

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Confirmed

Minutes of the Board of Governors meeting held on
Friday 13th October 2017 at 1.00pm* in the Joseph Tucker Room

* *Governors met with the Students' Union Officers for lunch prior to the meeting*

Attendance

Mrs Julia Smith (Chair)	
Prof D Church	Mr R Eveleigh
Ms S Aitken	Mr F Howie
Ms P Judd	Mr D Carr
Dr A Perera	Mr B Morris
Mr K Moule	Prof T Middleton
Mr A Radford	Mr J Swan
Mr P Swan	Mr P Van Damme
Mr N Spenceley	Ms S White

In Attendance: Mrs R Leno (Clerk), Mrs Catriona Wood (Director of Business & Finance), Mrs Janine Rusbridge (Director of HR) and Ms Lesley Graham (Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic)).

GB/17/69 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND WELCOME

Noted Apologies for absence were received from Mr A Creed, Mr S Brice, Mr G Page, Mr I Hutton-Jamieson, and Mr P Downer. The Chair welcomed Sue Davis to her first meeting as the Support Staff representative, and also Dannii Carr, the SU Sabbatical Officer and Acting SU President.

GB/17/70 STARRING OF AGENDA ITEMS

Agreed The starring of agenda items was noted and agreed.

GB/17/71 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Noted None received.

GB/17/72 NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

Noted None received.

GB/17/73 BOARD OF GOVERNORS MINUTES

Agreed The Board received and confirmed the minutes of Board of Governors meeting held on 14th July 2017.

GB/17/74 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Noted There were no matters arising, not covered elsewhere on the agenda:

Considered The Board received a presentation by the Vice-Chancellor, which outlined some of the developments and actions that had been undertaken since the last meeting of the Board. The main items of discussion are summarised below:

75.1 **Sector context**

Noted It was reported that the new Office for Students would be launched soon, and that it was expected their remit would include value for money. WUC is currently expecting an Ofsted inspection, and the new Self-Assessment Report (SAR) is being produced with involvement from governors (particularly members of ASQEC) and will be considered for approval by governors in November. FE quality at WUC is very good, with success rates in the top 3 for apprentices and top 5 for landbased institutions.

It was reported that WUC was part of a successful consortium, with the University of Essex, which had gained Agritech funding. WUC has also expressed an interest in becoming an Institute of Technology. Work is continuing, supported by ACER, to collaborate with Chelmsford College.

It was reported that the government is considering developing a Knowledge Excellence Framework (KEF) which would aim to increase links with business and ensure HEIs have a positive impact on the economy.

75.2 **Student recruitment**

Noted

[REDACTED]

It was reported that increasing student recruitment is a key priority for WUC, as it needs to grow its income and invest in the estate and curriculum developments.

It was reported that the Vice-Chancellor had liaised with staff from What Uni and the Good University Guide to maximise recruitment. The Vice-Chancellor is currently working with colleagues in marketing to make recruitment the priority, with a particular focus on enhancing the WUC website: the current website has a lot of views, but browsers appear to not like what they see as they move on quickly. Work was also being undertaken to make the website compatible with mobile phones.

It was noted that WUC is doing more to highlight its unique selling points, eg having a stud is quite unique in the sector.

It was reported that work is ongoing to support more curriculum innovation, and to be innovative with business development and third stream income. In addition, SLT is investigating offering an HND in Business Studies from September 2018.

75.3 **NSS & TEF**

It was reported that the 2017 NSS scores were disappointing and colleagues are working to address this. Some areas were more successful than others: Learning Community is above benchmark; meanwhile the weakest area was learning resources. There are plans to increase library opening hours to respond to some of the students' concerns. There was also variation across subject areas: Animal gained 100% satisfaction and Landscape Architecture and Garden Design gained 91% satisfaction, which was very positive and will be highlighted in marketing material and on the web site. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

WUC's bronze award in the TEF was partly due to the low score for employability. It was reported that some graduates who are self-employed may not have answered this question appropriately as they may not recognise their jobs as being "graduate jobs." Furthermore, it was reported that vet nurses had not been classified as "highly skilled" which illustrates the flaws in the metrics used.

It was reported that enhancing the student experience was a key priority for WUC. As part of this, WUC needs to be sure that feedback is provided to students about what is done as a result of their comments, and communication needs to be strengthened. It was hoped that the new PAMs posts would improve this.

75.4 **SLT and the Staff Suggestion Scheme**

The Vice-Chancellor reported that 64 suggestions had been received to date, although new suggestions were still being received. This was against a headcount of 250FTEs at WUC. These suggestions would be evaluated by the Vice-Chancellor and SLT.

It was reported that SLT was being changed to include some themed meetings, to which additional colleagues would be invited to attend.

GB/17/76 **FINANCIAL**

76.1 **Management Accounts to July 2017**

Considered The Board received and considered the Management Accounts prepared to 31 July 2017. It was noted that these had been considered in detail by the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 22nd September 2017.

[REDACTED]

Governors asked about financial modelling for student number growth,

[REDACTED] It was also noted that improving FE to HE progression was important, and the Vice-Chancellor reported that SLT was looking at creating a more distinctive FE – HE experience.

76.2 **Update on any relevant issues from the meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 22nd September 2017.**

Noted It was reported that there were no significant matters to report, not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

GB/17/77 **STUDENT MATTERS**

77.1 **Students' Union Update**

The Board received and considered the Students' Union update. There was some discussion regarding the Consent Caravan. It was reported that it had been a success and it was hoped to repeat it in future. In addition, it was hoped to hold an Open Road session designed to raise awareness of issues such as drugs and mental health.

There was some discussion about the aim to make the Students' Union inclusive for all WUC students, including FE as well as HE students. It was reported that this was already underway and more "sober social" events were being held for FE students. Governors encouraged the SU Officers to liaise with other Students' Union offices and to possibly visit some to share best practice.

77.2 Students' Union Accounts

Noted & Agreed

It was noted that the Accounts had not yet been received and would be submitted to the November meeting.

**SU, & Clerk,
November
agenda**

77.3 Students' Union Constitution

Considered & Agreed

The Board received and considered the revised Constitution of the Students' Union. Discussion focussed on 11.1 and 15.1 which concerned liabilities and the legal status of the Students' Union. It was agreed that this should be investigated further and clarified at the next meeting. Governors recommended that the SU liaise with the NUS to see what the sector norm is, and suggested that the SU investigate whether to become a separate legal entity with registered charity status.

**Academic
Registrar/SU
Office to
investigate**

The Board deferred the approval of the SU Constitution, pending these issues being resolved.

GB/17/78

FE & HE UPDATE

78.1 FE Update

The Board received and considered the FE update, by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic). It was reported that the FE team was finalising the data for the ESFA submission on 19th October. Colleagues were also preparing the Self Assessment Report (SAR), which would be considered at a validation meeting scheduled for 3rd November, and a further meeting on 30th November.

Members noted that a new Head of Quality (FE) had been appointed, and that a new post of data analyst had been advertised. The new CAMS structure was also noted.

78.2 HE Update

The Board received and considered the HE update, which included an evaluation of the NSS results. It was noted that WUC's NSS results had improved by 3%, but WUC was still at the bottom of the table. An NSS Action Group had been formed to address and monitor this, and meetings were held every 2 weeks. In addition, SLT would monitor progress.

It was reported that work is underway to develop new curriculum areas, including a Higher Certificate in Equine Studies (1 year course), which it was hoped could take on some of the students who had failed to gain a place on the BSc Equine Studies programme. WUC was also looking to develop more programmes in outdoor activities (FdSc), a BSc (Hons) canine therapy and HND business studies. Accelerated degrees in Horticulture and Agriculture were also being considered. Consideration was also being given to developing other HNDs, and a meeting was scheduled with Pearsons to discuss this.

78.3 Academic Board minutes

The Board received and considered the minutes of the Academic Board meeting held on 5th July 2017. There were no particular items of note.


GB/17/79 **HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT**


The Board received and considered the Human Resources Report. It was noted that this had been considered in detail by the Personnel and Remuneration Committee meeting held that morning. It was reported that it was hoped to improve the performance of the KPI for staff costs as a percentage of income: the KPI is currently 57.9 but the year end total was 59.56%. It was reported that work was being undertaken to launch a Staff Survey in November/December 2017.

