



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

Present: Ms Victoria Calvino – SU Governor
Mr Jeff Cottle
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 Paul Bridge – PVC (Global Engagement)
Mr Andrew Browning – University Secretary (Minutes)
Professor Symeon Dagkas – Interim Provost
Mr Richard Solomon – Chief Financial Officer (“CFO”)

Apologies: Mr David Brambell, Mr Pietro Palladino

21/36	The meeting opened with a prayer.		
21/37	Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest.		

21/38	<p>Minutes of Previous Meeting</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting of the Board which took place on 24 November 2020 were approved by the Board.</p>		
21/39	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>21/25 – Graduations- The Board were informed that preparations were being made for postgraduate graduations which are taking place at the University on 25 and 26 March. Board members are welcome at the ceremonies and are invited to inform the University Secretary or his assistant if they wish to attend.</p>		
21/40	<p>Vice-Chancellor’s Update <i>Paper 1 refers</i></p> <p>The Board were informed that Covid case levels remained low across both students and staff on campus. There had been a spike in cases just prior to the term ending at Christmas leading to face to face teaching being halted for the final week but following the drop in cases face to face teaching was expected to return after the exam period.</p> <p>The Vice-Chancellor told the Board that it had been very busy within the regulatory policy space. The OfS has issued three consultation papers including one on the ‘B3’ condition of registration. The Director of Strategic Planning said that the University had been considering the proposed metrics for this and it was felt that generally the University was above the minimum threshold. The metrics were however applied at programme level and therefore the University was identifying areas where it was potentially dropping below the required levels and considering how to address them.</p> <p>The Board noted that the Secretary of State for Universities had indicated that students at universities which made extensive use of online teaching should seek a refund of tuition fees. The Vice-Chancellor said that unless there were exceptional circumstances St Mary’s teaching was carried out face to face with online teaching being used as an enhancement.</p>		

	<p>The Vice-Chancellor told the Board that SAHPS had made a successful HEE bid for simulation learning in Allied Health programmes and had been awarded £293k.</p> <p>The Board were informed that the relics of St Bernadette would be coming to the United Kingdom this year as part of a tour which would include them being displayed at the University.</p> <p>The Interim Provost gave an update on the portfolio review. He said that this was close to being finalised. The last meeting of Academic Board had approved the first tranche of changes to the undergraduate portfolio when it met on 12 January. The remainder was expected to be discussed and approved at the next meeting of Academic on 2 February. This would be followed by a review of the postgraduate portfolio. The Board thanked all of those involved for their hard work.</p> <p>The Board noted the Vice-Chancellor's report.</p>		
21/41	<p>STUDENT RECRUITMENT UPDATE <i>Paper 2 refers</i></p> <p>The PVC (Global Engagement) provided an update on the current position relating to student recruitment. He said that the UCAS deadline had closed at 6pm yesterday with the data being released on Sunday night. The University was currently looking as though it would be 15% behind target. The PVC (Global Engagement) said that it is difficult to read what is happening in the wider aside from there being few applications overall than last year. The University would be looking to do everything that it could to convert applications into firm acceptances rather than insurance.</p> <p>The PGCE market was difficult. It was the case that last year the University received a lot of applications but a lot of these did not progress. Compared to 2020 the University was doing better in terms of applications for its core offer. Salaried Schools Direct applications were down. The number of applications to Glyndwr were also down and there were fewer applications from Ireland due to it having its own established teacher training provisions and Brexit.</p>		

	<p>Recruitment to postgraduate taught courses was going well despite it being very early in the cycle. There were good initiatives in place and the University was looking to extend its offer to alumni.</p> <p>The Board said that anecdotally the University could be slow in making offers to students. The PVC (Global Engagement) said that he was looking to speed up reply rates and was working with the acting Provost to do this.</p> <p>The Board noted the student recruitment update.</p> <p>.</p>		
21/42	<p>MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS <i>Paper 3 refers</i></p> <p>The CFO presented the management accounts for the month-end for November 2021. He said that the University's financial performance had been solid with the University's operating profit currently running £100k ahead of budget. The ledgers had been closed for December and the University was in a similar position. Cost control remained good and the University's cash position remained strong.</p> <p>The Board noted the management accounts.</p>		
21/43	<p>FIVE YEAR FINANCIAL FORECASTS <i>Paper 4 refers</i></p> <p>The CFO told the Board that the current student recruitment shortfall and inflationary pressures were creating a gap in the five-year financial trajectory of the University. This would therefore need to be adjusted ahead of the Annual Financial Return ("AFR") submission to the OfS.</p> <p>There was also a consideration of what capital expenditure would be needed over the next five years. The University was looking to have a five-year capital envelope of £45m.</p> <p>Under the current trajectory there would be £16m gap created between revenues and costs over the next five years which would need to be closed. To close this gap the pace in creating new partnerships would need to be increased. There would also be a</p>		

