

BOARD OF GOVERNORS
Minutes of the meeting held on
3rd November 2010
At 13 30 hrs at Newton Park

Present:

Mr J Amey	Revd E Mason
Mr R Bidgood	Professor T Middleton
Revd Prof J Brown	Professor F Morgan (Vice-Chancellor)
Ms C Bull	Mr P Parker
Mr A Harris	Mrs S Pirie (Chair)
Ms L Ludwell	Mr M Roy
Professor P Luna	Ms M Toman (from 14.18)

In attendance:

Dr A Thomas (Clerk)	Mrs C Puddicombe
Mr D Hamilton (Deputy Clerk)	Professor N Sammells
Mrs A Stone	Mr J Brady
Mr K Wright	

Apologies:

Mr I Ahluwalia, Mr I Phillips, Cllr C Watt

10/01 MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting held on 30th June 2010, which had been circulated, were accepted.

10/02 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

10/03 CHAIR'S BUSINESS

None.

10/04 CLERK'S REPORT

Dr Thomas presented three papers in his report.

10/04. 1 Independent Members Nominations

The arrangements to appoint to four vacancies for Independent Members of the Board of Governors were reported in Paper G673. Dr Thomas informed the Board that a meeting of the Committee of Independent Governors would be convened immediately after this meeting.

The Board noted the recommendation and received the report.

10/04. 2 Register of Interests (Governors)

Dr Thomas presented Paper G674 and the updated Register of Interests as of 1st October 2010.

The Board noted the report.

10/04. 3 Remuneration Committee: Business Conducted by Post

The Board were informed by Dr Thomas in Paper G675 that no business had been conducted by post in the year that ended 31st July 2010.

The Board received the report.

10/05 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

The Vice-Chancellor reported on the following:

10/05. 1 Proposed changes to student fees and the funding of higher education

The Vice-Chancellor outlined that the current proposals in the Browne Report would increase the fee level per annum for students to above £6,000 with an expectation that subsequent legislation would address fair access and widening participation.

He referred to the uniqueness of the times and the necessity for the University to recover its full costs in the future arrangements for higher education.

He emphasised that it was very important that the University be able to act in good time and effectively to respond to what are very significant proposals and not be disadvantaged or hindered by the uneven application of regulation or government delay.

In addition, he referred to differential fee structures, competition from other universities and private providers, and the need for the higher education market to be one in which there is equity between all types of higher education institutions.

The Vice-Chancellor said it would be important for the University to achieve a balance between its social mission and what was required to be successful in any further development of the higher education market.

He informed the Board that he would present a paper which would provide more information at their next meeting.

10/05.2 Newton Park Developments

The Vice-Chancellor reported on discussion at the Policy and Resources Committee which had met at 11 a.m. The papers necessary for the planning applications for the new academic building and the energy centre are complete and will be submitted in the next few days.

10/05.3 Applications from students

The Vice-Chancellor reported that demand for the provision at universities remains high and this continues to be especially the case for Bath Spa University.

10/05.4 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)

The Vice-Chancellor informed the Board that these are being established to promote economic development at local/sub-regional level. To some extent they are replacing work undertaken by the Regional Development Agencies. The twenty three approved to date includes an LEP for Bath/Bristol and it is the intention of the University to be actively involved in its work. In particular, the Vice-Chancellor referred to the contribution this University can bring to the creative and cultural industries.

10/05.5 Additional meeting of the Board of Governors

At the Vice-Chancellor's request, Dr Thomas informed the Board on arrangements for a possible additional meeting on the afternoon of 26th April 2011 to consider two items:

- 1 The Strategic Plan for the University
- 2 A review of the effectiveness of the Board of Governors

After this meeting there would be a Board of Governors Dinner at the University.

10/06 NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Dr Thomas presented Paper G676 and in particular referred Governors to the recommendations for revised Terms of Reference and the skills questionnaire to be circulated.

Governors discussed the increasing complexity of their role and the implications for their training. The Vice-Chancellor noted the discussion and the importance for the University to recognise and respond to Governors' needs, especially newly recruited ones.

The Board agreed the recommendations and noted the circulation of the skills questionnaire.

10/07 STUDENT APPLICATIONS AND RECRUITMENT 2010/11

Dr Thomas presented Paper G677. He informed Governors that this was a positive report with applications remaining healthy and resilient.

Whilst noting the positive content of the report, Governors referred to the challenges of debt and employment for students and how these might impact upon future levels of demand for higher education.

The Board noted the Paper.

10/08 ANNUAL REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS: RISK MANAGEMENT AND VALUE FOR MONEY

Mr Hamilton presented Paper G678 which is part of the regular updating to Governors. It contained within it proposed improvements in the content of future reports. There are, given the perturbations facing the sector at the moment, huge variations in risk possible in the future. Mr Hamilton identified the key primary risks as:

- Reduction in funding / ability to replace with higher tuition fees
- Over-dependence on particular income streams (including TDA)
- Inability to proceed with NP Development
- Time over-run of essential building projects (NP Development including residences)

- Consequences of cost cutting could be an increased number of Employee Tribunal claims. This is being monitored but no signs of a significant increase as yet
- Continued, poor graduate starting salaries
- Failure to hit recruitment targets.

and identified notable secondary risks:

- Partnership arrangements (including failing to recruit to target)
- Target recruitment for TDA not yet announced – significant uncertainty within TDA.
- Availability of managed residences

The Board received the report

10/09 AUDIT COMMITTEE: ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10 TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND VICE –CHANCELLOR

On behalf of the Audit Committee's Chairman, Paper G679 was presented by Mr Kevin Wright. In particular he drew the Board's attention to the excellent report from Mazars, and the positive feedback from both the University's auditors and the recent visit from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).

He confirmed that the Audit Committee were satisfied with the report this morning and that they had approved the Annual Assurance return at their meeting at 11 a.m. this morning (3rd November 2010).

The Board approved the draft annual report of the Audit Committee.

10/10 REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2009/10

Mr Brady presented Paper G680 and referred in particular to the action taken in the reporting year to control the cost base for the University. This had been successful and a strong performance for the year was realising a surplus of around £5 million. The increase in the cash balances will help the University in responding to both the anticipated challenges of future funding arrangements and the plans to develop the University's campuses, particularly the Newton Park developments.

The Board noted the report and approved the three recommendations in the Paper.

10/11 FINANCIAL FORECASTS

Paper G681. – CONFIDENTIAL

10/12 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE: ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10

Mr Hamilton presented Paper G682 and outlined the main features of the complaints received during the year to August 2010. The total number was marginally up on the previous year and about 40% had been upheld or partly upheld. The three judgements made by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator during the year on early complaints had all been in the University's favour.

The Board received the report and approved the change in timing for future reports.

10/13 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Dr Thomas presented Paper G683 and reported that it indicated that the University is not featuring as highly as it had in previous years. Indicators related to the employability of

students have been poor and this is reflected in our standing. In addition, aspects of the National Student Survey (NSS) were below levels that are acceptable.

Within this context the performance indicators for the University's teaching quality continues to be very positive.

The Board discussed key aspects of the report and how a variety of factors can impact upon positioning within league tables.

The Board received and noted the paper.

10/14 BSU'S STANDING IN NEWSPAPER LEAGUE TABLES

Dr Thomas presented Paper G684 which confirmed outcomes outlined in the previous paper.

The Board noted the absence of current accurate measures for teaching quality and how this disadvantages the University in league tables.

The Vice-Chancellor referred to the considerations that are being given to the outcomes of this report and the preceding one, and of action to be taken in the future.

The Board received and noted the paper.

10/15 HEFCE: FINANCIAL MEMORANDUM 2010 /11

Dr Thomas presented Paper G685.

The Board received the paper.

10/16 ITEMS FOR RECEIPT

MINUTES:
POLICY & RESOURCES 28 APRIL 2010
AUDIT COMMITTEE: 27 JANUARY 2010

10/17 OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None

The meeting closed at 15.00 hrs

Mr D Hamilton

Deputy Clerk to the Board of Governors

17th November 2010

Signed as record of confirmed minutes by:

Mrs Stella Pirie

Chair

Date: