

Board of Governors

Minutes

Of the Board of Governors meeting held on Tuesday, 16 March 2021 at 10am via Teams.

Present:

- Ms Jennifer Bernard (Independent Governor) (Chair of the Board)
- Mr Dermot Blastland (Independent Governor)
- Ms Sandra Botterell (Independent Governor)
- Ms Shirley Cameron (Independent Governor)
- Mr Mark Cammies (Independent Governor)
- Mr James Edmunds (Academic Board Representative)
- Mr Steve Fowler (Independent Governor)
- Dr Suresh Gamlath (Staff Representative)
- Mr Derek Hicks (Independent Governor)
- Professor Peter John (Vice-Chancellor)
- Ms Ancha Joof (SU President)
- Mr Jonathan Lawrence (Independent Governor)
- Professor Heather Loveday (Professoriate Representative)
- Dr Christopher McLaverty (Independent Governor)
- Ms Kerry O'Callaghan (Independent Governor)
- Ms Helena Peacock (Independent Governor)
- Mr Paul Sahota (Independent Governor)
- Mr Kiran Virdee (Independent Governor)
- Mr Patrick Younge (Independent Governor)

In attendance:

- Ms Kim Ansell (Co-opted member of the Workforce Advisory Committee)
- Mr Melvyn Barlex (Interim Director of Property Services (for agenda item 7))
- Mr Hanif Barma (Consulting Fellow, Halpin Partnership)
- Mr Adrian Ellison (Associate PVC and Chief Information Officer)
- Professor Joelle Fanghanel (Pro Vice-Chancellor, Academic)
- Mr Patrick Fuller (Chief Financial Officer)
- Mr Neil Henderson (Director of HR and Organisational Development)
- Ms Susie Hills (CEO, Halpin Partnerships)
- Ms Marion Lowe (University Secretary and Chief Compliance Officer)
- Professor Nicholas McKay (Director of the London College of Music (for agenda item 13))

Ms Coral Mason (Assistant Clerk to the Board)
Ms Sara Raybould (Senior Pro Vice-Chancellor)
Dr Kostas Tzortzis (Associate PVC and Director of Strategic Planning)
Professor Anthony Woodman (Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

1 Apologies for absence, announcements, and declarations of interest

1.1 No apologies were recorded.

1.2 There were no declarations of interest.

1.3 The Chair of the Board of Governors informed members that this would be the last meeting for Mr Dermot Blastland, Deputy Chair of the Board of Governors, who had completed his term of office as an Independent Governor. The Chair commented that he would be missed by everyone as his time and support had been beneficial to the operations of the Board over the last nine years.

1.4 The Vice-Chancellor added Mr Blastland was a supporter of meritocracy which was in line with the University ethos and he would be greatly missed by everyone.

1.5 Members were informed that the University graduation ceremonies were currently being planned at Twickenham Stadium on 29-30 July 2021. Further details would be forthcoming. Students would also be given the option to graduate online.

2. Minutes of the meetings held on 24 November 2020 (Appendix 1) and 8-9 February 2021 (Appendix 2) (BG 2021 15)

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2020 and 8-9 February 2021 were confirmed as a fair and accurate record.

3. Matters Arising Report (BG 2021 16)

Meeting of 24 November 2020 (Appendix 1)

3.1 The University Secretary confirmed a working group on sustainability would be established when the new Director of Property Services was in post.

3.2 Work was in progress to provide a webpage for students providing details on how the University provided value for money.

3.3 Succession planning would be considered at the Board of Governors meeting on 6 July 2021.

Meeting of 8-9 February 2021 (Appendix 2)

3.4 Updated presentations on the School of Biomedical Sciences and Employability would take place in the next academic year.

4. Approval of Recommendations from Committees (BG 2021 17)

Governance and Nominations Committee meeting of 25 January 2021

Committee Membership 2021 (Appendix 1)

4.1 The University Secretary informed members that as a result of the end of the term of office of the Deputy Chair of the Board, consideration had been given to Committee Membership to ensure continuity of business and the following changes were proposed:

- a) Mr Derek Hicks to join the Student Liaison Committee as a member,
- b) Mr Patrick Younge to take on the role of Chair of the Student Liaison Committee,
- c) Mr Patrick Younge to stand down as Chair of the Workforce Advisory Committee,
- d) Mr Steve Fowler to join the Workforce Advisory Committee as Chair,
- e) Mr Mark Cammies to join the Remuneration Committee, and
- f) Ms Helena Peacock to take on the role of Deputy Chair of the Finance Committee.

4.2 The Board of Governors **APPROVED** the changes to Committee Membership from 1 April 2021

Governance and Nominations Committee meeting of 25 February 2021

Board of Governors Membership (Appendix 2)

4.3 Members were informed that as a result of a number of vacancies on the Board, Ms Kim Ansell, co-opted member of the Workforce Advisory Committee, was interviewed by a panel comprising:

Ms Jennifer Bernard (Chair of the Board)
Professor Peter John (Vice-Chancellor)
Ms Marion Lowe (University Secretary)

For the role of Independent Governor.

4.4 The Board of Governors **APPROVED** the appointment of Ms Kim Ansell as an Independent Governor from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2024.

5 Vice-Chancellor's Briefing (BG 2021 18)

5.1 The Vice-Chancellor updated members on the following:

- Over the last four months there had been a continuous assault on what the government considered low quality courses. Quality and standards would now be based solely on outcomes and would not differentiate between differing starting points and social capital.
- Lord Wharton of Yarm had been appointed as Chair of the OfS.
- The government had produced its roadmap out of Covid-19 restrictions noting that research had indicated that there had been minimal transmission as a result of face-to-face teaching. Students with practical aspects to their courses

- were allowed to return to university from 8 March 2021. UWL were aware that an easing of restrictions could be announced and had prepared accordingly.
- HESA data indicated that just over 4% of black academic staff were professors and data for 2019-20 had not improved on the previous year. Data continued to show that UWL had some of the highest numbers of BAME academic staff and professors in the sector.
 - The government had announced that new legislation would be introduced to ensure freedom of speech on campus, although it was considered that the legislation would be difficult to enforce.
 - In February Pearsons published findings of a student survey on learning experiences from August 2020 and how they would like future teaching to be conducted. Overall, students preferred face-to-face teaching but looking forward would like to retain the online learning provision as a support alongside. The Vice-Chancellor confirmed UWL would ensure online activities continued and UWLFlex online would be a supplementary tool for teaching and would be monitored to ensure the content was refreshed and was of a high quality.
 - The results of a survey by JISC on student satisfaction with online teaching noted that while 45% of respondents felt their learning expectations had been reasonable and 51% stated they had accessed the services they needed online, 67% of students had turned to their classmates for help. 42% of students stated they had not been given adequate training to navigate online learning effectively.
 - UWL and the SU were reviewing feedback from students to ensure moving forward, UWL students would receive the best of both worlds, face-to-face teaching and high-quality online material.
 - The Pearce Review of TEF recommended the end of subject based TEF.
 - It was anticipated the Autumn spending review would provide information on changes to university fees.
 - The government had increased STEM funding but at the expense of C1 subjects which covers creative arts. Funding cuts of up to 50% had been initiated. In addition, London Weighting in student premium funding would be lost from 2021-22.
 - Students with practical aspects to their courses had been welcomed back onto campus on 8 March 2021. This was in addition to 60-100 students who had accessed facilities during lockdown daily. Over 500 staff had returned, on a rota basis to campus.
 - A lateral flow testing centre had opened on 9 March for staff and students. The centre operations would be reviewed at Easter to determine whether the facility would remain open. If closed, staff and students would be advised to continue to be tested at their local council operated sites or to use the sites provided by Ealing Council.
 - The NSS completion rates were currently 70.25%. The survey would close at the end of April with results published in July. The Senior Pro Vice-Chancellor expressed concern that the results across the sector would be disappointing but UWL staff continued to provide a positive learning experience for students.
 - **Some references in this section have been redacted.**
 - Autumn recruitment numbers looked strong although the London College of Music and the London Geller School of Hospitality and Tourism were suffering

as a result of Covid-19. NHS applications were strong with a 4.6% increase on last year.

- **Some references in this section have been redacted.**
- UWL's UKVI refusal rate was currently around 5%. Due diligence had been increased as a result of fraudulent activity across the sector.
- **Some references in this section have been redacted.**
- The REF would be submitted next week, and the outcome would be known in April 2022. As a result of preparing the REF submission the University had updated its research strategy which would be presented to the Board of Governors on 11 May 2021.

