

Kingston University London

MINUTES BOARD OF GOVERNORS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS HELD ON WEDNESDAY 21 JANUARY 2009 IN THE FRANK LAMPL BUILDING, KINGSTON HILL

Present:

Gren Collings (Chair), George Alexandrou, Nicholas Badman, Tony Beadle, Orlrick Coker, Ann Corrigan, Deirdre Ferrier, Robert Green, Peter Kopelman, Roderic Lyne, Phil Molyneux, Tim Oliver, Lawrence Parnell, David Reardon, Peter Scott, Christine Swabey, David Taylor, Colin Watts and Clarissa Wilks

In attendance:

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University Secretary, Pro Vice-Chancellor (External Affairs), Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & Enterprise), Finance Director, Head of Planning, Head of Secretariat, Minuting Clerk

1.0 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Stephen Cox, Sara Drake, Stephen King, Derek Osbourne and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Employer Engagement)

2.0 Minutes of the Board of Governors Meeting held on 26 November 2008

2.1 The Minutes were approved.

3.0 Matters Arising

3.1 Minute 88.0 – External Auditors' Report

The University Secretary would draw up a file note confirming that no further disclosure was required on non-completions.

3.2 Minute 89.3 – Succession Planning:

It was noted that a structure and formal process for succession planning would be developed.

3.3 There were no other matters arising.

4.0 Vice-Chancellor's Report (Paper BG 1/09)

4.1 National Developments:

4.1.1 The Vice-Chancellor reported on the four main areas of national development since the last Board meeting. The first point to note was that the DIUS (Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills) was working on its response to the HE debate initiated last spring, which had been summarised at the Board meeting in November 2008.

4.1.2 The second area related to the work being undertaken on measuring the impact of research as part of the development of the new Research Excellence Framework which would be replacing the current Research Assessment Exercise.

4.1.3 It was reported that Sir Alan Langlands would be taking over from David Eastwood as Chief Executive of HEFCE in April. The significance of this appointment was that it appeared to demonstrate the importance of familiarity with Whitehall, since Sir Alan had previously been the Chief Executive of the NHS in England.

4.1.2 The fourth point related to a process recently set up by UCAS involving early scanning of applications to individual universities, and was included for information.

4.2 Non-completions and HESES return

4.2.1 The Vice-Chancellor reported on his recent meeting with the Chief Executive of HEFCE, who had confirmed that HEFCE's claw-back of funds for non-completions would be based on the figure calculated by HEFCE's auditor. The definition of non-completing students had also been discussed. It was hoped that the matter of non-completion reporting could now be concluded.

4.2.2 The HESES return to HEFCE had indicated that the University was within its contract range of plus/minus 5%, and that this had been accepted by HEFCE. It was noted that funding remained unchanged where the contract range did not exceed these margins. From next year HEFCE was likely to move to a monitoring system based on module completion.

4.3 Royal Holloway and St George's

4.3.1 It was reported that Royal Holloway (RHUL) and St George's (SGUL) were continuing discussions on a range of issues following the recent agreement to merge. It was understood that a decision had not yet been reached on the structural nature of the new institution. From the University's point of view, a delay might have an adverse impact on the Faculty of Health & Social Care Sciences and the SWan alliance.

4.3.2 RHUL and SGUL were in the process of preparing a bid to HEFCE's Strategic Development Fund (SDF), with submission of the first draft due in March, which would need to include details of Kingston's relationship with both institutions. Jim Port of JM Consulting, who had already conducted work for HEFCE relating to the merger, had agreed to advise the University on its options.

4.3.3 The Vice-Chancellor noted that there were a number of issues which would need to be addressed on this matter and that a further report would be made to the Board meeting in March. The two main underlying principles were firstly, it was felt that there should be a single partnership agreement to cover the joint Faculty, SWan and all other relevant collaborations and secondly, the administration of the joint Faculty should be reviewed, with consideration given to the possibility of it being handled by one of the institutions, rather than jointly.

4.3.4 Peter Kopelman noted his agreement with the two principles outlined in the Vice-Chancellor's paper, and agreed that the restructuring of the institutions was a highly complex process, with a range of issues to be resolved. One of the most significant issues related to pensions and the application of TUPE provision to relevant employees. Consideration would be given to the possible benefits of dissolving both institutions and establishing a new one.

4.3.5 Peter Kopelman stated that, once a decision had been reached on the most appropriate structure, a due diligence process would be carried out by JM Consulting on behalf of HEFCE and SGUL. It was noted that HEFCE would need clarification with regard to the appropriate use of funds allocated to the SWan collaboration.

4.3.6 Work was progressing on developing the SDF bid, based on a clear academic strategy supported by a governance and management framework and a strong business case. It was planned to submit the bid for inclusion in the July SDF round. It was noted that the SDF submissions were based on a quarterly structure, so in the event the bid was not ready in July, the next opportunity for submission would be in October.

4.3.7 The Vice-Chancellor stated that an update on developments would be given to the Board at its next meeting in March, including an outline of the proposed future partnership. It was noted that re-negotiations of the NHS contracts were underway and would continue over the next six months.

4.3.8 It was agreed that the governance arrangements of the joint Faculty and SWan would be reviewed, with a view to developing a combined governance arrangement if possible.

4.3.9 The Board agreed it needed to have a good understanding of the new project and its governance arrangements. With regard to SWan, it was important to uphold what was seen as a strong momentum. Peter Kopelman noted that the new project was an opportunity to strengthen and develop the SWan alliance.

4.3.10 The Chair, on behalf of the Board, thanked the Vice-Chancellor and Peter Kopelman for their reports on progress of the SGUL / RHUL merger and noted the Board's interest in future developments.

4.4 Applications and Student Numbers

4.4.1 Although this was an early stage in the cycle of applications, it was reported that the figures to date were encouraging with an increase in both applications and offers being made. However, since current government policy provided no additional funding for home/EU students over the next two years, the rapid growth of recent years was unlikely to be possible. This would make the development of new programmes more difficult in the future. The main challenge faced by the University would be to achieve the appropriate balance in ensuring that demands could be satisfied.

4.5 Research Assessment Exercise

4.5.1 This matter would be reported in greater detail by the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research & Enterprise later in the meeting. Issues to note were that the outcome of the RAE had demonstrated that there had been a significant increase in world-class research within the University. The basis on which funding would be awarded had not yet been clarified.

4.6 UCU pay claim:

4.6.1 The Vice-Chancellor reported that UCU (the University and College Union) had submitted a pay claim for an 8% increase in the autumn, following the completion of the current pay review this summer. UCU was proposing to hold a ballot amongst its members with regard to taking industrial action. The issue of the timing of the claim was significant, as any possible action by UCU members was likely to focus on the end-of-year assessment period. However, UCEA (the University and College Employers Association) considered the claim premature and not in line with the agreed time-scale for negotiations. UCEA also felt that the UCU claim should be considered as part of the negotiating machinery which had recently been agreed with the trade unions. Talks were due to be held with ACAS, which it was hoped would resolve the procedural issues.

4.6.2 The Board agreed that the University should carefully consider its position and keep the situation under review.

4.7 Strategic Plan and key performance indicators

4.7.1 Following the discussion at the Away Day in December, it had been suggested that a smaller number of key performance indicators could be drawn up, which would be reported on a more frequent basis than the current annual practice. It was suggested that further discussion by the Board on this matter would be useful in order to provide a better steer of the Board's objectives.

4.7.2 It was noted that the Board was in receipt of regular KPI information through the finance reports and Vice-Chancellor's reports, and it was suggested that this information could be brought together as part of a quarterly report on KPIs.

4.7.3 The Chair of the Audit Committee said that the KPIs were seen as a tool for measuring performance against the University's Strategic Plan. The Audit Committee considered it good practice to review the KPIs on a regular basis, to assess if they remained appropriate and to consider how they were used and what management action was being taken. The current list of KPIs had been drawn up by the Board approximately three years ago, and it was considered appropriate that these KPIs should be reviewed in line with the new Strategic Plan.

