



**Minutes
Board of Governors
27 April 2022
Via Zoom Conference Call**

Present: Dr Chris Campbell – Staff Governor
Ms Noreen Doyle
Dr Fiona Gatty
Mr Dave Hartnett
Mr George Jenkin – Staff Governor
Mr Anthony McClaran – Vice-Chancellor
Ms Claire McDonnell
Rt Rev Richard Moth (Chair)
Ms June Mulroy
Mrs Deborah Streatfield
Professor Dominic Tildesley

In Attendance: Mrs Elizabeth Bell – Director of Strategic Planning
Mrs Jo Blunden – Chief Operating Officer (“COO”)
Mr Andrew Browning – University Secretary (Minutes)
Mr Ahmed El Hana – Student Life President
Professor Symeon Dagkas – Provost
Mr Richard Solomon – Chief Financial Officer (“CFO”)

Apologies: Mr Jeff Cottle, Victoria Calvino, Paul Barber

21/49	<p>WELCOMES The meeting opened with a prayer.</p> <p>Ahmed El Hana the Student Life President was welcomed to the meeting. He was attending in place of the Education President.</p>		
21/50	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST There were no declarations of interest.</p>		

21/51	<p>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting of the Board which took place on 27 January 2021 were approved by the Board.</p>		
21/52	<p>MATTERS ARISING</p> <p><i>Board Recruitment</i> The University Secretary is currently in contact with a recruitment agency in order to recruit new members to the Board of Governors. Noreen Doyle will be leaving the Board at the end of the academic year and three more members of the Board will be completing their terms by June 2023.</p> <p><i>Relics of St Bernadette</i> The Vice-Chancellor said that the relics of St Bernadette would be coming to the University on 6 September 2022.</p>		
21/53	<p>VICE-CHANCELLOR'S UPDATE</p> <p><i>Paper 1 refers</i></p> <p>The Vice-Chancellor said that the Spring Graduations had taken place in the Chapel for the first time since 2019 and they had been very successful.</p> <p>The COO provided an update on the UCEA pay negotiations. She said that they had been particularly contentious with the Unions being unhappy with recent pay awards. There had been ballots on strike action at SMU; however, the 50% turnout threshold had not been met. It looked likely that the key issue around the negotiations would be pay. An offer had been put forward by UCEA of 2.9%- 3.5% however there was no guarantee that this would be accepted.</p> <p>The Vice-Chancellor was asked about the collapse of ALRA. He said that the outcome for SMU had been better than expected as Rose Bruford had stepped in to provide places to all existing ALRA students. He said that credit had to be given to the Provost and Dean of Learning and Teaching for their hard work in liaising with BDO, the OfS, ALRA, and Rose Bruford. The Vice-Chancellor said that there had been very little coverage of ALRA's collapse with SMU being barely mentioned in any reports and</p>		

	<p>with most criticism of the situation being directed at the OfS.</p> <p>The Board said that it was pleasing to note that the undergraduate portfolio review had been completed. The Provost said that c200 modules had been removed. Further reviews were still to be completed on the postgraduate portfolio with this expected to be completed in September. The Vice-Chancellor said that going into the future the portfolio review would be a rolling exercise which would avoid the accumulation of modules with a low number of students.</p> <p>The Board noted the Vice-Chancellor's Report.</p>		
21/54	<p>STUDENTS UNION REPORT <i>Paper 2 refers</i></p> <p>The Student Life President presented the report. He told the Board that graduations had run smoothly and it was good for the SU sabbaticals to have the opportunity to address the graduates at the ceremony.</p> <p>The SU elections had taken place. This year there will be two sabbaticals with George Chaplin being elected as Education President and Caitlin Finn being elected as Student Life President. The Board offered its congratulations to both of the successful candidates.</p> <p>The Board were told that Varsity had gone ahead at Brunel for the first time since 2019. The Sports Dinner had taken place and was very successful. There had also been events to mark Ramadan.</p> <p>The Board asked the Student Life President where he sensed the student body was in relation to student outcomes and value for money as the University was coming out of the pandemic. The Student Life President said that student engagement had been improving since September and there was more of a sense of community. The Vice-Chancellor said that the response level of the NSS was at 72.6% which was higher than last year with students in all areas of the University providing a meaningful response which would give the University helpful and positive feedback.</p>		