Action: Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

- Data indicated the mean gender pay gap was down 6.68% in 2019 to 5.40% and the median pay gap at 0.00%. If student ambassadors were removed from the data, the median pay gap would be -1.76%.
- The Biomedical Laboratories had opened in February 2021, on time and on budget. A bipolar ventilation system had been installed which filters the air and neutralises pathogens, including coronavirus.
- The following appointments had been made:
 - Claire Willitts as the Director of Property Services
 - Santanu Vasant as the Head of Expert Academy
 - Professor Graeme Atherton as the Director of CELUP and NEON, and
 - Mr Matt Snowdon, Head of Research Operations, would take up the new role of Dean of Academic Partnerships.
- Two Town Hall meetings had taken place for staff providing information on the phased return to work. Whilst some members of staff had expressed concern about returning to work, the majority of staff were keen to return to campus. The Heads of Schools and Heads of Professional Service Departments had been keeping staff up to date and providing assurances that the campus sites were safe.
- The Professoriate representative confirmed that teaching staff were keen to resume face-to-face teaching. Online teaching had increased workloads and did not provide the same level of satisfaction for staff, although staff had agreed that online delivery had allowed them to develop new skills which, where possible, would be incorporated into their teaching.
- Members queried whether UWL Flex had been trademarked. The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that this was not the case but would be registered as soon as possible.

Action: Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

5.2 The Board of Governors **NOTED** the Vice-Chancellor's update.

6. Project 4ARM (BG 2021 19)

6.1 **Some references in this section have been redacted.**

6.13 The Board of Governors **NOTED** the update.

7. Property Update (BG 2021 20)

- 7.1 The Interim Director of Property Services confirmed work on the Biomedical Laboratories had been completed. Work on specialist space for Police Constabulary Apprenticeship students had also been completed.
- 7.2 The Eilor and Bouygues contracts had been scaled back as a result of lockdown saving the University approximately £1.2m. As the campus re-opened both contracts would be reactivated.
- 7.3 The Interim Director of Property Services had entered into discussions with the BBC relating to the lease on Villiers House. The lease had been extended for a further year but if student numbers grew, particularly the Police Constabulary Apprenticeships, then the University would either have to invest in developing the building or find alternative premises in Ealing.
- 7.4 The Board of Governors **NOTED** the current issues relating to the current Estate Strategy.

PSDS Decarbonisation Project (Appendix 1)

- 7.5 The Interim Director of Property Services informed members that a more detailed report on the Project would be presented to the next meeting of the Board on 11 May 2021.

Action: Interim Director of Property Services

- 7.6 The project development had been broken down into three stages:
- i. High level assessment – the University had been successful in obtaining funding for this.
 - ii. Investment grade proposal – developing designs, a programme of works and developing a contractual relationship.
 - iii. Implementation stage – to be concluded by 30 September 2021.
- 7.7 The project was not subject to a tender process as the funds were part of a government grant and work would be carried out by the government appointed company, Ameresco. Salix would administer and distribute the funds.
- 7.8 Members were informed that there were risks attached to the works. If anything unexpected was identified, costs would not be covered by grant funding and the University would be liable for any additional, unexpected costs. The Interim Director of Property Services confirmed an independent survey had been conducted to mitigate against unexpected events. A clear roadmap of works had been prepared and funds would be drawn down when key aspects of the works were undertaken.
- 7.9 The DSL site would also be part of the proposals and works on the DSL building were expected to take 5-6 weeks.
- 7.10 The first project board met yesterday to set out the scope and timeline for the works.

- 7.11 Members noted that the geothermal heat pumps would be the first of its kind in Ealing and should be publicised.
- 7.12 The Board of Governors **NOTED** the project, its progress and its benefits to the University's Environmental and Sustainability Strategy.

Renewal of Fountain House Lease (Appendix 2)

- 7.13 The Interim Director of Property Services informed members that the University had conducted a search for alternative properties in Reading but floors in Fountain House had been adapted for the College of Nursing, Midwifery and Healthcare and the proposed rental agreement provided value for money.
- 7.14 The Board of Governors **APPROVED** the renewal of the three existing leases at Fountain House, Reading, for a new term of 10 years with a tenant only break clause on the fifth anniversary of the term paying a maximum combined rent of £437,414 per annum with half rent being paid for the first 42 months and a further 12 months at half rent should the break clause not be implemented.

8. CUC Higher Education Code of Governance (2020) – Recommendations for implementation (BG 2021 21)

- 8.1 Members requested a seminar style meeting be set up to provide an in-depth review of the Code for Governance.

Action: University Secretary

- 8.2 The University Secretary confirmed the item would be deferred to the next meeting of the Board of Governors on 11 May 2021.

Action: University Secretary

9. People and Organisational Development Strategy 2020-2025 (BG 2021 22)

- 9.1 The Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development informed members the strategy was developed in alignment with Achievement 2023 and beyond and aimed to celebrate staff diversity and open up new opportunities for all in partnership with the University.

