

Kingston University London

MINUTES BOARD OF GOVERNORS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS HELD ON WEDNESDAY 15 JULY 2009 IN THE BOARD ROOM, TOWN HOUSE, PENRHYN ROAD

Present:

Gren Collings (Chair), George Alexandrou, Tony Beadle, Olrick Coker, Ann Corrigan, Stephen Cox, Deirdre Ferrier, Peter Kopelman, Roderic Lyne, Phil Molyneux, Derek Osbourne, Peter Scott, Christine Swabey, David Taylor, Colin Watts and Clarissa Wilks

In attendance:

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

The Chair welcomed TJ Esubiyi, the incoming President of KUSU, to his first meeting of the Board of Governors.

53.0 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Sara Drake, Robert Green, Stephen King, Tim Oliver and David Reardon.

54.0 Minutes of the Board of Governors Meeting held on 20 May 2009

54.1 The Minutes were approved.

55.0 Matters Arising

55.1 There were no matters arising, which were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

56.0 Vice-Chancellor's Report (Paper BG 76/09)

56.1 Funding Outlook:

The Vice-Chancellor reported that the funding outlook was fairly uncertain with an increasing number of HEIs reporting possible cuts and job losses.

The funding council was considering removing premiums from a number of areas, including historic buildings and the 10% premium in respect of Foundation Degrees. The latter of these was likely to have an impact on the University and its partner FE colleges, as this premium was paid directly to the franchise partners. The main areas of proposed additional expenditure were in improving the student experience and maintaining investment in research. Suggested projects which would give significant academic benefits as well as increased administrative efficiency included a revision of the modular structure from 8 to 4 modules to create a less complex system, and the creation of a single STEM faculty from the existing three faculties of CISM, Engineering and Science. Other areas under consideration included increasing the number of short courses, further work in enterprise and more efficient use of space. It was agreed that the University would need to review its academic portfolio, and optimize its use of resources.

56.2 Mary Stuart – Kingston to Lincoln:

- Transitional arrangements

56.2.1 The Vice-Chancellor on behalf of the Board congratulated Mary Stuart on her recent appointment as Vice-Chancellor of Lincoln University, which she was due to commence in November. It was noted that although consideration had been given to re-arranging, and possibly reducing the number of senior posts, it had been decided that no changes should be made to the Senior Management Group at the present time. The position had now been advertised and it was planned to hold interviews in September, with a successor confirmed by the end of the year.

56.1.2 It was reported that Penny Sparke, Pro Vice-Chancellor of Research and Enterprise would act as the Deputy during the interim period. Additionally, David Mackintosh, Dean of the Faculty of Science, would take over responsibility for the preparations for the forthcoming institutional audit by the Quality Assurance Agency.

- Succession planning

56.1.3 Further to the Board's recent request for more information about succession planning, the University Secretary had drawn up notes on this issue, which were attached as an annex to BG 76/09. The Board agreed that, in view of the relatively small size of the Executive, it was desirable to retain flexibility when considering succession planning for this group. Nevertheless the Board encouraged the University to make sure that it had in place arrangements to cover for the short or medium term absence of members of the Executive.

56.2 New Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences:

56.2.1 It was reported that the current Dean, Gail Cunningham, was retiring this summer, and Professor Martin McQuillan from the University of Leeds had been appointed to the post, with a starting date to be confirmed.

56.3 HEFCE Audit(s):

56.3.1 The University was involved in two separate HEFCE audits, which both related to the issue of reporting of student non-completions. The first of these was the final stage of the audit of HESES 2007/08 and involved an assurance visit by HEFCE later in July, which would include the participation of several Board members.

56.3.2 The second audit related to HEFCE's reconciliation of the HESES early return of numbers in December 2007 against the actual outcome recorded in the HESA return for 2007/08. HEFCE had conducted an investigation due to the discrepancy caused as a result of the under-reporting of non-completion figures.

56.3.3 The main issue relating to this investigation was the possibility that last year's clawback of £400,000 might be increased, with a potential maximum exposure of up to £1.3 million. Although HEFCE had advised that the clawback was likely to be based on the audited figures, it was possible that the position may have since changed, and was largely dependent upon whether the University's figures were back within the contract range. The outcome of this position would be available later in the month. It was reported that there had been a marginal increase in student recruitment for STEM subjects following high demand in this area.

56.3.4 The University was now in a better position with regard to accuracy of reporting student data. However, it was acknowledged that this was a complex area and additional work was needed to further improve levels of accuracy. It was reported that there was a possibility HEFCE might change its system on completion reporting to better align it with student progression.

56.4 Awards ceremonies at the Rose

It was agreed that this matter would be discussed as part of the next agenda item, the KUSU Survey on Graduation Venues.

