

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors held on Wednesday 23 March 2022.

Present: David Lamb (Chair, via Microsoft Teams), Richard Bacon, Jenny Body, Evan Botwood,(until G22.03.11.2), Laura Claydon, Carolyn Donoghue, Professor Marc Griffiths (until G22.03.11.2), Domini Harewood, Priya Kaur, Ian MacKenzie, Grant Mansfield, Dr Chris Moore (until G22.03.11.2), Margaret Simmons-Bird, Dave Tansley, Professor Steve West (until G22.03.11.2), Kalpna Woolf, Andrea Young.

Apologies: Professor John Craven, Tim Simmonds, Dr Jodie Anstee, Clerk.

In Attendance: Professor Amanda Coffey, DVC and Provost (until G22.03.11.2), Jo Midgley, Registrar and PVC Student Experience (until G22.03.11.2), Christine Gledhill, Deputy Clerk (minutes, until G22.03.12).

G22.03.1 MEMBERSHIP AND APOLOGIES

Confirmation of Appointments

G22.03.1.1 The following recommendations by the Nominations and Governance Committee were formally ratified:

- Domini Harewood to serve as an Independent Member for a term of office of 3 years to 22 March 2025.
- Priya Kaur to serve as an Associate Board Member for a term of office of 1 year to 22 March 2023.
- Margaret Simmons-Bird, MBE to serve as an Independent Member for a term of office of 3 years to 22 March 2025.

G22.03.1.2 Members noted that the Chair had discussed committee membership with the three new Governors and had agreed that they meet with the Committee Chairs ahead of committee memberships being confirmed.

G22.03.1.3 Apologies were noted as set out above.

G22.03.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None received.

G22.03.3 OPENING DISCUSSION

G22.03.3.1 The Chair invited Members to raise any further matters for consideration at the meeting or for a future meeting of the Board.

G22.03.3.2 No further matters were raised.

G22.03.4 UPDATE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE STUDENTS' UNION

Paper G22/03/01 was received

G22.03.4.1 Evan Botwood, UWESU President and Student Nominee highlighted to the Board the matters that were exercising the Students' Union – both nationally and locally.

G22.03.4.2 Members noted the following:
i. Ukraine Crisis – the SU's response included:

- a. NUS had removed all Russian products from their supply chain, which supplied most of the products for UWESU.
- b. Promotion of a wellbeing drop-in session for affected students (focusing particularly on Ukrainian and Russian students).
- c. Working with UWE Wellbeing Team to ensure Ukrainian and Russian students were contacted for welfare checks.

G22.03.4.3 The UWESU President asked whether any Wellbeing staff were specifically trained to support students from conflict zones.

G22.03.4.4 Members noted that a scheme was in place for students impacted (fee waivers and financial support) and whilst it was not known whether staff were specifically trained, these students were being prioritised for wellbeing appointments.

G22.03.4.5 Members also noted that extenuating circumstances would also be applied in relation to students' academic work and that the University's Dean of Students was working on the development of a formal protocol for these sorts of circumstances.

G22.03.4.6 ii. Speak Week – a cross-campus project, undertaken in early February which was designed to gain some high-level insight into students' views of their time at UWE. Two questions were asked:

- What one thing would you keep about UWE?
- What one thing would you change about UWE?

G22.03.4.7 Members noted that data from the project had been shared with Members of the Directorate. Professor Amanda Coffey, DVC and Provost remarked that this had been a good project and it was pleasing to see that it would be extended.

G22.03.4.8 Members also noted that the Campus Life workshops were in place to discuss the development of the campus, including ensuring the enhancement of sport, leisure and wellbeing opportunities; the Speak Week data had been a helpful addition to this and would feed into the Masterplanning work.

G22.03.4.9 iii. UWESU and Governors' Strategic Workshop – currently exploring with the Governance Team how best to take these forward: format, frequency, etc.

iv. Leadership race – the SU President and 4 Vice-Presidents for 2022/2023 had been elected. Term of office was for 1 year and a maximum of two terms may be served (on re-election). The elected officers were:

- Rania Regaieg, SU President (Rania was currently VP, Community and Welfare)
- Rahul Aswani, VP Community and Welfare
- Lily Diymowei, VP Education
- Bethel Ekaette, VP Societies and Communication
- Doha Laftimi, VP Sports and Health.

G22.03.4.10 The UWESU President referred to a question put to him at an earlier Away Day session as to what advice he had for the new Student Nominee. He observed:

- Continue to ensure that they are supported by the Governance Team.
- Be clear that the role is representing all UWE students, not UWESU.
- Maintain the helpful approach that 'there is no silly question'.
- A year really was not long enough; there was so much to learn.

G22.03.4.11 The UWESU President thanked Members for their friendliness and support and remarked on how much he had enjoyed the Student Nominee role and in particular, working with the Governance Team to set up the Student/Governor lunches, the reforming of the Student Governor Forum to interactive workshop sessions and he thanked the Chair for introducing this new agenda item.

G22.03.4.12 On behalf of the Board, the Deputy Chair thanked the Student Nominee for his exceptional contribution throughout the year and wished him luck for the future.

STRATEGIC ITEMS

G22.03.5 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

Paper G22/03/02 was received

G22.03.5.1 Members noted the content of the report and received an update from the Vice-Chancellor. Members noted the following in particular:

G22.03.5.2 *Student Recruitment*

- i. Strong admissions cycle for the University; it was possible that the University would go into Clearing seeking significantly fewer students than in previous years.
- ii. The need to provide a balance across the different areas of provision (apprenticeships, degrees and pathways), tariff and widening participation.
- iii. The recognition that world events may have an impact on International recruitment; the Admissions Unit was closely tracking what was happening, with the University's international teams.

G22.03.5.3 *Senior staff recruitment*

- i. Dr Elena Marco had been recruited recently as PVC and Head of College, Technology and Environment).
- ii. The University was considering the shape of the three Colleges, which would have a range of schools within, the detail of names and configurations is being considered in partnership with those Faculty teams.
- iii. The University was currently in conversation with head-hunter companies for the Chief People Officer position and that of the PVC and Head of College, Business and Law. A timeframe would be developed and Governor engagement would be welcome, even though these roles were not holders of senior posts. It was hoped that the two new appointees would be in post by September 2022.

G22.03.5.4 *National Student Survey (NSS)*

- i. Engagement with the NSS was tracking slightly lower than the previous year, though was broadly in line with the rest of the sector.
- ii. The University was working with areas to raise engagement.

G22.03.5.5 *Conflict in Ukraine*

- i. Ongoing work of UUK, the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the Department for Education (DfE) to support HE colleagues in Ukraine, and in countries that had received most of the displaced communities.
- ii. All institutions were looking at Russian links – whilst there was very limited exposure for the University, there were many universities that were more significantly exposed.
- iii. The sector was encouraging the OfS to advise on how to support students and not breach sanctions. There was very small risk for UWE, which had a small number of students from Ukraine, Russia and Belarus, all of whom were being supported in a similar way.

G22.03.5.6 Members referred to the impact of growth on University services and accommodation and the statement in the report that the University had secured a further 600 beds in Newport, Gloucester and Cheltenham. Members asked if, given the distance, this would lead to students having difficulty integrating.

