approach recommended by the OfS to developing the APP. Members noted that the self-assessment had been completed and the outcome of strategic outcomes framed around any material gaps identified would be completed by the end of May. The University's aspiration for the APP is that it works for the University and reflects the new aspirations of the new Strategic Plan.

33.5 Due to the 1st July 2019 submission date once the APP had been approved by VCEB it would be circulated to the Board with sufficient time for members to have the opportunity to raise any queries and comments ahead of the submission deadline.

33.6 The Board received the report and approved the proposed direction of travel.

18/34 Reports form Sub-Committee and Academic Board

34.1. Audit Committee [BG18/44]

34.1.1 The Chair of the Committee presented the report of the Committee noting the outcomes of the two recent internal audits which looked at GDPR and Staff Disciplinary, Grievance and Dismissal Policies and Procedures. Members noted that the implementation of actions arising from the internal audit reports was tracked with an update provided to each meeting of the Committee.

34.1.2. The Chair reported to the Board that the internal audit contract with Ernst & Young came to an end at the end of the current academic year. The contract had been retendered and five firms had been interviewed. After a robust process the interview panel had recommended the appointment of KPMG as the new internal auditors, this recommendation had been approved by Audit Committee under its delegated authority from the Board.

34.1.3 The Committee received the report.

34.2 Finance and Development Committee [BG18/45]

34.2.1 The Chair of the Committee presented the report and advised members of the Board that the Committee had received a very helpful presentation from the Vice Chancellor on the University's Financial Strategy in the Current Context. The presentation had been made ahead of the Committee's consideration of the budget for 2019/20, which would take place at its June meeting and had been timely given the recent letter from the OfS regarding Financial Viability and Sustainability.

34.2.2 The Board received the report.

34.3 HR Committee [BG18/46]

34.3.1 The Chair presented the Committee's report, drawing members' attention to the progress that had been made in implementing the new Applicant Tracker System software for prospective staff.

34.3.2 It was also noted that, as part of the restructuring of the HR department, a new HR Business Partner model had been rolled out. Under this model the HR Business Partners are allocated specific departments of the University to work with, which allows them to build up a closer working relationship and to understand the area better. There are already indications of the positive impact of this innovation.

34.3.3 The Committee transmitted to the Board the Gender Pay Gap Data for 2018 which showed a reduction in the pay gap in the mean and median pay figures. It was noted that in accordance with the regulatory requirements the data had been published on the Government and University websites.

34.3.4 The Board received the report.

34.4 Nominations Committee [BG18/47]

34.4.1 The Chair presented the report of the Committee noting that there would be one vacancy for an independent governor next year, following Mr Padda's retirement from the Board at the end of the academic year.

34.4.2 The Board received the new Independent Governor Recruitment Pack and noted it had been developed to be more inclusive and to encourage applications from under-represented groups. It was noted that the Board would benefit from strengthening its membership by recruiting new members with expertise in finance and healthcare. Members were asked to share the Recruitment Pack with any one they thought might be interested and would add value to the Board.

34.5 Academic Board [BG18/48]

34.5.1. The report was presented by Mrs Hooper, the Governor Observer on Academic Board. It was noted that Academic Board had received a presentation and held a discussion on the approach to the new APP requirements.

34.5.2 The Board noted in particular the Annual Report on Complaints and Academic Appeals 2017-18, noting the relatively small number of complaints and academic appeals that were received annually.

34.5.3 Academic Board had noted the recent Guidance on submissions to REF2021, which will be a significant piece of work for the University over the next period.

34.5.4 The Board received the report.

18/35 Strategic Discussion – The role of International at the University of Worcester

35.1 The Board received a presentations from the Pro Vice Chancellor Students and the Director of International on the International Department's role within the University.

35.2 This was followed by group discussion and a question and answer session around the following themes:

- The importance of maintaining a good balance between the number of international and UK home students in order to provide all students with a good international experience.
- The operation of the Agent Network which is complex, with a wide range of agents. Those agents that are successful are those that participate in events such as the University's Annual Agents' Conference and who bring groups of students to visit the University. The International Department works closely with agents to ensure they are representing the University appropriately.
- Short courses are another approach to giving students an international experience but encounter financial barriers, which will increase if the Erasmus Scheme is withdrawn, post Brexit.
- Members noted that although the inclusive culture of the University, which embraced diversity, was contrary to the culture in some countries this did not appear to have a negative impact on recruitment from those countries and students often welcomed the opportunity to explore different views when in the UK.

- Opportunities to experience other cultures outside of the UK are actively promoted to UK home students including at Open Days. A new development is the opportunity for students in education and health courses to take short placement opportunities in India during the summer.

35.3 The Board thanked the Director of International for giving the presentation and invited him to return in 18 months' time for an update.

18/36 Any Other Business

36.1 Members agreed that a BBQ after the July Board meeting should be considered.

Those in attendance at the Board meeting retired from the meeting. Members of the Board of Governors (see 27.1 above) plus the Director of HR, and Vice Chancellor for agenda item 37.1, remained. The Vice Chancellor left the meeting before agenda item 37.2

**18/37 Annual Reports from the Remuneration Committees (Director of HR in attendance)
[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

18/38 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 9 July 2019

Signed:.....
John Bateman OBE, Chair

Date: