

ACADEMIC BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on

30 May 2006

<u>Present:</u>	Mr J Bennett Mr J Cooper Mr D Copley Professor D Cush Mr A Dyson Mr C Ellicott Professor R George Dr T Hill	Professor R Mears Dr T Middleton Dr F Montgomery Professor F Morgan (Chair) Ms J Parry Professor N Sammells Professor G Smith Professor D Timms
<u>In attendance:</u>	Mr J Brady Mr S McDonough	
<u>Unable to attend:</u>	Mr A E Dewberry Dr A Thomas	

05/15 MINUTES : 11 APRIL 2006

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 April 2006, which had been circulated, were received as a correct record.

05/16 MATTERS ARISING

05/10 Undergraduate Assessment 2004 / 05

The Chair agreed to confirm with the Deputy Registrar that she was undertaking a detailed analysis of 2.1 degree classifications pursuant to the discussion on paper D292.

05/12 Student Applications 2006 / 07

The Registrar reported the current position in relation to student applications which, in aggregate, were broadly similar to the previous year. However, the position remained very competitive and the need for continuing vigilance to secure applications would remain until students arrived.

Circulation of agenda papers

In response to a comment concerning the late circulation of agenda and papers for the meeting, the Chair agreed to endeavour to ensure that papers for future meetings were circulated sufficiently in advance of the day of the meeting.

05/17

CHAIR'S BUSINESS

a) 05/09 : Ofsted Inspections 2004 /05 and 2005 / 06

The Chair reported that at the meeting with Ofsted inspectors on 26 May 2006, he and colleagues had received an assurance that the inspectors' report would not result in a finding of "Grade 4", "Unsatisfactory" or "Non Compliance" and therefore that there was no risk of accreditation powers being withdrawn. The inspectors had highlighted a number of issues for continuing improvement and these would be dealt with.

The Chair congratulated all the staff in the School of Education who had been involved in these matters, notably Professor David Timms who had coordinated the University response to the earlier Ofsted report. Further management arrangements, including the appointment of a Dean of Education, had yet to come to fruition but these were in process and when complete, would enable future performance to focus on achievement of the required quality standards.

05/18

STRATEGIC PLAN 2006 / 07 – 2008 / 09

The Chair invited comments on Paper D295, bringing the Academic Board up to date with the development of the new strategic plan covering the period 2006/07 to 2008/09 .

Following discussion, the Academic Board:

- a) received Paper D295;
- b) noted that a final version of the Strategic Plan would be presented to the Board of Governors at its meeting on 28 June 2006;
- c) agreed that, prior to submission of the final version of the Strategic Plan to the Board of Governors, further consideration be given to the wording in relation to:
 - i) the Mission Statement;
 - ii) Strategic objectives nos (x) and (xi);
 - iii) Characteristic eight (Teaching – led Research, not Research led-teaching) of the ten characteristics defining a teaching – led University, and
- d) requested that, in the longer term, further consideration be given to the relationship between the strategic objectives and the ten characteristics defining a teaching - led University, with a view to possible integration of the two.

05/19

BUDGET PROPOSALS 2006 / 07

In introducing Paper D296, being budget proposals for 2006 / 07, the Chair drew attention to the scale of proposals for development of new accommodation for the University. Although this would necessitate financial borrowing, which would be a new experience for the University, the borrowing strategy was not high risk and would secure the long term future of the Institution.

Mr J Brady, Director of Finance and Resources, expanded on the Paper, which provided the Academic Board with an opportunity to consider the Budget Proposals 2006 / 07 and in particular, to advise the Vice Chancellor on the distribution of academic budgets. The budget proposals had been developed against a number of important uncertainties including:

- i) first time recruitment of new students responsible for paying tuition fees of £3,000;
- ii) the cost of bursaries and scholarships to students paying the full tuition fee – this would be determined by the family income of the students concerned and calculated by the appropriate local authority;
- iii) local implementation of the nationally negotiated pay framework;
- iv) continuing industrial action in support of their pay claim by the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE);
- v) the impending sale of Somerset Place;
- vi) the acquisition of a new campus and subsequent development of academic space for some 1,500 – 2,000 students.

These factors would have a significant and continuing impact on the budget for the foreseeable future.

In response to a question regarding the level of IT support available to students using Guestnet, Mr Brady confirmed that an appropriate level of support would be determined by the Head of Network Services in consultation with appropriate staff and almost certainly informed by the Academic Co-ordinators Group.

Following discussion the Academic Board:

- a) received Paper D296; and
- b) noted that the annual revenue budget would be presented to the Board of Governors on 28 June 2006.

05/20

ACADEMIC PROGRESSION AND AWARDS 2005 / 06

The Chair circulated Paper D297 requesting approval of the Academic Board to variation of regulations on assessment. This action was recommended in the light of the extraordinary circumstances which had arisen from continuing industrial action by NATFHE and in order to mitigate the impact of this action on students.

The Paper also included at Appendix A, a communication from the Registrar to all staff. This explained the proposed procedure to be adopted by the University for conferment of awards in the light of the industrial action.

Professor David Timms, Deputy Vice Chancellor, expanded on the Paper, including the postscript attached thereto setting out the latest position of NATFHE in relation to their instructions to members regarding award of grades and processing of these to external examiners and Registry.

Following discussion the Academic Board

- a) received Paper D297, and
- b) agreed that, with immediate effect and until the next meeting of the Academic Board:
 - i) the Academic Regulations be varied to permit examination boards without normal composition to make awards; and

- ii) specific responsibility be delegated to chairs of examination boards to take such decisions as seem to be within the spirit of the proposals set out in the Postscript to Paper D297 and to report any such decisions to a future meeting of Academic Board.

5/21

ITEMS FOR RECEIPT

The Academic Board formally received minutes of the following meetings:

A&D	SB	:	16 March 2006
E&CS	SB	:	2 March 2006
M&PA	SB	:	13 February 2006
		:	12 December 2005
SS	SB	:	14 February 2006
AQCS	SB	:	9 February 2006
		:	8 December 2005
		:	6 October 2005
L&TC		:	17 January 2006
		:	18 October 2005
RC&SC		:	3 November 2005
HD (R) C		:	10 May 2006
		:	29 March 2006

5/22

OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None

The meeting closed at 10 45 hrs.

Anthony E Dewberry
Secretary
31 May 2006