

Kingston University London

MINUTES BOARD OF GOVERNORS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS HELD ON WEDNESDAY 20 JANUARY 2010 IN THE SIR FRANK LAMPL BUILDING, KINGSTON HILL

Present:

Gren Collings (Chair), George Alexandrou, Tony Beadle, Chris Brooks, David Carter, Stephen Cooksey, Ann Corrigan, Lesley Granger, Robert Green, Frank Kennedy, Stephen King, Peter Kopelman, Nona McDuff, Phil Molyneux, Derek Osbourne, David Reardon, Sue Rimmer, Peter Scott, David Taylor, Clarissa Wilks and Reza Zaidi

In attendance:

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & Enterprise), University Secretary, Finance Director, Head of Planning, Head of Secretariat, Minuting Clerk and Rhiannon Hiscocks representing KUSU

1.0 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Sara Drake, TJ Esubiyi, Roderic Lyne, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Employer Engagement) and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (External Affairs)

2.0 Minutes of the Board of Governors Meeting held on 25 November 2009

2.1 The Minutes were approved.

3.0 Matters Arising

3.1 The Chair reported that Lesley Granger had agreed to take up the role of Chair of the Employment & Diversity Committee. The Board endorsed the appointment.

3.2 There were no other matters arising which were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

4.0 Vice-Chancellor's Report (Paper BG 1/10)

4.1 Higher Education Funding 2010 - 2011

The Vice-Chancellor reported on the recent letter from the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills to the Chair of HEFCE, outlining details of the funding council's budgets for 2010-2011, the full text of which was attached as an annex. The key points of the letter, detailed in the Vice-Chancellor's report, were as follows:

- The total HE budget would be cut by 5.9% in 2010-2011;
- There would be a reduction in (ASNs) Additional Student Numbers of 20,000;
- The guidance from HEFCE was that the funding cuts should be applied in such a way as to have a minimal impact on core services and research;
- The allocation of 10,000 additional student numbers for the current year was a 'one-off' allowance and future over-recruitment could result in financial penalties.

With regard to tuition fees, it was anticipated that, in addition to the likely raising of the fees cap, it could become necessary to end the automatic entitlement to loans. It could also be necessary to rationalise the complex system of central student support.

4.2 Scenario Planning Exercise:

The Vice-Chancellor reported on the approach recently agreed by the Executive Board for work on Scenario Planning, led by the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Employer Engagement. The approach was based on two main areas of cost reduction – to consider scenarios for a reduction in faculty and departmental budgets over three years, and central measures such as wider use of the Voluntary Early Retirement and Voluntary Redundancy schemes. The work on Academic Foresight and Fitness for Purpose would also be taken into account in the final calculation of cost reduction.

It was noted that the Scenario Planning Exercise was a work in progress and would require several iterations prior to finalisation. A more comprehensive plan would be produced for the May Board meeting.

It was noted that a 10% cut in HEFCE funding would equate to an approximate 6% cut in University funding, since the University's income came from various sources in addition to the HEFCE grant. It was confirmed that the University was continuing to develop initiatives for additional sources of income, which had to date been successful in a number of areas, in particular overseas fee income.

4.3 UCAS Applications:

It was reported that UCAS applications to the University continued to increase for all faculties, and were substantially ahead of the national average figures.

4.4 Additional Student Numbers:

It was reported that, having bid for 100 ASNs, the University had been awarded 40 for the year 2010-2011.

4.5 Health Innovation and Education Cluster:

The South London bid to develop a Health Innovation and Education Cluster (HIEC) had been successful and would provide funding of £300,000 per annum for the next three years, to be shared between the HIEC partners. This initiative was a follow-up to the Academic Health and Social Care Network established last year, of which Kingston was a core member, and its aim was to establish closer links between universities and the health service to develop innovation, education and training.