- G22.03.5.7 Members noted that the accommodation in these locations had been trialled the previous year with a limited number of students. The accommodation was cheaper, had a warden-in-residence and transport to and from the University was subsidised.
- G22.03.5.8 Members also noted that the University had adopted a transparent approach to communicating the availability of accommodation and supply and demand issues in Bristol, and had removed the previous accommodation guarantee. Members further noted that there was a package of student support in place.
- G22.03.5.9 Members asked when the University might be able to provide that accommodation guarantee for new students and noted that the building of Student Accommodation Phase 3 (SAP3) – 900 beds – was going well, and the University was in the process of submitting the planning application for the next phase (1200 beds) and car parking.
- G22.03.5.10 Members also noted the discussions taking place with third parties around other accommodation development opportunities. Putting all developments and opportunities together, it was possible that these would be complete by 2025/2026.
- G22.03.5.11 Members further noted that even given these developments, the University would remain reliant on nomination agreements for its city centre campus.
- G22.03.5.12 Members referred to the accounts of 'landlord scams' relayed by some international students at a recent Student/Governor lunch. Members noted that the University was being as clear as possible in targeted communications as to what options were available, and that it would prefer to see students secure accommodation through the University's connections. This was communicated to international students at agent offices by local staff, but a number of students had chosen not engage, which had unfortunately led to significant difficulties for them.
- G22.03.5.13 Members noted that the University now used web-based software that provided direct links to verified private landlords, and which was able to serve all accommodation needs, including those of students with families.

G22.03.6 STRATEGY: CORPORATE SCORECARD

Paper G22/03/03 was received

- G22.03.6.1 Members noted that an additional and very useful meeting of the People, Culture, Quality and Standards (PCQS) Committee had taken place the previous day which had focused on the Corporate Scorecard's non-continuation data, which had not been updated at the time the Committee had met in January.
- G22.03.6.2 Members remarked that whilst it was good to see the awarding gap coming down, it would be even better to see an acceleration of that reduction.
- G22.03.6.3 Professor Marc Griffiths, Executive Dean and PVC, Health and Applied Sciences (HAS), and Academic Board Nominee, shared some examples of activity within his own Faculty, including the University's participation in the Supporting Healthcare Student in Placement Project, focused on the University's black and minority ethnic students in healthcare placements, which was funded by Health Education England (HEE) and was a pan-Bristol project.
- G22.03.6.4 Members were informed that HEE recognised that this was a significant issue in the workforce.
- G22.03.6.5 Members noted the activity that was taking place and that whilst it was good to see a reduction in all awarding gaps, there was learning to take forward from that and the Executive were keen to ensure good practice was being shared across the institution.

- G22.03.6.6 Members further noted that programmes with very large awarding gaps would be targeted using a task force approach, to understand the cohorts, explore assessment and how students were supported. There was a need also to look at leadership throughout the organisation, at responsibility and accountability, to ensure that this was a whole University responsibility. This approach was in the process of being rolled through and the Directorate were discussing the strengthening of the governance around the EDI agenda.
- G22.03.6.7 Members strongly expressed the view that pressure should be applied to accelerate the achievement of these targets, given that the awarding gaps were not about ability, but race. Members noted that where possible, the University would move faster but it recognised that this issue required continuous challenge and would remain a constant matter of accountability and responsibility.
- Members commented that awarding gaps also existed in other cohorts including disability and to white males from some socio-economic groups and that all gaps needed to be eliminated.
- Members remarked upon the grade awards made by teachers during lockdown and the fact that black and black heritage students, and disadvantage students were awarded lower grades and remarked that assessment was the most important factor in addressing the gap.
- G22.03.6.8 During discussed Members acknowledged the need to ensure that good practice was shared and permanently embedded.
- G22.03.6.9 Members were reminded that the Office for Students (OfS) had challenged the University's awarding gap target of zero and the University had stood by as it was the right thing to do; the OfS would hold the University to account on it.
- G22.03.6.10 Members noted that the University recognised the moral imperative to reach this target but was exploring how to eliminate the awarding gap in a way that was sustainable, including examining curricula, the ways of assessment, tariff, and where UWE's students started from.
- G22.03.6.11 Members asked if the data included Home, EU and International students and noted that only Home domicile student data was reported to the OfS, but the University's wider data included International students. Members were reminded that the People, Culture, Quality and Standards Committee had recently undertaken a 'deep-dive' into this disaggregated data.
- G22.03.6.12 *Research Income*
Members noted that the University was working hard on funding bids and that in light of some anxiety around the EU, the Government had urged institutions not to be afraid to submit bids to Europe (via Horizon Europe, the EU's key funding programme for research and innovation), advising that if needed, the Government would support these bids at home. Academic colleagues were signalling however, that some European partners were unwilling to collaborate/bid with the UK.
- G22.03.6.13 Members were informed that a deep-dive into the research landscape would be brought back to the Board and this would include a look at external funding.