- 9.2 The strategy was divided into five themes and set out the expectations and responsibilities of the University and staff:

- Rewarding, recognising and engaging talent
- Celebrating our diversity and enhancing inclusion
- Attracting and retaining excellence
- Cultural and organisational effectiveness, and
- Developing and enhancing our people.

- 9.3 Each of the themes would have a clear set of KPI's which would set out how the themes would be achieved.

- 9.4 Members were informed that succession planning would be considered at the Board of Governors meeting on 6 July 2021, but consideration would also be given

to how teams operate after a member of staff had been promoted and whether succession planning was considered at all staffing levels. Members agreed the University would also need to future proof itself by recruiting staff who had the potential to develop skills for the future. The Director of HR confirmed that workshops were being planned for managers to consider future needs.

Action: Director of HR and OD

- 9.5 The Director of HR and OD confirmed the University had signed up to an apprenticeship programme to develop staff project and management skills which would offer qualifications up to level seven.
- 9.6 The strategy would allow the University to develop its brand as an employer that promoted development of individuals and encouraged wellbeing. The process would be a two-way discussion to ensure clarity of purpose for the employer and employee.
- 9.7 The Chair of the Workforce Advisory Committee confirmed the Committee had reviewed and supported the strategy which should be shared with all University staff.
- 9.8 Members were informed that staff were provided with individual development plans through their annual appraisal. The appraisal process would be moved online for 2021-22.
- 9.9 Members queried how the University identified and recruited staff who were aligned to UWL's strategy. The Director of HR confirmed the appointment process and the use of key processes which hopefully could provide employment panels with clarity when appointing staff.
- 9.10 Members were informed that the University would be conducting its first all staff survey soon which would be designed in-house. Focus groups would then study the results.
- 9.11 The Board of Governors **NOTED** the report.

10. Action to tackle racial harassment (BG 2021 23)

- 10.1 Members agreed to defer this item to the next meeting of the Board of Governors on 11 May 2021.

Action: University Secretary
- 10.2 The University Secretary confirmed the paper would be revised to incorporate all forms of harassment including sexual and gender-based harassment. HR were also reviewing staff harassment, and this would also be included in the action plan.

Action: University Secretary
- 10.3 The SU President confirmed the SU had been working with the University to ensure campus safety.
- 10.4 The Board of Governors **NOTED** the report.

11. Gender Pay Gap Report (BG 2021 24)

11.1 The Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development reported that the mean gender pay gap was 5.40% down from 6.68% in 2019. If the student ambassadors were removed from the data, the pay gap falls to -1.60%. The median gender pay gap was 0.00% down from 0.04% in 2019.

11.2 Table three indicated 52.4% of females were working in the upper quartile pay bands in the University.

11.3 The Board of Governors **NOTED** the report.

Ethnicity Pay Gap Report (BG 1920 25)

11.4 The Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development reported that the mean pay gap had reduced from 5.57% to 2.36% which confirmed a steady incremental decrease.

11.5 Members agreed the University showed that inclusivity had led, in part, to the reduction of the ethnicity pay gap.

11.6 The Board of Governors **NOTED** the report

12. Board and Committee dates 2021-22 (BG 2021 26)

12.1 The University Secretary presented the Board and Committee dates for 2021-22.

12.2 The Board of Governors **NOTED** the dates.

13. Professor Nicholas McKay – Director of the London College of Music (LCM) (Presentation)

13.1 The Director of the London College of Music provided an historical background of LCM.

13.2 LCM had 43 academic staff, 22 administrators and over 100 specialist practitioners providing students with professional and real-world experiences.

13.3 The College was divided into two subject groups delivering over 40 courses covering acting, musical theatre and music performance, technology and management. The College provided outstanding learning resources which included 18 sound recording studios and mixing studios.

13.4 The College had 15 partner institutions in the UK and all over the world. The College had validated 19-degree courses and would be working with current partners to increase the number of validated courses.