56.5 Pay Dispute

It was noted that the UCU ballot for action had been put on hold, and that the existing offer of 0.4% remained in place. The Executive recommendation was that the University pay this amount from the normal settlement date of 1 August and pay any agreed balance at a later date.

56.6 Other matters for report

56.7.1 Demise of DIUS

The Board noted the departmental re-organisations, whereby the work of the DIUS had been absorbed by the larger Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, headed by Lord Mandelson.

56.7.2 Student grants frozen

The Board noted that the full maintenance grant had been frozen at £2,906, and that the Government had agreed to increase the fees cap by 2% to £3,290.

56.7.2 St George's / Royal Holloway merger

It was confirmed that due diligence exercises were underway and work on the agreed merger was on schedule with anticipated Privy Council approval in November. The importance of the relationship between St George's and Kingston was noted, as was the relationship with the NHS and in particular London healthcare services.

56.7.3 The Times 'Good University Guide'

The Board noted the University's improved ranking in the *Times Good University Guide*, the last of the three published league tables.

57.0 Summary of KUSU Survey on Graduation Venue

(Paper BG 77/09 - *confidential*)

- 57.1 The outgoing student nominee member presented the summary report of the KUSU survey which had been carried out following the University's decision to use the Rose Theatre in Kingston for graduation events. The detailed results of the survey had been circulated to the Board members separately. It was clear from the survey that there had been a strong negative response amongst the student body to using the Rose, with many students asserting that they would prefer a larger, more prestigious, central London venue.
- 57.2 The Vice-Chancellor noted that he fully recognised and respected the students' views, but believed that those students who had already graduated at the Rose had generally found it to be a good experience, in a setting with a far more human scale than the central London venues used. He felt it was important to ensure that any possible misunderstandings were clarified, including reassurance that graduations would be organised on a faculty basis so students would be graduating with friends, and that there would be no increased restrictions on inviting guests.
- 57.3 It was noted that arrangements had now been made and the University had no option other than to hold graduation ceremonies at the Rose next academic year. However, a formal course of action had been agreed with the students' union whereby post-graduation surveys would be carried out after next year's graduations to evaluate students' opinions. In addition, attendance would be monitored and a further survey would assess reasons for non-attendance.
- 57.4 The Board agreed that the survey was very comprehensive and well put together. However, it appeared that the planned changes had not been properly communicated, which led to collective misunderstandings about

the rationale for the change, and which was in part responsible for some negative reaction. Clearly it was important for the University to address the students' misgivings, address the issues raised in the survey and ensure that graduation in future was a positive experience for students.

57.5 It was suggested that the positive aspects of using the Rose Theatre should be emphasised, including the possibility of involving local businesses and creating a more extensive local event around the graduation ceremony.

58.0 Approval of the External Auditors' Strategy for the year ending 31 July 2009, on the recommendation of the Audit Committee

(Paper BG 78/09)

58.1 The Chair of the Audit Committee reported that the External Auditors' Strategy for the year ending 31 July 2009 had been discussed in detail by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 7 May, and recommended for Board approval. The Committee had discussed two specific issues in particular – the continuing sustainability of the institution and the accuracy of student records.

It was resolved that

The Board authorise the External Auditors' Strategy for the year ending 31 July 2009 on the recommendation of the Audit Committee.

59.0 Approval of Budget for 2009/10

(Paper BG 79/09)

59.1 The Finance Director reported that the developing Financial Plan and operational budget had been reviewed in detail by the Finance Committee at its meeting on 2 July. In line with HEFCE's revised submission date under the 'Single Conversation' process, the Financial Plan would be presented to the Board for its approval in November. In the meantime it was necessary to approve the provisional budget for the coming year.

59.2 The increase in budgeted expenditure for the year 2009/10 against the outcome for 2008/09 was largely due to the additional income generated by high levels of overseas and home/EU postgraduate recruitment, not matched by expenditure in 2008/09, which would be carried over into 2009/10.

It was resolved that

The Board approve the provisional budget for 2009/10 on the recommendation of the Finance Committee.

60.0 Approval of Kingston Vale Student Residencies

(Paper BG 80/09)

- 60.1 The Finance Director presented the report on the acquisition and financing of the Kingston Vale student residencies, which had been discussed in detail by the Finance Committee at its meeting on 2 July. This development presented an opportunity to replace the accommodation units which would be lost following the impending demolition of Rennie Hall, with a net increase of approximately 15 units.
- 60.2 The aim was to have the accommodation ready by the start of 2010/11 and in order to avoid any possible delay the Board was requested to approve delegated authority under Chair's Action, on the basis of the conditions outlined in the report.
- 60.3 It was noted that the rental levels reflected the type of accommodation proposed and the need to move to a 50-week licence period. The rents were lower than at the IQ Wave building on Vicarage Road, which had a very good take-up rate. Although the Kingston Vale accommodation was out of town, the location would be desirable due to its proximity to both Kingston Hill and Roehampton Vale campuses.
- 60.4 The RBK nominee member noted that the proposed development was in a residential area, which could impact on any decision. It was agreed that full consultation with the RBK councillors as well as the planning officers would be of value in progressing the proposal.

It was resolved that

The Board approve the proposed approach for the acquisition and development of the Kingston Vale student residencies as outlined in paper BG 80/09, and also approve the delegation of contract signing authority to the Chair on the advice of the sub-committee previously established for CDP approvals.

61.0 Update report on the Campus Development Plan (Paper BG 81/09)

- 61.1 The University Secretary reported on progress with the Campus Development Plan, noting that all four projects had now started and were proceeding on time. Tenders received to date had been 10% – 20% below budget, which reflected current market conditions. The tenders for the main project at Kingston Hill had yet to be received; should this exercise not follow the current trend, it would be necessary to carry out a further value engineering exercise or a further review by the Board to consider the most appropriate action to be taken.
- 61.2 It was reported that there were a number of ongoing issues relating to project management, which it was planned to resolve over the summer. A further update report on this matter would be made to the Board at its September meeting.

62.0 Review of Key Performance Indicators

(Paper BG 82/09)

- 62.1 The Head of Planning presented the review of Key Performance Indicators, which was in response to a request by the Board to review the KPIs in the light of the new Strategic Plan, and had been reviewed against CUC guidance. It was important to note that the listed KPIs were representative of areas of activity at the University, and were based on headline KPIs which continued to be monitored and reviewed in detail as part of the Review of Progress, presented annually to the Board in September.
- 62.2 The outcome of the review indicated that the majority of the existing KPIs remained relevant. Two areas of change were recommended, relating to staffing and estates. It was agreed that it would be appropriate to review the staffing KPI after the revision of the Organisational Development Strategy later in the year. It was also agreed that a high-level KPI addressing estates issues should be included.
- 62.3 It was noted that one area not covered in the headline list was enterprise activity and it was suggested that a high-level KPI could be included, bringing the total number to eleven. However, it was decided that enterprise was adequately covered in the annual Review of Progress.
- 62.4 The report included annexes showing how the KPIs were mapped against CUC guidance and managed within the University, mainly through existing committee structures which addressed the respective areas of activity. It was noted that there would be more opportunity to ensure that these reflected the University's Strategic Plan, once the Operational Plan had been finalised.
- 62.5 The Chair of the Audit Committee thanked the Head of Planning for a very comprehensive and useful report. He noted that the Audit Committee had asked the Internal Audit Department to review how the KPIs were connected to the Strategic Plan and managed by the University. In terms of the staffing KPI he suggested it would be useful to include consideration of staff perceptions and attitudes.
- 62.6 A further report on monitoring KPIs and a Review of Progress would be presented to the Board at its September meeting.

It was resolved that

The Board approve the recommended changes to the KPIs as outlined in paper BG 82/09.

Action: Further report on monitoring KPIs and a Review of Progress to be presented to the Board of Governors in September 2009 [Head of Planning]

Peter Kopelman left the meeting

Glyn Jones, the Head of the Student Affairs Office attended the meeting for the next two items

63.0 Approval of revised Student Complaints Procedure
(Paper BG 86/09)

- 63.1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor noted that the Student Complaints Procedure had been approved by the Board last year, at which time it had been agreed that the procedure would be reviewed in twelve months' time.
- 63.2 The Head of the Student Affairs Office reported that there were two areas where revisions were being proposed, in response to discussions with the students' union. The first change was to extend the time limit for investigating complaints to give a more realistic timeframe, and the second was to amend the section regarding complaints about staff conduct to bring it more in line with the other stages of the Complaints Procedure.
- 63.3 It was noted that the proposed revisions had been approved by the Senior Management Group.

It was resolved that

The Board approve the revised Student Complaints Procedure.

64.0 Approval of revised Student Disciplinary Procedure
(Paper BG 87/09)

- 64.1 The Student Disciplinary Procedure had also been approved by the Board in 2008, subject to a review in one year's time. In addition to several minor revisions, the main changes proposed were firstly, to amend the operation of Fitness to Practise panels to make this more consistent with the Disciplinary Procedure, and secondly, to make the failure to declare a criminal conviction, or submitting fraudulent documentation at the time of application, a part of the admissions procedure, which simplified the procedures.
- 64.2 It was noted that the proposed revisions had been approved by the Senior Management Group and the Academic Board.

It was resolved that

The Board approve the revised Student Disciplinary Procedure.

65.0 Approval of contract for the provision of bus services
(Paper BG 83/09)

- 65.1 The Head of Secretariat reported that, as part of the University's travel plan, it had been decided to continue with the provision of a bus service.