ACTION: DVC and Provost/ PVC Research and Innovation

G22.03.7 STRATEGY: STRATEGY 2030 ROADMAP

Paper G22/03/04 was received

- G22.03.7.1 Members noted the first update to the Board of Governors on the Strategy 2030 Roadmap, including progress to date, current and emerging issues and next steps, with the focus on outcomes due and those planned for in the next period.
- G22.03.7.2 Members also noted that the Vice-Chancellor and the Chair of the Board were discussing how best to attain the right level of granularity for reporting to the Board and securing assurance regarding progress against our objectives.
- G22.03.7.3 Members endorsed the suggestion that some of the projects within the roadmap be reviewed in detail at committee level, as appropriate.

ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

G22.03.8 RESEARCH INTEGRITY ANNUAL REPORT

Paper G22/03/05 was received

- G22.03.8.1 The DVC and Provost reminded Members of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity requirement for the University to produce a short annual statement, present it to the Board to note and to approve for publication. Academic Board had considered the statement at its meeting on 8 December 2021. The statement had also been considered by the PCQS Committee at its meeting on 20 January 2022, when Members confirmed that the Committee had been assured that the University had met the requirements of the Concordat in 2020/2021.
- G22.03.8.2 Members noted that the report applied to the period 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2021 and that it provided a summary of actions and activities to support and strengthen the application of research integrity, covering three main areas: Research Ethics, Human Tissue and Animal Welfare.

Members noted that there had been no formal investigations of research misconduct during this period.
- G22.03.8.3 Members noted the contents of the report, **approved** the publication of the report, and **confirmed** that no risks have been identified, through the report, in terms of compliance with the Concordat.
- G22.03.8.4 Members subsequently referred to the mention in the report of University's policy statement on not accepting tobacco industry funding for research, that it would "not knowingly accept any monies from sources funded by the tobacco industry".

Members shared that there was an expectation in the wider environment with regard to the governance of deeper supply chains and asked the extent of resources that was assigned to this at the University.
- G22.03.8.5 Members noted that the vast majority of the University's research was secured through UKRI or European agencies and that a robust procurement process was in place and that following any self-declaration, due diligence would be undertaken, the level of which would be dependent on the University's perception of the risk.
- G22.03.8.6 Members also noted that to date, this procurement approach had been effective; with third party agencies occasionally engaged by the University to assist in this. Members further noted that no issues had been identified through audit review to date.
- G22.03.8.7 Members cautioned that current approaches may no longer be adequate as HMRC were increasing its compliance checking activity in this regard. It was suggested that

the topic of deeper scrutiny applied to our supply chains be discussed further by the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee.

