

**MINUTES
BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 23 JANUARY 2008 IN THE FRANK LAMPL BUILDING, KINGSTON HILL**

Present:

Gren Collings (Chair), George Alexandrou, Nick Badman, Olrick Coker, Ann Corrigan, Sara Drake, Deirdre Ferrier, Robert Green, Sean Hilton, Roderic Lyne, Thalia Marriott, Phil Molyneux, Tim Oliver, David Reardon, Peter Scott, Christine Swabey, David Taylor, Colin Watts and Clarissa Wilks

In attendance:

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Pro Vice-Chancellor (External Affairs), Finance Director, University Secretary, Head of Secretariat, Minuting Secretary

Also in attendance:

Head of International Development (Minute 5)

The Chair welcomed Martyn Jones, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (External Affairs) to his first meeting of the Board.

1.0 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Stephen Cox, Mark Kierstan, Stephen King, Andy Lomax, Derek Osbourne, and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & Enterprise)

2.0 Minutes of the Board of Governors Meeting held on 21 November 2007

2.1 The Minutes were approved.

3.0 Matters Arising

3.1 New Buildings:

The University Secretary noted that the Nightingale Wing extension to the Learning Resource Centre at Kingston Hill was opening formally

this afternoon. This was the third and final opening of the NUP new buildings.

It was noted that the Campus Development Plan was on track to report to the Board at its next meeting in March, to seek approval for the appointment of the Project Management and Design teams for the next stage of development.

- 3.2 Board Member acting as an observer on the University's Health, Safety and Security Committee meetings:

The Chair noted that, following the Board's decision at its last meeting to appoint a member of the Board to act as an observer, Robert Green had agreed to take on this role.

- 3.3 There were no other matters arising.

4.0 Confirmation of meeting dates of the Board of Governors and its Standing Committees for 2008/2009 and approval of meeting dates for 2009/2010

(Paper BG 1/08)

- 4.1 The Head of Secretariat stated that the revised dates of committee meetings in February 2009 were due to the decision following the effectiveness review of the Estates Committee that it should precede and inform the Finance Committee. The Board approved the suggested revision of dates. The Board was also asked to agree the proposed dates of Board and Committee meetings for the academic year 2009/10.

The Head of International Development joined the meeting for the next item

5.0 Report and presentation on the International Development Plan

(Paper BG 2/08)

- 5.1 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (External Affairs) and the Head of International Development gave a presentation and report on the International Development Plan, noting that the Board had discussed the Plan at its meeting in March 2007 and requested an update on activities. The updated report included targets for overseas recruitment and was supported by recently developed Internationalisation and European Strategies, each containing a number of goals.
- 5.2 The aim was to achieve the goals by 2012 and an Action Plan was being developed in this context, which covered the key features of the two new strategies, and was based on the following six themes:

Student experience; Staff experience; Partnerships; Recruitment; Academic and professional practice; and the embedding of the internationalisation process across the University. The intention was that actions would be developed within each of the six areas and that progress could be monitored through regular review of the action plan.

- 5.3 Enrolment figures indicated a good performance in the last academic year. Enrolment was anticipated to grow at a rate of approximately 10% annually, although this excluded any possible external factors such as slower growth in the post-graduate area. The rate of growth could also be affected by the quality and content of the University's course portfolio.
- 5.4 The main markets were China, the Middle East and India. It was reported that the recently opened India Office was working well and now had delegated decision-making authority which was particularly important in areas of rapid turnover of applications. The Chinese market was more difficult because there had been no significant involvement with China on the part of the University at the time of the boom in the market. The University was now working as part of a consortium in order to improve this position. The other new markets were Turkey and North America. The importance of developing specific initiatives relating to each of these markets was noted.
- 5.5 One of the key features of the International Development Plan was the building up of good quality partnerships and strategic alliances across the faculties and all levels of the University. This was particularly important in the context of regular and efficient recruitment of students, rather than relying on individual recruitment.
- 5.6 The student experience was seen as a key feature in international development and much work had been put into this area including improving social space, developing scholarships and establishing a scholarship alumni network, extending the level of careers advice available and recruitment of an employability co-ordinator.
- 5.7 It was reported that there had been a drop in the number of undergraduate applications, due largely to a reduction in UCAS choices from six to five. It was noted that the University's position regarding fewer international undergraduate applications was in line with comparator institutions. However, it was difficult to accurately predict enrolment figures at this stage of the academic year, and a clearer understanding of the position would be possible in late spring. The University's cycle of recruitment would be reviewed and any necessary action would be taken in order to ensure that targets were reached for the next academic year. The conversion of offers to enrolled places would also be reviewed.

- 5.8 The Board considered what additional specific work could be done with regard to improving the University's academic profile. It was noted that increasing the University's research standing would have a positive impact. It was also important to promote the University on a wider basis, and to increase the portfolio of courses which were of particular interest to international students.
- 5.9 The need to embed the cultural aspect across the University was acknowledged as significant in terms of having a positive impact on its reputation and on future recruitment. To this end it was important to ensure that each individual student enjoyed a favourable student experience.
- 5.10 It was felt that, although the international market was difficult, the University now had the appropriate strategies in place, and a generally more realistic approach to internationalisation. It was agreed that the Board would further review the International Development Plan at a future date to be agreed between the Chair and the University Secretary.

The Head of International Development left the meeting.

6.0 Vice-Chancellor's Report (Paper BG 3/08)

6.1 Funding Outlook / Comprehensive Spending Review

The Vice-Chancellor reported that, following the letter sent from the DIUS (Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills) to HEFCE earlier in the week, the financial position for HEIs was now clearer. The Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) allowed for an average increase of 2.5% per annum over the three years of the CSR, with guaranteed funding up to 2010/11. The main features were an increase of 40,000 ASNs over three years to be allocated conventionally, withdrawal of funding for ELQs (equivalent lower-level qualifications) creating a further 20,000 ASNs, flexible delivery models and increased participation by under-represented groups. The implicit indication was that the University would not be subject to a loss in funding.

A number of priority areas were identified. The Employer Engagement initiative would be expanded with additional funding available for 20,000 confirmed places. Foundation Degree growth to 100,000 places would be expected by 2010. The third priority area related to support for academies and expansion of links with FE colleges and life-long learning networks. Overall, the content of the DIUS letter did not affect the main issues detailed in the Vice-Chancellor's Report.

The three key features which could have an impact on the University in financial terms were a possible effect on pay negotiations, the total number of ASNs available, and a possible increase in the level of cap on top-up fees. The DIUS letter to HEFCE had removed some of the uncertainty over these issues. However, the current assumptions relating to income and student growth would need to be reviewed, as would the University's system for allocation of funding, in particular the faculty IRB models, which were predicated on growth.

6.2 School Academies

The Vice-Chancellor noted that the Board of Governors had discussed the possibility of sponsoring an Academy about four years ago but had decided at the time, not to pursue the matter for a number of reasons: the large financial commitment involved, academies being seen as politically controversial and the risk of antagonizing other local secondary schools and collaborating FE colleges. The issue had since been discussed by the Executive Board and whilst it was considered that the correct decision had been made at the time, it was felt that the matter should be reviewed by the Board of Governors, particularly since the reasons of financial commitment and politics no longer applied.

The Board discussed the possible advantages and disadvantages to the University of proceeding with this initiative. It was noted that the University had been successful in developing relationships with FE colleges and that a move towards sponsoring academies might be detrimental to the existing network of relationships. Sponsoring academies would necessitate input of a significant level of the University's resource in terms of staff time. However, it seemed likely that academies would increasingly become an integral part of the education system and it was appropriate to review the University's position. In terms of possible benefits, academies were intended to bring about improvement of standards in secondary education. It was also expected that academies could offer interesting educational experiments and generate a more creative approach on the part of teachers, and there was the additional benefit of possible capital funding.

It was important to consider how sponsorship of an academy might relate to the University's strategic plan, and to ensure that such an initiative would bring benefits to both the University and to the academy involved. It would be useful to establish whether forging new links with academies would necessarily be at the expense of losing existing links with FE colleges. It was further suggested that the systems relating to FE colleges, currently in place and working successfully, could be extended to include academies, which would consolidate the University's commitment to all types of education.

It was agreed that the University would not go ahead with a sponsorship scheme at this time, particularly since there was a lack of full understanding on what this would involve. It was further agreed that the Board would receive a paper giving further information on this subject, detailing the current arrangements with schools, explaining the differences between partnerships with schools and with academies, and identifying how sponsorship of an academy would fit within the University's Strategic Plan.

Action: *Presentation and report giving further information on academies as detailed above to be presented to the Board at its September meeting.*

Ann Corrigan left the meeting.

6.3 St George's University of London

The Vice-Chancellor reported that there had been no major developments with St George's University of London (SGUL) since the Board had last discussed the matter at its Away Day meeting in December. At that time, the Board of Governors was advised that, following the strategic options review by the consultants, SGUL Council had agreed that SGUL would continue to consolidate its relationship with St George's Healthcare Trust, that it would review its mission and vision by Easter 2008, that over the next six months it would investigate the merger proposals from Kingston and Surrey Universities, but that this did not exclude the possibility of other options, and that whilst it would not pursue a merger with Royal Holloway it would remain committed to the SWan alliance.

The Acting Principal of SGUL Sean Hilton confirmed that SGUL planned to build on the mid-term strategic review and be in a position to identify the key areas of its strategy by Easter 2008. This would involve an inclusive consultation approach with staff and students to secure a strong representative view of the organisation's future and its preferred position in ten years, and would include the assistance of external facilitation. The newly appointed Principal, who was due to take up his post on 1st April, would also be involved in this consultation.

It was noted that a number of inter-professional developments were ongoing, which would benefit from being publicised and marketed more extensively, in order to emphasise the University's strong relationships within the NHS. It was agreed that the SWan Inter-professional Institute marketing information would be circulated to the Board.

6.4 South West London Academic Network

It was noted that a draft progress report had been finalised for submission to HEFCE by the end of January 2008. A meeting was planned in the coming weeks between HEFCE and the three institutions comprising the SWan alliance. It was believed that HEFCE's interest was focused not on specific details of SWan's operation, but on the wider strategic context and the possible impact of SGUL's strategic review on the alliance.

It was reported that three posts had recently been advertised for positions in the SWan network: Director of the Institute of Leadership Management and Health, Director of the Inter-professional Institute and Project Director.

6.5 Strategic Plan

The Vice-Chancellor gave an update report on the continuing preparatory work for the University's new Strategic Plan, noting that the Board of Governors would be fully involved and asked to approve the final draft at its meeting in July 2008. A summary of the Away Day discussion would be included on the University's website.

6.6 Student Numbers and HEFCE Grant 2007-08

It was reported that the University had achieved its growth target, and that the additional growth represented funding of £2.7 million.

6.7 Applications 2008

The total number of undergraduate applications in early January 2008 showed a decrease of 9.7%, which was generally in line with national figures. However, this was a snapshot figure and it was important to note that results differed widely from day to day. The main reasons for the decline were thought to be the impact on the University's position in league tables of the National Student Survey scores, the University's profile and the reduced portfolio of new undergraduate courses. Work was continuing on increasing the University's profile with the recent appointment of a Communications Director. A Communications Plan would be produced this academic year which would be presented to the Board of Governors following discussion by the Executive Board.

Action: *Communications Plan to be produced and presented to the Board following discussion by the Executive Board.*

6.8 Other matters for report

The Rose Theatre in Kingston had now opened.

The Nightingale Building, the extension to the Learning Resource Centre at Kingston Hill, was formally opening on 23 January.

Professor Katie Truss had been appointed Head of the Department of Leadership, Human Resources Management and Organisation.

The Department of Innovations, Universities and Skills had produced a report on extremism at universities. It was noted that Kingston was a secular institution, which respected all faiths and beliefs. It was important to give reassurance that students were not being monitored or restricted in freedom of speech, in any way, within the law. Copies of the report were available and would be forwarded on request.

7.0 Occupational Health and Safety Annual Report

(Paper BG 4/08)

Report on Health & Safety Metrics

(Paper BG 5/08)

7.1 Papers BG 4/08 and BG 5/08 were considered jointly. The Chair reminded the Board that it had been agreed that the Board would receive a report on health and safety issues on an annual basis, along with regular updates on health and safety metrics. The two reports had been discussed by the University's Safety, Health and Security Committee and the Executive Board. It was noted that there were no major issues to report.

7.2 The Board requested that information be supplied on trend analysis relating to assaults. It was agreed that this additional information would be circulated.

Action: Additional information to be circulated on trend analysis relating to assaults.

8.0 Sustainability Plan

(Paper BG 6/08)

8.1 The University Secretary noted that the Sustainability Plan was closely linked with the Campus Development Plan and had been discussed by the Estates Committee. The Sustainability Plan was a key part of the University's strategy. Operational action plans had been developed relating to identified specific areas of sustainability, which would be monitored on a regular basis. The aim was for sustainability to

become an integral part of the teaching and learning curriculum. It was reported that the Royal Town Planning Institute had recently visited the University as part of an accreditation visit and had commended the C-Scaipe project.

Sean Hilton left the meeting.

9.0* Summary Finance Report for November 2007
(Paper BG 7/08)

9.1 The Board noted the Summary Finance Report for November 2007.

10.0 Minutes of the Academic Board meeting held on 5 December 2007

10.1 The Board discussed Minute 86 relating to the University's degree classification profile and how this would be affected by the proposed revisions to the Undergraduate Modular Scheme. It was noted that a number of measures related to faculties and others related to the University as a whole. The University rules and regulations had not been revised for some time and differed from other HEIs. The revisions proposed would bring the University in line with other HEIs.

11.0 Any other business

11.1 The Finance Director noted that the University had entered into a £35 million loan facility eighteen months ago, with a flexible rate of interest for the first two years. None of the loan had been drawn down to date. From the 31st July 2008 the loan would be fixed at 5.34% over a period of 23 years. A further loan facility of £35 million had been agreed in principle, on similar terms.

11.2 There was no other business.

12.0 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Governors was scheduled for Wednesday 12th March 2008 in the John Galsworthy Building at Penrhyn Road.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 10.35am.