Following a formal tender exercise, it had been decided to offer a 5 year contract to Tellings Golden Miller to start from the 2009/10 academic year.

It was resolved that

The Board approve the contract for the provision of bus services and delegate signing authority to the Chair.

66.0 Report and recommendations by the Nominations Committee (Paper BG 84/09)

66.1 Roderic Lyne, who had acted as Chair of the Nominations Committee meeting on 2 July, reported on the Committee's discussions and recommendations, following the work of the sub-committee which had interviewed potential candidates for the Board. It was reported that there had been an encouraging level of applications and strong candidates with a wide range of skill sets.

66.2 It was noted that there remained a gap in the area of property expertise and that this issue would need to be addressed as soon as possible. With regard to the requirement of a representative with an educational background, the Vice-Chancellor was continuing his search for a suitable candidate.

66.3 It was intended to invite two of the recommended candidates to join the Board with immediate effect, and the other three candidates who would be filling vacancies created in November, would be invited to attend the September meeting as observers.

66.4 The University Secretary reported on the vacancies within the Board's committees. It was proposed that Sara Drake, who was the Chair of KUSCo and KUCEL, be asked to move from the Employment & Diversity Committee to the Estates Committee. The rationale for this proposal was to strengthen the link between the Estates Committee and KUSCo, which handled the maintenance of the University's estate, by appointing the Chair of KUSCo to membership of the Estates Committee.

It was resolved that

The Board approve the recommendations for Board and Committee membership as outlined in the report from the Nominations Committee.

To join the Board with immediate effect:

David Carter
Frank Kennedy

To join the Board from 21 November 2009

Chris Brooks
Lesley Granger
Reza Zaidi

65.0 Delegation of authority on severance payments
(Paper BG 85/09)

65.1 The Head of Secretariat noted that, at its last meeting, the Remuneration Committee had agreed to make an amendment to its Terms of Reference, allowing the delegation of authority relating to severance payments to senior post holders, to the Remuneration Committee, in line with recent guidance from HEFCE and CUC.

It was resolved that

The Board approve the delegation of authority to the Remuneration Committee on the issue of severance payments for senior post holders.

68.0 Approval of revised signatories for Joint Faculty Bank Account
(Paper BG 88/09)

68.1 The Finance Director stated that the revision to the signatories for the joint faculty bank account was to ensure a higher degree of control in this area.

It was resolved that

The Board approve the revised authorised signatories as outlined in paper BG88/09.

69.0 Approval of the appointment of the Student Nominee Member to the Board
(Paper BG 89/09)

69.1 The Board noted that Tj Esubiyi had been elected as President of KUSU for the next academic year, and had accordingly been nominated as the Student Nominee Member of the Board of Governors for this period.

69.2 On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked Olrick Coker, the outgoing President, for his work on the Board, in particular for his presentation on KUSU at the last Board meeting in May, and wished him well for the future.

It was resolved that

The Board approve the appointment of Tj Esubiyi as the Student Nominee Member of the Board with immediate effect.

70.0 Summary report on Kingston University's External Reviews
(Paper BG 90/09)

70.1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor presented the summary report on the University's external reviews, which outlined the accreditations for the

University's courses and programmes. It was noted that the work on accreditations represented a significant task for staff, but was highly valued by students and seen as an important part of their career progression.

70.2 It was reported that the University was believed to have a higher than average number of accreditations within the sector. It was noted that, where a relevant professional accreditation applied, the University believed it was important to secure the accreditation, as part of a package.

70.3 In addition to the formal accreditations, the University also had a number of non-official accreditations such as sector endorsements.

71.0* Report on Health and Safety Metrics
(Paper BG 91/09)

71.1 The Board noted the report on Health and Safety Metrics

72.0* CHARM Collaboration agreement
(Paper BG 92/09)

72.1 The Board noted the report on the CHARM collaboration agreement

73.0* Finance Report for May 2009
(Paper BG 93/09)

73.1 The Board noted the Finance Report for May 2009

74.0* Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 7 May 2009

74.1 The Board noted the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting.

75.0* Minutes of the Employment & Diversity Committee meeting held on 17 June 2009.

75.1 The Board noted the minutes of the Employment & Diversity Committee meeting.

76.0* Minutes of the Estates Committee meeting held on 17 June 2009

76.1 The Board noted the minutes of the Estates Committee meeting.

77.0* Draft Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 2 July 2009

77.1 The Board noted the draft minutes of the Finance Committee meeting.

78.0* Minutes of the Nominations Committee meeting held on 2 July 2009

78.1 The Board noted the minutes of the Nominations Committee meeting

79.0 Any Other Business

79.1 There was no other business.

80.0 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Governors was scheduled for Wednesday 23 September 2009 in the Town House, Penrhyn Road.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 11.00am.

Ref: Governors\Minutes\BoG150709FinalDraft