4.7.4 The Chair suggested that there were two possible ways to proceed, firstly for the Head of Planning to review the KPIs in the light of the new Strategic Plan or secondly, to convene a small group as suggested by the Audit Committee to consider the issue in greater detail and make subsequent recommendations to the Board.

4.7.5 The Board noted that it was also important to ensure that the KPIs were presented in a way which would facilitate benchmarking against other HEIs. It was agreed that comparison against the CUC guidance was useful.

4.7.6 It was agreed that the current set of KPIs should be reviewed by the Vice-Chancellor and the Head of Planning, including consideration of how they were presented and what follow-up action was being taken, and that a report on this matter would be made to the Board by its July meeting.

Action: *Minute 4.7.6 – KPIs: Report on review of existing KPIs to Board by its meeting in July 2009 (Vice-Chancellor & Head of Planning)*

5.0 Approval of the Strategic Plan (Paper BG 2/09)

5.1 The Vice-Chancellor noted that paper BG 2/09 was the final draft of the Strategic Plan which had undergone extensive discussion over the past year including a special meeting of the Academic Board earlier this

month. The key part of the Plan was the chart at page 5 listing the key objectives against the four core areas. The Board had considered earlier drafts of the Plan and was now being asked for any final comments and for its approval.

- 5.2 The Board considered the paragraph which discussed whether the possible pressures as a result of limited growth in student numbers due to the funding cap was clearly reflected in the Plan. It was agreed that the paragraph should be retained with additional dialogue to outline the difference between the possible scenarios.
- 5.3 The Finance Director reminded the Board that the strategic risk register would be reviewed in the light of the new Strategic Plan. It was noted that risk management planning would be included within the risk register.
- 5.4 It was noted that the existing Income Related Budget methodology would be reviewed if necessary, depending on future student growth.
- 5.5 The Board discussed the possible addition of a measure relating to student employability. However, it was agreed that such a measure would be difficult to quantify across the whole University given the mix of programmes and employment destinations, and would therefore not be appropriate.
- 5.6 The Board agreed to approve the new Strategic Plan.

It was resolved that

The Board approve the Strategic Plan 2008/09 – 2012/13

6.0 Approval of Contract for Provision of Advertising (Media Services) (Paper BG 3/09)

- 6.1 The contract for the provision of advertising media services had a total value over four years of £2.8 million, which exceeded the Vice-Chancellor's signing limit and therefore required Board approval. The Pro Vice-Chancellor, External Affairs, noted that the main benefit of the new contract was the rationalisation of provision, which facilitated the relationship between the External Affairs media team and the faculties, and also gave improved economy of efficiencies resulting in lower costs.
- 6.2 The Board agreed to approve the contract.

It was resolved that

The Board approve the contract for the provision of Advertising (Media Services) and authorise the Chair to sign the contract

7.0 Approval of dates for future Board and Committee meetings (Paper BG 4/09)

- 7.1 The Board noted the re-scheduled Board meeting next year from 10 March to 17 March 2010, confirmed the dates of all meetings for 2009/10 and approved the dates for 2010/11.

It was resolved that

The Board approve the proposed dates and note the confirmed dates of meetings of the Board of Governors and its Standing Committees for 2009/10 and 2010/11.

8.0 Report on the Research Assessment Exercise 2008 Results (Paper BG 5/09)

- 8.1 The Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research & Enterprise presented the report on the RAE 2008 Results noting the attached appendices which comprised a high level summary report, a detailed breakdown of all subject units with comments, and a comparison between the University's expected targets per unit and those achieved.
- 8.2 It was noted that the University had, in essence, achieved the objectives outlined in its Research Strategy, with an average grade point of just over 2. The overall outcome was that the University achieved a higher quality of output than in the 2001 RAE, with an increase in the number of researchers submitting work and a higher number of units containing pockets of international excellence.
- 8.3 The University's league table position varied between providers; however, the influential *Research Fortnight* listed Kingston as 74th. An inclusive approach had been adopted when identifying areas to submit. This had had the effect of slightly lowering the institutional grade point average, but it meant that a larger number of staff had been included in this RAE. This could result in a higher level of research funding depending on the allocation methodology adopted by HEFCE.
- 8.4 It was noted that the overall grade scores in some areas had been pulled down by the research environment. It was evident that where a better case had been made for the environment, this had been picked up by the RAE panels.
- 8.5 The Board considered the possible impact with regard to SGUL and RHUL, and the opportunity of any collaborative research between Kingston and these institutions. It was noted that research opportunities existed within the SWan alliance. It was also noted that

further opportunities might be available on the basis of the very positive results achieved in nursing and business.

- 8.6 On behalf of the Board, the Chair congratulated the University on its improved RAE results.

Peter Kopelman left the meeting.

Clarissa Wilks left the meeting.

9.0 Executive Summary on the League Table Report

(Paper BG 6/09)

- 9.1 The Pro Vice-Chancellor reported on work undertaken by himself and by the Head of Planning with regard to league tables. This was based on an overview of the 2008 league tables produced by *the Times*, *the Guardian* and *the Independent*. It was noted that analysis showed that all three publications used data accurately in order to formulate the league tables.
- 9.2 It was noted that in the scoring system used, the University would need to improve its relative score by approximately 50 points in order to make a meaningful change in its position. The report analysed the University's performance against a peer group of other HEIS to which Kingston students had applied. It was noted that the University performed well in the NSS, and less well in the Student/Staff Ratio and Employability. In the area of completions, this had historically remained stable before 2008, as had the percentage of good honours degrees, but the latter was in the lower quartile in the sector.
- 9.3 A working group had been established, which was carrying out further analysis on the University's position against the peer group and was also working to ensure that the data used by the League Tables fully and accurately reflected the University's practice and use of its resources.
- 9.4 The Chair, on behalf of the Board, thanked the Pro Vice-Chancellor for an interesting and valuable report and noted that the Board would be interested in receiving further reports on this issue in the future.

10.0 Occupational Health and Safety Annual Report 2007/08

(Paper BG 7/09)

- 10.1 The University Secretary presented the Occupational Health and Safety Annual Report 2007/08, which summarised the University's safety performance and the work of the Occupational Health & Safety team over the year. It was noted that the University had achieved an award

for health and safety from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents.

10.2 Robert Green noted that, following discussions last year about governor representation on the University Health, Safety and Security Committee, he had attended the Committee's meetings, and reported that he was impressed and reassured by the attention to detail and the work being carried out in this area. He noted the importance of local groups also being actively involved in health and safety issues.

10.3 The Board noted the Report.

11.0 Progress Report on the Campus Development Plan

(Paper BG 8/09 - *confidential*)

11.1 The University Secretary reported on progress with the Campus Development Plan, noting that work was continuing at all four campuses.

11.2 A major report would be presented to the Board at its meeting in March with recommendations in respect of financial investment for the next phase of the CDP, including replacement of Rennie Hall of Residence with a new academic building, and extensive refurbishment work at Knights Park.

12.0* Finance Report for November 2008

(Paper BG 9/09)

12.1 The Board noted the Finance Report for November 2008.

13.0 Minutes of the Academic Board meeting held on 3 December 2008

13.1 The Chair had received a request that this item be un-starred. The Board discussed minute 4.5 relating to a post-implementation review of the new academic regulations. It was noted that the impact of these regulations varied between faculties, and that the Academic Board had set up a group to review the situation in more detail.

14.0 Any Other Business

14.1 The Board agreed that a presentation on the work of KUSU should be included as an annual agenda item.

14.2 The Chair noted that Nick Badman was resigning from the Board with immediate effect on account of taking up various new activities including undertaking work for the CASS Business School. On behalf

of the Board, the Chair thanked Nick for his extensive contribution over the years as a member of the Board and the Finance Committee, and also his contribution as Chair of KUIL and KUEL, and wished him well for the future. Nick Badman thanked the Board for its good wishes and noted that he had very much enjoyed his time with the University.

14.3 There was no other business.

Action: *KUSU presentation to be added as a standing annual Board agenda, with the next presentation to be arranged during the current academic year [Secretariat]*

15.0 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Governors was scheduled for Wednesday 11 March at the Town House, Penrhyn Road

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 10.30am.

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