	<p>The Board noted the Students' Union Report.</p> <p>.</p>		
21/55	<p>VISION 2030 PROGRESS REPORT <i>Paper 3 refers</i></p> <p>The Director of Strategic Planning told the Board that the roadmap for the strategic plan had been approved by SLT and UEC. This would be reviewed on an annual basis to establish whether the stages had been met and if it needed to be changed. Work was also being done on the Resource Allocation Model.</p> <p>The Board asked about the creation of a medical school which was an aspiration in the outer years of the plan. The Vice-Chancellor said there had been internal discussion as to whether there should be a medical school and the University had reached a point where it was compiling an outline business plan to establish whether or this would be viable.</p> <p>The Board noted the Vision 2030 progress report.</p>		
21/56	<p>MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS <i>Paper 4 refers</i></p> <p>The CFO told the Board the management accounts to the month ending 28 February 2022 were slightly ahead of revised budget showing an operating profit of £3.6m. Income remained £0.4m adverse to budget but underspending on staff costs and non-staff costs were able to compensate for this. The CFO said that the position for March is very similar. He said that he was relatively hopeful that the University would hit budget for 2021/2022 and there would be a small net surplus.</p> <p>The Board noted the management accounts.</p>		
21/57	<p>PLANNING ROUND FINANCIAL PARAMETERS <i>Paper 5 refers</i></p> <p>The CFO presented the paper setting out the financial parameters for the 2022/2023 planning round. These had been impacted by the 10% drop in UCAS applications and the Augar. This has had an adverse effect on the financial outlook.</p>		

	<p>In relation to student recruitment, four scenarios had been considered and it was felt that the second-best scenario was the most realistic. This would however have an adverse effect on the modelling of the numbers creating a £1m difference from the forecast approved by the Board for 2022/2023 with this difference increasing in the outer years. The Augar Review if implemented could potentially cost the University £1m per year by 2025/2026.</p> <p>The University was being assumed to roll forward the 4% savings which made in-year and there being a £12m net contribution from partnerships.</p> <p>It was proposed that there should be a £1m reduction in the financial trajectory of the University would be revised with the University achieving a surplus of £3.7m by 2025/2026. The capital expenditure envelope would decline from £45m to £38m.</p> <p>The Board noted the need for partnerships to ensure that financial position of the University remained healthy. It also felt that more work could be done in fundraising from alumni and development.</p> <p>The CFO said that the demographic of the alumni was not particularly affluent. He said that the University needed to be willing to invest more in its alumni and development arm to generate income and more investment in this was going to be unlikely during this planning round. The Vice-Chancellor said that more work was being done with alumni groups and it was also the case that the University had recently received a significant bequest. It was the case however that more needed to be done.</p> <p>The Board noted the planning round financial parameters. The budget for 2022/2023 and financial forecasts would be coming to the next meeting of the Board of Governors.</p>		
21/58	<p>STUDENT RECRUITMENT <i>Paper 6 refers</i></p> <p>The Provost told the Board that student application numbers had remained largely unchanged since the last meeting of the Board with undergraduate numbers currently running around 10% behind</p>		

	<p>target. There had been a significant increase in the number of PGT applications with international applications up 80% on last year. PGCE applications remained down on last however.</p> <p>The Provost said that the recruitment paper coming to Board was slightly different from previous papers as it showed an analysis of the local education authorities that the prospective students were coming from. The University does very well at recruiting locally; however, it is still not well known. In order to improve this a local advertising campaign had been launched. There were also going to be 200 – 300 year 12 and 13 students coming onto campus next week.</p> <p>The Board said that it found the analysis contained within the paper helpful. It highlighted the importance of messaging and the need to follow up on inquiries from potential applicants. The Vice-Chancellor said that the University was getting an analysis of the speed of response to inquiries as this was key to conversion into actual applications.</p> <p>The Board noted the student recruitment update.</p>		
21/59	<p>STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS <i>Paper 7 refers</i></p> <p>The COO presented the paper. The paper was intended to set out the actions that the University was taking in response to the OfS’ expectations on Sexual Harassment and Bullying. Included within this was an expectation that the governing body should ensure that the University’s approach to harassment and sexual misconduct is adequate and effective.</p> <p>The COO said that the University had instituted a “Report and Support” initiative and training and staff awareness had been implemented.</p> <p>The Board noted the actions that had been taken.</p>		
21/60	<p>PARTNERSHIP PROPOSAL WITH THE MAURITIAN INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION <i>Paper 8 refers</i></p> <p>This paper was presented by the CFO and the Provost. The paper proposed a partnership with Mauritian Institute of Education. It was a small partnership likely to generate</p>		

	<p>around £60k of revenue. The proposal was currently at the initial stage.</p> <p>The Board unanimously approved further exploration of the partnership with a request that it come back to the Board for final approval.</p>		
21/61	<p>FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE <i>Papers 9 refers</i></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee which took place on 24 March 2022 were noted by the Board.</p>		
21/62	<p>ACADEMIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE <i>Paper 10</i></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting of the Academic Scrutiny Committee which took place on 31 March were noted by the Board.</p>		
21/63	<p>AUDIT COMMITTEE <i>Paper 11 Refers</i></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee which took place on 7 April were noted by the Board.</p>		
21/64	<p>Dates of Next Meeting 9 June 2022</p>		

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