13.5 Students were able to access a media resource centre where they were allowed to hire equipment, free of charge.

13.6 The College was an all Steinway College.

- 13.7 The Director of LCM had recently included Dr Sara McGuinness to the LCM executive team as the College Equality and Diversity Lead. The LCM executive, as part of the future plans, were committed to diversifying the staff and student cohort through changes to the curriculum and offering a more inclusive environment. The Director acknowledged the College would need to be restructured and a review of hourly paid lecturers (HPLs) was in progress to diversity expertise. A recent recruitment drive for HPLs had led to applications from a wide variety of musical artists.
- 13.8 A review of the curriculum had led to proposals for a number of new undergraduate courses including a BA in Hip Hop and a BA in Music for Gaming.
- 13.9 The Director of LCM highlighted plans for the future which included building a strong research base and to develop the next generation of researchers, to ensure the College was research driven in music and performing arts, to deliver courses that were practice based and to increase and sustain widening participation and diversity in the staff and student bodies.
- 13.10 The Director of LCM aimed to increase work with the local community by expanding LCM Live. The College utilised Lawrence Hall as a performance venue and it was hoped the number of performances would increase.
- 13.11 The College currently had 28 PhD students enrolled and with a strong REF submission it was anticipated this number would increase over the next few years.
- 13.12 Members noted the number of national and international partnerships.
- 13.13 The Director of LCM confirmed that, where possible, the College collaborated with Schools across the University and would continue to pursue working with the College of Nursing, Midwifery and Healthcare in the field of Dementia.
- 13.14 The Board of Governors thanked Professor McKay and **NOTED** the presentation.

14. Academic Matters

Competitions and Market Authority Review (BG 2021 26)

- 14.1 The University Secretary confirmed the paper had been presented to the Audit and Risk Committee and the Student Liaison Committee. It provided a comprehensive review of work conducted to ensure information sent to students was accurate and, if required, would provide assurances to the OfS that UWL had been meeting its obligations to its students. A working group had been established to undertake the review of compliance with consumer law.
- 14.2 Emergency Regulations had been approved by Academic Board which provided students with clear information about how the University would operate during lockdowns and the services available and how these services would be provided.
- 14.3 Students were receiving communications twice a week to update them on activities and how the University would adapt to further government pronouncements.

- 14.4 The University Secretary accepted that students were probably not receiving the learning experience they would have liked but they had received clear information on alternative ways to ensure a quality learning experience. Feedback from External Examiners confirmed that the alternative assessments were of a high standard.
- 14.5 All students who had registered as vulnerable had been contacted by Student Services and this had been an on-going process. Staff in the SU had also maintained contact with identified vulnerable students.
- 14.6 Members noted that the BAME attainment gap had grown during the pandemic, but appropriate actions were being put in place to address this.
- 14.7 Members noted the additional enrichment activities being undertaken to support the student learning experience.
- 14.8 The Board of Governors **NOTED** the outcomes of the review.

15. Apprenticeship Board (BG 2021 27)

Meeting of 16 December 2020

- 15.1 The Chair of the Apprenticeships and Further Education Board informed members that the Board had been renamed the Apprenticeship Board to reflect the growing business in apprenticeships and the growing numbers of apprenticeship students.
- 15.2 Members noted that LCME were operating within Ofqual requirements.
- 15.3 Members noted the Minutes and items of business discussed.

16. Academic Board (BG 2021 28)

Meeting of 27 January 2021

- 16.1 Members noted the Minutes and items of business discussed.

17. Chairs Briefing on Committee Activity (BG 2021 29)

Audit and Risk Committee meeting of 1 March 2021 (Appendix 1)

- 17.1 Members noted the Minutes and items of business discussed.

Finance Committee meeting of 18 January 2021 (Appendix 2)

- 17.2 Members noted the Minutes and items of business discussed.

Governance and Nominations Committee meeting between 10 December 2020 and 25 February 2021 (Appendix 3)

- 17.3 The Chair of the Governance and Nominations Committee informed members that the Committee had been meeting on a monthly basis.

17.4 Members noted the Minutes and items of business discussed.

Student Liaison Committee meeting of 5 November 2020 (Appendix 4)

17.5 The Chair of the Student Liaison Committee informed members that the Senior Pro Vice-Chancellor, UWL staff and SU staff had been working hard to ensure students completed the NSS. The results would probably not be as outstanding as in previous years, but it was anticipated that this would be standard across the sector.

17.6 Members noted the Minutes and items of business discussed.

Workforce Advisory Committee meeting of 19 November 2020 (Appendix 5)

17.7 Members noted the Minutes and items of business discussed.

Workforce Advisory Committee meeting of 4 February 2021 (Appendix 6)

17.8 Members noted the Minutes and items of business discussed.

18. Any Other Business

18.1 No further business was discussed.

19. Date of next meeting

19.1 The next virtual meeting of the Board of Governors will take place on Tuesday, 11 May 2021. Details to be confirmed.

Signed by Ms Jennifer Bernard
Chair of the Board of Governors

Date

Author: Ms Marion Lowe
Title: University Secretary and Chief Compliance Officer
Date: March 2021