

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

**Minutes of the meeting held on
26 APRIL 2006
at 1330 hrs at Newton Park**

Present:

Mr I Ahluwalia	Mr P Parker
Professor J Brown	Mr I Phillips
Mr D Copley	Ms S Pirie (Chair)
Mr M Croker	Mr M Roy
Clr J Gay	Professor G Smith
Professor P Luna	Ms M Toman
Mr A Harris	Dr R Woodbridge
Professor F Morgan (Vice Chancellor)	

In attendance:

Mr A E Dewberry (Clerk)	Mr J Brady
Dr A Thomas	Mr K Wright
Professor D Timms	Mr S McDonough
Mr J Bennett)
Ms C Harrington) to Agenda item 6.1 only
Professor P Hyland)

Unable to attend: Mr J Amey, Ms S Talbot-Williams

05/31 MINUTES : 25 JANUARY 2006

Minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2006, which had been circulated, were received as a correct record.

05/32 MATTERS ARISING

None

05/33 CHAIR'S BUSINESS

None

05/34 STATEMENT OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

At its meeting in October 2005, the Board received and endorsed a report (Paper G502), setting out 15 recommendations approved by Policy and Resources Committee in response to the Guide for Governors published by the Committee of University Chairman (CUC) in November 2004, (Minute 05/13 refers).

The purpose of the recommendations was to incorporate best practice, meet HEFCE requirements and ensure transparency and due process in all governance related matters. The recommendations included a proposal to publish a "Statement of Primary Responsibilities", setting out the main responsibilities of the governing body.

The Clerk referred to Paper G512 presenting for adoption a proposed Statement for the University. This took into account the model Statement developed by CUC but, in

accordance with CUC guidance, had been tailored to Bath Spa University's Articles of Government and other legal obligations following consultation with the Chair and the Vice Chancellor. Once adopted, the Board would be invited to measure its own effectiveness by reference to the document.

Arising from discussion relating to clause 13 of the proposed Statement (relating to the Board as trustee for property, legacies and gifts etc), the Clerk explained that currently, the Board did not exercise rights of trusteeship because there were no legacies, gifts etc for which it was responsible. However, the clause had been included because these responsibilities might become an issue in the future if the University benefited from any gifts or legacies. In this event, legal advice as to how the Board might best exercise these responsibilities would be required.

Following consideration the Board of Governors:

- a) received Paper G512;
- b) approved and adopted the Statement of Primary Responsibilities set out in Appendix 1, and
- c) noted that, in accordance with CUC recommended practice, the Statement would be published widely, including on the internet and in the annual report along with identification of the Chair, Deputy Chair, Vice Chancellor and Conveners of standing committees.

05/35

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

The Clerk referred to Paper G513 informing the Board that the periods of office of the following Independent Members of the Board would expire on 21 November 2006:

Ms Stella Pirie
Dr Roger Woodbridge

Following consideration the Board of Governors:

- a) received Paper G513,
- b) noted that, in accordance with established procedures of the Board, the Clerk would invite nominations for consideration by the Nominations Committee in due course.

05/36

CO-OPTED MEMBER: PRESIDENT OF THE STUDENTS' UNION 2006/07

The Clerk referred to Paper G514 informing the Board of the election of Mr Dean Copley to serve for a further year as President of the Students' Union.

Subsequently, Mr Copley had decided not to accept the position. The Clerk would therefore initiate established procedures and arrange for a new election, the outcome of which would be reported to the Board at the next meeting.

Following consideration the Board of Governors received Paper G514 and the Clerk's update.

05/37

DEPUTY CHAIR : NOMINATIONS

The Clerk referred to Paper G515, informing the Board that the period of office of the current Deputy Chair, Mr Ian Phillips, would expire on 31 August 2006. Mr Phillips had confirmed that he would continue to serve as a member of the Board but that he would not seek re-election as Deputy Chair.

The Board's approved procedures provided for the election of Deputy Chair by confidential ballot prior to the first meeting at which any appointment took place. The Board was therefore invited to submit nominations from amongst its membership for a person to hold the established office of Deputy Chair for a period of three years

commencing 1 September 2006 or such other time as the appointee ceased to be a member of the Board of Governors.

Nominations needed to include confirmation of the willingness of the nominee to serve and were required to be submitted to the Clerk, in writing (letter or e mail), by no later than Friday 26 May 2006. The Board's Nominations Committee would consider nominations prior to confidential ballot at the June meeting of the Board.

The Chair advised members that anyone considering the role of Deputy Chair was very welcome to discuss the matter with herself or the current Deputy Chair.

Following consideration, the Board of Governors:

- a) received Paper G515, and
- b) noted implementation of the approved procedures in relation to the imminent vacancy of Deputy Chair of the Board.

05/38

VICE CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

05/38.1 Estates Strategy: Somerset Place/South Quays

The Vice Chancellor reported that earlier that day, the Policy & Resources Committee had welcomed and endorsed a report prepared by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Mr A E Dewberry) confirming that:

- the sale (and short term leaseback as planned) of Somerset Place was proceeding according to plan. Exchange of contracts was anticipated before the end of May, the aim being to proceed to formal completion by mid June 2006
- following an initially fluid and uncertain situation, good progress appeared now to be being made with the proposed purchase and development of the site at South Quays, Bath. Discussions were scheduled to take place with senior representatives of the Regional Development Agency (RDA) and the Bath and North East Somerset Council (B&NES) with a view to securing a ground adjacent to a site to be developed for the Dyson Design Academy for 14 – 19 year olds.

The Vice Chancellor stated that bringing the scheme to fruition would represent a very significant step forward for BSU. The development would provide the opportunity the University had been seeking to meet space needs within the context of a sustainable development befitting a modern, forward looking university embracing the digital age.

Discussions were also taking place to replace student accommodation following disposal of Somerset Place.

A further report would be submitted to the Board in June.

05/38.2 Ofsted : Re-inspection 2005 / 06

The Vice Chancellor updated the Board on the University's recovery plan in response to a failure in the Secondary Inspection 2004/05 and the associated re-inspection, the first phase of which had taken place in February 2006. The second and final phase of re-inspection was due to take place in May 2006.

The final meeting of the University's Monitoring Group was imminent. The Group was led by the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Professor David Timms, and had been established to deliver recovery action. The meeting would precede the formal and final Ofsted visit

and assessment. The Group was hopeful that the actions they had taken would demonstrate to Ofsted inspectors that progress had been made, not only in satisfying immediate requirements but also in moving forward to re-establish University procedures as being amongst the best.

Professor Timms explained that the scope of the problem related to the wide geographical distribution of the Schools in which University students completed their placements. This geographic spread was necessitated by the competition which BSU faced from other providers in securing sufficient placements to meet demand.

The actions which had been taken to combat these issues included a reduction in TDA student numbers and a progressive reduction in the geographic spread of student placements. Whilst the Monitoring Group were confident that the measures taken were sustainable and would remedy the failure identified by Ofsted, the outcome of the re-inspection and assessment would not be known until June 2006.

The Vice Chancellor confirmed that a report on the re-inspection would be submitted to the next meeting of the Board. Members would be advised by letter immediately the decision from Ofsted was known.

05/38.3

National Teaching Fellowships

The Vice Chancellor referred to Paper G516 informing the Board of the background to, and purpose of, the National Teaching Fellowship scheme and reporting the success of three BSU academics in winning funding under the scheme. Their success not only represented significant personal achievement and served to further enhance the profile and reputation of Bath Spa University but had also been a factor in the success of the University in securing the Centre of Excellence (CETL).

At the invitation of the Vice Chancellor, Professor Paul Hyland, Mr Joe Bennet and Ms Chrissie Harrington, specialists in History, Music and Dance respectively, gave a joint presentation, outlining the benefits of the awards in terms of

- developing excellence in teaching and learning and in personal and professional development
- the opportunities provided to each individual for enhanced involvement in their subject areas, locally, nationally and internationally, arising from the £50,000 awards each had received
- dissemination of information and experience to students and wider academia, locally, nationally and internationally
- development of nationally renowned excellence in the three subject areas thus benefiting individual subject centres
- distinctiveness in pedagogic development in the University
- empowerment of learning for students

Following discussion the Board of Governors:

- a) received report G516;
- b) noted the success of the three University academic staff in winning National Teaching Fellowships;

- c) noted the enhanced level of project and pedagogic development facilitated by the three Teaching Fellowship Awards, and
- d) expressed their appreciation to Mr Bennet, Ms Harrington and Professor Hyland for their informative presentation.

05/39

STRATEGIC PLAN 2006/07 TO 2008/09

Dr Alun Thomas, presented Paper G517, informing Governors of the current position with regard to development of the new Strategic Plan for the period 2006/07 – 2008/09.

The Board had previously considered the draft Strategic Plan in June 2005 (Paper G490, Minute 04/06, 29 June 2005 refers). That lengthy document combined overall University strategy with a series of departmental strategies and operating plans. Subsequently, the document had been refined to focus on strategic issues alone. The revised document set out the University Vision and Mission Statement and an abbreviated version of the 15 strategic objectives approved in June 2005. In addition, a further strategic objective had been included relating to the development of performance indicators. This had been added with reference to the introduction of tuition fees and the overall objective of the University of securing its position as a major teaching - led University.

The revised strategic plan also related to the 15 features of a Teaching-Led University developed by the Vice Chancellor and to which the performance indicators also related (Paper G520, Minute 05/42 below).

Following discussion the Board of Governors:

- a) requested that consideration be given to the scope for a more positive wording of the Vision;
- b) noted that consultation on the draft Strategic Plan would now take place with staff and students, and
- c) noted that a final version of the Strategic Plan 2006/07 – 2008/09 would be presented to the Board at its meeting on 26 June 2006.

05/40

REVIEW OF THE BOARD'S EFFECTIVENESS AND PERFORMANCE

The Clerk referred to Paper G518 inviting the Board to initiate a review of its own effectiveness against the Governance Code of Practice included in the Statement of Primary Responsibilities (Minute 05/34 above).

In January 2006, the Board received Paper G509 and approved a framework for this self assessment exercise (Minute 05/25 refers). As a first step members had been invited to complete a self assessment questionnaire which focussed on the role and responsibilities of the Board, its effectiveness in strategic planning, monitoring and review, and the effectiveness of Governors' own individual contribution to the work of the Board.

Analysis of the questionnaire and issues for possible further consideration were set out in Appendix A.

Following group discussions, the Board of Governors:

- a) received Paper G518;
- b) noted that the questionnaire and group discussion of the analysis of responses had been a useful exercise in initiating the review of effectiveness and performance; and

- c) noted that a further report on the issues raised by the questionnaire analysis and group discussions be submitted to the June 2006 meeting of the Board.

05/41

BUDGET PROPOSALS 2006/07

The Director of Finance & Resources, Mr J Brady, expanded on Paper G519 inviting the Board to consider the major factors influencing the University's financial planning and preparation of the 2006 / 07 budget.

These included the extent and proposed uses of additional income from variable tuition fees for bursaries, pay modernisation and the South Quays development . The Board was also advised that above average increases in HEFCE funding would be offset by a reduction in TDA income as a result of the decision to reduce PGCE Secondary intake in 2006 / 07.

Following consideration the Board of Governors:

- a) received Paper G519, and
- b) noted that the detailed annual revenue budget would be presented for approval in June 2006.

05/42

TEACHING – LED UNIVERSITY : PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Vice Chancellor introduced Paper G520 advising the Board of the Performance Indicators relevant to a teaching-led university and highlighting the strong position of Bath Spa University in terms of overall performance against those indicators.

Further refinement of the indicators would be required including the possible introduction of longitudinal measures to enable Governors to measure performance and progress against the objectives set in the strategic plan and against its major competitors.

Dr Alun Thomas explained that the indicators were being developed such that they would be appropriate to Corporate Strategy, reflect the characteristics of a teaching-led university as approved by the Board in April 2005 (Minute 04/33 refers) and take into account key external indicators applied to the University by government agencies.

Following discussion the Board of Governors:

- a) received report G520;
- b) noted that similar reports would be provided to the Board on an annual basis;
- c) requested that:
 - i) the indicators be developed to provide accurate comparisons against appropriate peer group institutions and to include indicators of student recruitment, subject levels and employability, and
 - ii) a further report be submitted to a future meeting of the Board on the comparative figures published in the Sunday Times relating to staff/student ratios at BSU.

05/43

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The Vice Chancellor referred to Paper G521 seeking approval of an updated complaints procedure in response to the recommendations of the Internal Auditor (November 2005) and reporting the outcome of all formal complaints received by the University in 2004/05.

Dr Alun Thomas, explained the mechanisms of the procedure which applied equally to students, staff and members of the public. The new complaints procedure, set out as Appendix A to the report, was consistent with best practice.

Following consideration the Board of Governors:

- a) received Paper G521;
- b) approved the revised Complaints Procedure set out in Appendix A, and
- c) requested the Vice Chancellor to submit an annual report in relation to formal complaints.

05/44 ITEMS FOR RECEIPT

The Board of Governors formally received Minutes of the following meetings:

Policy & Resource Committee	:	26 October 2005
Audit Committee	:	26 October 2005

05/45 OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

The meeting closed at 16.05 hrs.

Anthony E Dewberry
Clerk to the Board of Governors
27 April 2006