The Board noted the sector information, including employment law changes, the gender pay gap reporting, tax treatment of termination payments and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The Director of Human Resources provided a Prevent update, using the Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP) update information. It was noted that while the national threat level is severe, most of Essex is considered low risk, although Chelmsford is considered to be of higher risk. It was noted that the main threat is a lone wolf style act, and risks posted by online propaganda.

GB/17/80 **RISK MANAGEMENT**

It was noted that the revised risk register had been considered in detail at the Audit Committee meeting held on 22nd September. 



GB/17/81 **INTERNAL AUDIT**

81.1 Internal Audit Annual Report for 2016/17.

Considered & Agreed

The Board received and considered Scrutton Bland's annual report for 2016/17, which had been considered in detail by the Audit Committee meeting held on 22nd September 2017. It was noted that this was a positive opinion, and an improvement on the conclusion of last year's annual report. The Board agreed to approve this report which will be submitted to HEFCE by 1st December 2017.

Clerk to submit

81.2 Internal Audit Assurance Strategy and Annual Plan for 2017/18

Considered & Agreed

The Board received and considered Scrutton Bland's Strategy and Annual Plan for 2017/18 which had been considered in detail by the Audit Committee meeting held on 22nd September 2017. The Board agreed to approve this plan.

GB/17/82 **HEALTH & SAFETY**

82.1 Health and Safety Policy

Considered & Agreed

The Board received and considered the updated Health and Safety Policy, which had been considered in detail by the Personnel and Remuneration Committee meeting held earlier in the day. The Board agreed to approve this policy.

GB/17/83 **MEMBERSHIP OF THE BOARD AND ITS COMMITTEES**

Clerks' Note: Mr Eveleigh was asked to leave the room for the consideration of this item.

83.1 Mr R Eveleigh's term of office

Considered & Agreed

The Board considered for approval the proposal that Mr Robert Eveleigh is re-appointed for a second term of office, with effect from 15th November 2017. It was noted that this had been considered by the Search and Governance Committee meeting held earlier in the day, which had recommended approval. The Board agreed to approve Mr Eveleigh's appointment for a second 4 year term of office, with effect from 15th November 2017.

83.2 Mr A Radford's Term of Office

Considered

It was reported that the Search and Governance Committee had also considered the re-appointment of Mr Alan Radford for a second term as although Mr Radford had been with the Board since 2011, he had initially been a Non Board member of the Audit Committee and had therefore only served one term of office on the Board (since November 2013). The Search and Governance Committee had recommended this for approval, subject to Mr Radford being given time to consider the proposal.

Clerk's Note: Mr Radford subsequently confirmed that he would be willing to serve a second term of office, subject to Board approval at the November meeting.

**Clerk,
November
agenda**

GB/17/84 **HONORARY AWARDS**

Noted

The Clerk reported that the Search & Governance Committee had considered in more detail the proposed new awards at the meeting held this morning. Further details would be shared with the Board in due course.

Clerk

GB/17/85 **COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Noted

Members received and noted the minutes of the following meetings:

- 85.1 Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 30th June 2017.
- 85.2 Academic Standards & Quality Enhancement Committee meeting held on 14th July 2017.
- 85.3 Health, Safety and Welfare Committee meeting held on 8th June 2017.

GB/17/86 **PROGRAMME OF WORK**

Noted

The Board received and noted the updated Programme of Work for the Governing Body. It was noted that the Board would also be involved in supporting growth and innovation at WUC.

GB/17/87 **USE OF THE COLLEGE SEAL**

Noted

It was noted no documents were sealed during the period 14th July 2017 to date.

GB/17/88 **NOTIFICATION OF CHAIR'S ACTION**

The Board noted that the Chair had taken Chair's Action to approve the following large spends:



GB/17/89 **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

None received.

GB/17/90 **FORTHCOMING MEETINGS**

Noted It was noted that the next meeting of the Board of Governors is scheduled for **Friday 24th November 2017 at 1.00pm.**