	<p>need to roll forward cost restraint for the next two years.</p> <p>The main risks to the University were a continued shortfall in student recruitment and implementation of some or all of the proposals set out in the Augar review.</p> <p>The CFO said that the forecasts would need approving; however it was highly likely that some adjustments would need to be made to these when the Board met in June.</p> <p>The Chair of FRC confirmed that the Committee had considered the plan and had endorsed it.</p> <p>The Board expressed some optimism that A-Level grade inflation would be less of a problem this year which would mean that student recruitment may be more positive than expected.</p> <p>The Board asked what progress was being made in revising the courses that were currently on offer. The Vice-Chancellor said that portfolio review meant that there had been a significant reduction in the number of modules. The University had sought to reduce the number of programmes with 0-10 applicants and therefore the number of programmes had been reduced by 25%. This reduction was giving the University the opportunity to retune its offering to meet student demand.</p> <p>The Vice-Chancellor also said that an operations review was being carried out by the COO check how efficiently the University was operating and reduce unnecessary administrative burdens and operate more efficiently with potential savings being made from this.</p> <p>The Board unanimously approved the Five Year Financial Forecasts</p>		
21/44	<p>ANNUAL FINANCIAL RETURN <i>Paper 5 refers</i></p> <p>Following the approval of the Five Year Financial Forecasts the Board unanimously approved the submission of the Annual Financial Return as set out in the paper presented by the CFO.</p>		
21/45	<p>London Living Wage</p>		

	<p><i>Paper 6 refers</i></p> <p>The COO presented the paper which detailed the history of the London Living Wage (“LLW”) and the options open to the Board in relation to its adoption for the forthcoming year. The options were:-</p> <p>Option 1 Continue with LLW accreditation</p> <p>Option 2 End LLW accreditation with the following possible provisions:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Paying the new LLW to those roles where the University is experiencing recruitment and retention issues and all existing employees on the current LLW hourly rate b) As and when the recruitment issues subside, reviewing the hourly rate for these roles, c) Paying the National Minimum Wage or the National Living Wage for other roles in line with the market. <p>The Board asked what the benefit was to the University of being an LLW employer. The COO said that it was hard to quantify the benefit. She said that having the accreditation was a positive statement by the University as to how it treats its employees but this benefit was being diluted by other organisations which state a similar commitment but were not accredited.</p> <p>The Board noted that it was well known within Catholic networks that the University was an LLW employer. It spoke to the ethos of the University and the wider world.</p> <p>The COO said that currently the University was struggling to recruit to posts such as catering and cleaning which were paying the LLW and as a consequence being an LLW employer was having little impact on the University’s ability to recruit staff to these positions. She added that if the University were to outsource such operations then there was a requirement for the LLW to be outsourced workers.</p>		
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	<p>The Board raised the issue of London Weighting and that this was not paid to SMU employees. The COO said that this had been consolidated into the 51 point pay scales when they were adopted.</p> <p>The Board voted on whether to continue with LLW accreditation as set out in option one above or to pursue option two. The voting was as follows:-</p> <p>Option One: 11 votes Option Two: 3 votes Abstentions: 0</p> <p>The Board therefore approved option one and the continuation of LLW accreditation.</p>		
21/45	<p>STUDENTS' UNION REPORT <i>Paper 7 refers</i></p> <p>The SU Education President presented the Students' Union Report. She said that the "Welcome Back" week was taking place during the week of 7 February and this would consist of various afternoon and evening events to welcome students back for the second semester.</p> <p>The sexual safety awareness week would be running in February as would the LGBTQ+ week. There would also be a sustainability week taking place in April.</p> <p>The SU was also being represented on the new working group on student retention. It would also be launching its new strategy in April.</p> <p>The Board noted the Students' Union report.</p>		
21/46	<p>MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT <i>Paper 8 refers</i></p> <p>The Modern Slavery Statement for 2022/2023 was unanimously approved by the Board.</p>		
21/47	<p>BANK SIGNATORIES <i>Papers 9 refers</i></p> <p>The Board unanimously approved that the following staff members to be authorised to act as signatory</p>		

	<p>on all the University's bank accounts with all access rights as Authorised Signatories:-</p> <p>Anthony McClaran - Vice -Chancellor Joanne Blunden - Chief Operating Officer Richard Solomon - Chef Finance Officer Andrew Browning - Company Secretary</p> <p>It was resolved that all relevant bank mandates would be amended accordingly.</p> <p>he Board further confirmed that this resolution shall remain valid until superseded by a new board resolution and communicated to the bank(s).</p>		
21/33	<p>Finance and Resources Committee <i>Paper 10</i></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee which took place on 13 January were noted by the Committee.</p>		
21/35	<p>Dates of Next Meetings 10 March 2022 (Away Day) 27 April 2022 9 June 2022</p>		

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