REPORTS

G22.03.9 COMMITTEE ASSURANCE REPORTS

Paper G22/03/06 was received

- G22.03.9.1 **Nominations and Governance Committee**
David Lamb, Chair of Governors and Chair of the Committee Chair reported that the meeting held on 13 January 2022 had focused on the recommended Board appointments, ratified at the start of this Board of Governors meeting.
- G22.03.9.2 The Committee Chair also presented for Board approval the Committee's recommendation that the term of office for the elected Academic Board Nominee be revised to two years, which would give opportunity to a wider pool of staff.
- G22.03.9.3 Members **approved** the recommendation that the term of office for the elected Academic Board Nominee be two years.
- G22.03.9.4 **People, Culture, Quality and Standards (PCQS) Committee**
Jenny Body, PCQS Committee Chair, reported that the recommendation to approve the Research Integrity Report for publication had been approved by the Board earlier in the meeting.
- G22.03.9.5 **Finance, Estates and IT (FEIT) Committee**
Ian MacKenzie, FEIT Committee Chair, reported that there were no recommendations for Board approval forthcoming from the meeting held on 22 February 2022 and that the unconfirmed minutes were provided for information.
- G22.03.9.6 **Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee (ARAC)**
Richard Bacon, ARAC Chair, presented the recommendation of the Committee that the contract for External Audit Services with Mazars, be extended for the maximum two years, subject to annual reappointment.
- G22.03.9.7 Members **approved** the recommendation that the External Audit Services contract with Mazars be extended as described.
- G22.03.9.8 The ARAC Chair also reported the Committee's discontent with uncompleted internal audit recommendations, with no explanation provided, and that relevant staff would be asked to attend the next meeting in June.

ITEMS TO NOTE

G22.03.10 CLERK'S REPORT

Paper G22/03/07 was received.

- G22.03.10.1 The Vice-Chancellor drew Members' attention to the following:
- i. The tables provided in the report which set out the notices, monitoring and data returns, consultations and communications issued by the regulator, the OfS.
 - ii. Assurance that the University was fully engaged with these and that the OfS worked to a list of key contacts within the institution to ensure that the relevant information reached the right staff to action or for information.
 - iii. The University continued to work with Universities UK (UUK) and University Alliance (UA) in engaging with consultations.
- G22.03.10.2 The Clerk's Report to the Board was noted.

G22.03.11 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

Paper G22/03/08 was received

G22.03.11.1 Members **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2021.

G22.03.11.2 Matters Arising

Members noted that all but one of the three actions from the last meeting were completed and that for the third, relating to the Strategy 2030 Roadmap, remained ongoing and reporting to the Board would continue, as discussed earlier in the meeting.

University staff, Staff and Student Nominees left the meeting. The Deputy Clerk remained for the next item.

RESERVED BUSINESS

G22.03.12 Remuneration Committee (REMCO)

Paper G22/03/09 was received

This item is recorded as a confidential minute.

The Deputy Clerk left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.

G22.03.13 INDEPENDENT GOVERNOR DISCUSSION

This session involved Lay Governors only and was not minuted.

***G22.03.14 NOMINATIONS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES**

*Paper *G22/03/10 was received and noted.*

***G22.03.15 PEOPLE, CULTURE, QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE MINUTES**

*Paper *G22/03/11 was received and noted.*

***G22.03.16 UWESU AND UWE GOVERNORS' STRATEGIC WORKSHOP NOTES**

*Paper *G22/03/12 was received and noted.*

***G22.03.17 FINANCE, ESTATES AND IT COMMITTEE MINUTES**

*Paper *G22/03/13 was received and noted.*

***G22.03.18 AUDIT, RISK AND ASSURANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES**

*Paper *G22/03/14 was received and noted.*

***G22.03.19 FINANCIAL UPDATE AND FORECAST OUTTURN FOR 2021/2022**

*Paper *G22/03/15 was received and noted.*

***G22.03.20 PLANNING AND BUDGETING PROCESS AND TIMELINE FOR 2021/2022**

*Paper *G22/03/16 was received and noted.*

***G22.03.21 HONORARY DEGREES REPORT**

*Paper *G22/03/17 was received and noted.*

***G22.03.22 CORPORATE SEAL**

*Paper *G22/03/18 was received and noted.*

***G22.03.23 ACADEMIC BOARD MINUTES, 13 OCTOBER 2021 AND 8 DECEMBER 2021**

*Paper *G22/03/19 was received and noted.*

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

12 July 2022 13:00 – 18:00 Frenchay Campus

OUTSTANDING ACTIONS			
Meeting	Minute	Action	Status
23 March 2022	G22.03.6.13	DVC and Provost to liaise with the PVC Research and Enterprise to provide and present a deep-dive into the research landscape (including external funding).	