

**BOARD OF GOVERNORS**  
**Minutes of the meeting held on**  
**26<sup>th</sup> January 2011**  
**At 13 30 hrs at Newton Park**

Present:

Mr I Ahluwalia	Mr P Parker
Mr R Bidgood	Mr I Phillips
Ms C Bull	Mrs S Pirie (Chair)
Ms L Ludwell	Mr M Roy
Professor T Middleton	Ms M Toman
Professor F Morgan (Vice-Chancellor)	

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 J Amey, Revd Prof J Brown, Mr A Harris, Professor P Luna, Revd E Mason, Cllr C Watt.

**10/18 MINUTES**

Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd November 2010, which had been circulated, were accepted.

**10/19 MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

**10/20 CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

The Chair paid tribute and recorded her regret concerning the decision of the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Frank Morgan, to retire from the University. He had been a superb servant to Bath Spa University and she was confident this would continue until his retirement took effect on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011.

The Chair's remarks were received with wholehearted endorsement by the Board of Governors.

## **10/21 CLERK'S REPORT**

Dr Thomas presented his report.

### **10/21. 1 Schedule of Meetings**

Dr Thomas presented Paper G686.

The Board approved the proposed schedule and thanked Dr Thomas for the inclusion of the early notification of the calendar events for 2011.

### **10/21. 2 Review of Governing Body's Effectiveness**

Dr Thomas informed the Board that the five year review of its effectiveness is due in 2011 and that a related questionnaire would be circulated to Governors by the end of February.

Governors noted that this review should be cross-referenced with recommendations in the HEFCE Assurance Review of September 2010.

## **10/22 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT**

### **10/22. 1 FEES AND FUNDING**

The Vice-Chancellor spoke to Paper G687.

He referred to the movement to private fees from taxation. This, in his view, was unlikely to bring about a rapid transition to a true market as some form of regulation on student numbers was likely to remain. However, the development of a market could be hastened if the aggregate supply of student numbers exceeded the aggregate demand.

Whilst the transition to a market may provide a threat to some universities, Bath Spa University's fundamental strengths in its finances, recruitment and quality provide great confidence for its future development to this Board and the University's staff.

The fundamental shift in the revenue of the University did not mean that we are in any sense 'privatised' and, as yet, there is no indication of the regulatory framework diminishing. However, the Vice-Chancellor considered there would be changes in emphasis toward a marketing approach relative to a budgetary approach.

With regard to future competition the Vice-Chancellor thought this was most likely to come from peer universities, further education and the private sector.

Of increasing importance to the University in for the future would be 'branding' and the distinctiveness offered by the prosecution of our research strategy.

In the subsequent discussion Governors were concerned with balancing financial efficiency with high quality and student retention, including the support services available to students. In addition, they drew attention to the importance of adding value and the potential strength of our brand in potential future associations.

At the invitation of the Vice-Chancellor Mr Brady continued with the presentation of Paper G687.

He summarised the most important inputs currently known from the Browne Review into Higher Education Funding and Student Finance and subsequent Government announcements. He informed the Board of a range of options which need to be implemented for the 2012/13 academic year and referred to calculations about how the University might approach the charging of tuition fees. In particular he referred to a table (3.2) illustrating how the University might respond with necessary adjustments in the future. In this, it was important that we did our utmost to continue to anticipate and address possible threats other than the anticipated loss of HEFCE teaching funding.

He referred to a recent meeting with Price Waterhouse Coopers which had demonstrated that the University has a good grasp of both the challenges posed by financial change in the sector and their management. He confirmed that the Board would receive further information over their next two meetings.

The Board received the report and noted the issues informing the work of Management.

#### **10/23 HEFCE ASSURANCE REVIEW**

Mr Brady presented Paper G688 which addressed the report from the HEFCE Audit Service and asked the Board to determine a response to Recommendation 2 in the appended HEFCE Assurance Review (15 September 2010) in respect of the Audit Committee quorum.

He informed Governors that it was a positive and supportive report with three recommendations for improvement. These and the management responses are included in the interim report from the Assurance Consultant.

The Board had a very full discussion with regard to recommendations 1 and 2 including regulations relating to committee memberships, the work of the Nominations Committee, and the length of service of Governors.

The Vice-Chancellor spoke of the importance of retaining a clear view of effective Governance at the University whilst taking account of documents, that in some way, react to, and take account of events elsewhere in the sector.

Governors referred to practice in private companies and Health Service, including useful proformas, and how this may assist the University in determining future action.

The Chair proposed that a paper be brought to the next meeting of the Board which addressed appropriate action to meet outstanding recommendations in the HEFCE Assurance Review.