4.6 St George's University of London :

It was reported that a working group had been established in order to develop the relationship between SGUL and Kingston. The main objectives were to agree a framework partnership arrangement and to develop and integrate shared services between the institutions. Given the forthcoming period of austerity, this was seen as an important piece of work which could strengthen the partnership and result in gains for both institutions.

4.7 Other matters for report:

4.7.1 HEFCE Chief Executive:

The Vice-Chancellor reported on a recent visit to the University by the Chief Executive of HEFCE.

4.7.2 STEM Faculty:

It was noted that a number of groups had been established to work on the new STEM Faculty, including an internal review group which would concentrate on academic developments and sub-groups to work on administrative and technical issues, with the aim of delivering a more efficient and cost effective faculty.

4.7.3 Adverse weather:

It was reported that the University had remained open throughout the recent period of extreme weather. The Board noted its appreciation of the work carried out by KUSCo in this regard.

4.7.4 Graduation ceremonies:

Following the concerns expressed last year over the use of the Rose Theatre for graduation ceremonies, it was reported that the programme of graduations currently taking place at the Theatre had so far resulted in

positive feedback. A full evaluation and report would be carried out once the programme of events was completed.

5.0 Report on KUSU's Support our Sports Campaign (Paper BG 2/10)

- 5.1 The Chair introduced and welcomed Rhiannon Hiscocks, who was representing KUSU and reporting on its 'Support our Sports' Campaign.
- 5.2 It was reported that the existing sports and recreational facilities at the University did not meet current demand. Student perception was that investment in this area did not compare favourably with other HEIs, and that the University's facilities were not comparable to the level provided at schools and colleges, on which students' general expectations were based. KUSU believed it was important to address this issue in the context of the student experience.
- 5.3 There was increasing demand amongst students for a more extensive and diverse range of recreational facilities relating to health and fitness as well as to sport in general. Additionally, it was felt that there should be greater support for sports and recreational opportunities, by having in place a University-wide policy of reserving Wednesday afternoons for non-academic activities.
- 5.4 The University Secretary reported that the issue of sports facilities would be included in the next stage of the Campus Development Plan. However, the provision of further sports facilities would need to be balanced against improving learning and teaching facilities. A report would be made to the Board meeting in July 2010 with a draft outline of priorities and costs of future CDP work. It was noted that a substantial amount of funding of approximately £3.4m was being invested to improve the facilities at Tolworth Court.
- 5.5 With regard to the issue of keeping Wednesday afternoons free for non-academic activities, it was noted that whilst classes were generally not formally scheduled for this time, it would be very difficult and inefficient to totally eliminate them in a University the size of Kingston, particularly since the faculties operated independently.
- 5.6 It was noted that the student body was represented on executive matters relating to campus development through regular meetings between KUSU and Property Management & Development, which in turn reported to the Estates Committee and to the Board of Governors for final decisions. With regard to general administrative business, Student Services & Administration included a sports team headed by a Director of Sport, and a sports strategy had been drawn up within this group. Additionally, the University and KUSU held regular meetings relating to budget planning. The possibility of establishing a Sports Steering Group had also been discussed by the SMG.

- 5.7 It was agreed that it would be useful for the Board to receive a further report at a later date to provide an overall response on all matters, in addition to the issue of estates development.

Action: Further Report on the issues relating to development of sports facilities to Board of Governors meeting at a later date [Director of Student Services & Administration]

Clarissa Wilks left the meeting

6.0 Report on Pension Scheme Arrangements

(Paper BG 3/10)

- 6.1 The Finance Director presented the report on Pension Scheme arrangements, which was in response to a request at the Board meeting in November 2009 for further information on the University's pension schemes and their impact on the financial statements.
- 6.2 It was noted that the financial statements for the year 2008/09 included a pension deficit of £70.4m, which mainly related to the local government scheme operated by the Royal Borough of Kingston. It was confirmed that the liability for this deficit rested with the University.
- 6.3 There had been regular increases in employer contributions and continuing increases had been factored into the Financial Plan. However, it was possible that a cap might be introduced on employer contributions. It was also possible that employee contributions might be increased or changes introduced to the retirement age. It was agreed that the current level of pensions may not be sustainable in the future.
- 6.4 The University's share of the RBK scheme was 30% of the total fund value. It was noted that, as an admitted member, the University had no voting rights over the scheme. Derek Osborne confirmed that responsibility for the scheme and management of the level of risk of the investment portfolio lay with the RBK Councillors, but that care was taken that all advisory members had the opportunity to participate in discussions on investment strategies.

7.0 Report on the University's Revised Regulations for Degree Classification

(Paper BG 4/10)

- 7.1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor presented the report on revised regulations for degree classification, and explained the background to the regulations review. Following a revision of the regulations in 2007/08, a number of issues were raised by External Examiners relating mainly to the award of First and Upper Second class degrees. This led to a further review of the regulations resulting in a set of revised algorithms for the calculation of degree classification which were modelled against the previous system, with the primary aim of reducing the complexity of the regulations. Benchmarking exercises were carried out against comparator institutions.

- 7.2 The outcome of the review was the further revision of the regulations to provide a clear and rigorous system, which would be implemented in phases, and reviewed periodically.

Action: Periodic review of revised regulations for degree classification [Deputy Vice-Chancellor]

8.0 Occupational Health and Safety Annual Report (Paper BG 5/10)

- 8.1 The University Secretary presented the Occupational Health and Safety Annual Report which summarised the University's activities and performance in this area for the year 2008/09, and showed that good progress had been made over the year. Two of the main issues related to the development of appropriate planning and responses to a possible swine flu outbreak and adverse weather conditions.
- 8.2 It was noted that security incidents were covered under the remit of the Safety, Health & Security Committee through regular reporting. Health-related issues covered a number of areas including substance abuse, and it was possible to break down the relevant categories for more specific reporting.
- 8.3 It was noted that health and safety was under the remit of the Property Management & Development Department and that an appropriate safety plan had been drawn up for the management of the construction work at Kingston Hill. Contractors' statistics were not currently included in the University figures.
- 8.4 The Board discussed security issues relating to terrorism. Universities UK had set up a group to consider this matter and provide guidelines. It was reported that the University liaised with KUSU over guest speakers and there had been no problems to date in this area. It was noted that the UK visa system had been tightened, and that HE and FE institutions were monitoring the attendance of overseas students, in response to recent legislation.

9.0 Progress report on the Campus Development Plan (Paper BG 6/10)

- 9.1 The University Secretary reported on progress with the Campus Development Plan since the last meeting of the Board in November.
- 9.2 The contract for the construction work at Kingston Hill had been agreed and was due to be signed imminently. It was confirmed that the novation issue previously reported had now been resolved.
- 9.3 The costings for work at Knights Park were currently slightly over budget. However, it was anticipated that cost reductions would be achieved through value engineering exercises, without compromising the core elements of the proposed development.

10.0 Dates of future Board of Governors and Standing Committee meetings

(Paper BG 7/10)

10.1 The Board confirmed the dates of meetings for 2010/11 and approved the proposed dates for 2011/12.

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 2010/11 and 2011/12.

11.0* Finance Report for November 2009

(Paper BG 8/10)

11.1 The Board noted the Finance Report for November 2009.

12.0* Health and Safety Update Report

(Paper BG 9/10)

12.1 The Board noted the Health and Safety Update Report.

13.0 Minutes of the Academic Board meeting held on 2 December 2009

13.1 The Board noted the Minutes of the Academic Board meeting.

14.0 Any Other Business

14.1 The Chair reminded the Board members of the dinner to be held at Dorich House on 27th January 2010.

14.2 There was no other business.

15.0 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Governors was scheduled for Wednesday 17 March 2010 in the Board Room, TH102/103 at Penrhyn Road.

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