The Board received the report and agreed the proposed action.

#### **10/24 ABOLITION OF THE DEFAULT RETIREMENT AGE**

Mrs Stone presented Paper G689 and advised the Board of imminent change in legislation that abolishes the current default retirement age of 65.

She informed Governors that the annual impact is quite small but with an increasing number of staff approaching 65 there is the potential for greater impact over time.

In particular she referred to the possibility of agreeing an Employer Justified Retirement Age (EJRA) and confirmed that the University, along with others in the sector, did not believe there was sufficient justification for us to seek this.

She assured the Board that the University is well prepared for the changes and will be monitoring their impact.

The Board received the report and noted the planned responses.

#### **10/25 NEWTON PARK DEVELOPMENT – PROGRESS REPORT**

Mrs C Puddicombe presented Paper G690 as part of the regular updating on progress to the Board.

She referred to the submission of the planning application to Bath and North East Somerset Council on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2010 for the Academic Development and the Energy Centre. The consultation period was set to expire on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2010 but due to an administrative error by the Council this period has now been extended to 6<sup>th</sup> February 2011. Despite this her hope is that the planning Application will be heard by the Council's planning committee at its meeting on 16 March 2011.

Governors were informed that there were three objections to date including that of the Duchy of Cornwall. This was considered to be low number given the scale of the proposed development.

In addition the Board were informed of progress with regard to appointment of the contractor for the academic development, the University working group and user groups, and bat mitigation.

Mrs Puddicombe also reported on the current position of the residential development. The Design Team had been appointed and an initial meeting held with key stakeholders on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2010 and a public consultation exercise is arranged for 10-12<sup>th</sup> February 2011 at Newton Park. In addition the brief for the Residential Accommodation, informed by feedback from existing students, had been agreed.

The Board received the report and noted the two main associated risks.

#### **10/26 STUDENT RECRUITMENT 2010/11 AND APPLICATIONS 2011/12**

Dr Thomas presented Paper G691 and informed Governors it was a good report indicating that recruitment to the University had continued to be strong in 2010/11. Amongst other things he referred to the successful deployment of additional student numbers from HEFCE and that recruitment to TDA student numbers was the best for ten years.

Applications for 2011-12 are currently at three times the sector average and our ratio of applicants to places may exceed a ratio of 7:1 for the first time in our history. He referred in particular to very high current application rates for Business Studies and Psychology.

Dr Thomas reminded the Board that the University has to take care not to incur penalties from HEFCE for over recruitment.

The Board discussed the impact of demography and the possible impact of increased tuition fees and noted that 2011/12s may represent a high point in demand.

The Board noted the report.

## 10/27 PROCESS FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF THE NEW VICE-CHANCELLOR

The Chair introduced the Paper and welcomed Jago Channel and Alex Ackland from Heidrick and Struggles to the meeting.

She outlined the process to date, with reference to Paper G692, and emphasised the importance of involvement and consultation in the process leading to the appointment. As part of this process all Governors would have the opportunity to see all candidates selected for final interview. A Recruitment Panel of Governors was proposed that would also seek input from a Vice-Chancellor from another institution. The Chair confirmed that this would be Mike Driscoll, Vice-Chancellor of Middlesex University.

The Chair sought and received the Board's approval for this process.

The Board were further informed that the process would be coordinated by Mrs A Stone, Head of Human Resources. Mrs Stone then outlined to the Board other key aspects of the process including the selection of Heidrick and Struggles to assist the Board in the recruitment of a new Vice Chancellor.

On behalf of Heidrick and Struggles Jago Channell and Alex Ackland delivered a presentation for the 'Appointment of the Vice-Chancellor'. They referred to a Succession Transition Plan of five phases, the timetable for the appointment and their experience in assisting in appointments of Vice-Chancellors. In response to questions from Governors they also outlined their plans for advertising the position and the use of Heidrick and Struggles' offices in other countries.

The Board were particularly interested in the length of the notice period that may be required for a successful candidate, the implications of not making an appointment within the timescale outlined, and the opportunity for students to be involved in the process.

The Board approved the process and agreed the proposed timescales.

## 10/28 ITEMS FOR RECEIPT

MINUTES:

POLICY & RESOURCES: 30 JUNE 2010

AUDIT COMMITTEE: 30 JUNE 2010

ACADEMIC BOARD: 27 JULY 2010

## 10/29 OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None

The meeting closed at 15.25 hrs.

Mr D Hamilton  
Deputy Clerk to the Board of Governors  
4th February 2011

Signed as record of confirmed minutes by:

Mrs Stella Pirie .....

Convenor

Date: .....