

BIRMINGHAM CITY UNIVERSITY

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 JANUARY 2014

PRESENT: Mr Alex Stephenson (Chair)
Professor Cliff Allan
Mr Jim Beeston
Mr Joe Boyd
Professor Stuart Brand
Mr John Charlton
Mr Vic Cocker
Lord Bruce Grocott
Professor Graham Henderson
Mr Mark Hopton
Mr Joe Kelly (for agenda items 4 onwards)
Ms Jenny Ladbrooke
Ms Nicky Lloyd
Ms Jenny Loynton
Mr Andrew Messenger
Professor David Roberts (for agenda items 5 onwards)
Mr Raaj Shamji
Mr Shaun Smith

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms Christine Abbott, University Secretary and Director of Operations
Professor Mary Carswell, Pro-Vice-Chancellor
Mr Graham Rhodes, Director of Estates (for agenda item 7)
Mr Andrew Jowett (Governor elect)
Professor Paul Ivey, Pro-Vice-Chancellor
Professor Bashir Makhoul, Pro-Vice-Chancellor
Ms Helen Matthews, Assistant University Secretary
Mr Richard Spilsbury, Director of Finance and Resource Allocation

APOLOGIES: Dr Waqar Azmi
Ms Ann Jones

01/14 MEMBERSHIP

The Chair welcomed Mr Andrew Jowett, who was in attendance at the meeting prior to taking up his role as Governor on 1 April 2014.

Members noted that Mr Andrew Messenger would be retiring from the Board on 31 March 2014 and placed on record their thanks for his significant contribution to the University during the past eight years.

02/14 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 NOVEMBER 2013 (BGOV.14.01.01)

Minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2013 were received.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2013 be confirmed and signed as an accurate record.

03/14 UNIVERSITY IT STRATEGY

Arising from Minute 75/13, the University Secretary and Director of Operations reported that the University's IT Strategy was still in development.

04/14 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR 2012/13

Arising from Minute 81/13, the University Secretary and Director of Operations reported that the financial statements for the University's dormant subsidiary companies had been approved by written resolution in December 2013.

05/14 REPORT OF FINANCIAL ISSUES

Arising from Minute 85/13, the Director of Finance and Resource Allocation confirmed that the University's current deposit with the Co-operative Bank was due to mature on 31 January 2014 and would be withdrawn by the Executive on that date.

06/14 ANNUAL SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

Members were advised that the University's Annual Sustainability Assurance Report for December 2013 had been revised in accordance with Minute 86/13 and submitted to HEFCE. The final version of the submission had been sent to the Chair and Deputy Chair for information and was available to all Governors on request, from the Secretariat.

07/14 INTERNATIONALISATION STRATEGY FOR 2014 – 2018/19 (BGOV.14.01.02)

A paper was received that invited the Board to consider and approve the University's Internationalisation Strategy proposals for 2014 – 2018/9.

The proposals outlined in the paper stemmed from the Aims and Vision outlined in the University's Strategic Plan 2020 (Minute 12/14 below refers) and reflected current Government thinking that the number of international students in higher education would grow by 15-20% over the next five years. At 8%, the percentage of international students studying at the University was small compared to the 32% average for top-performing institutions in the UK and a step change was required for BCU to remain competitive in the marketplace.

Noting that the proposals were based on a mature model that was proven elsewhere within the sector, the Board supported the broad thrust of the Strategy including: the establishment of a range of sustainable overseas partnerships with reputable institutions; the development of existing programmes to embed internationalisation within the curriculum; the strengthening of internal support structures; the establishment of a Partnership Unit; and the appointment of dedicated Associate Deans. Final consideration of the proposals would be undertaken at the April meeting of the Board, taking into account the recommendations of the Finance Committee following its review of a detailed financial analysis and risk assessment. The latter would consider a range of issues including minimising the potential for bribery and corruption, competition for business and partnerships in the markets identified within the Strategy, and the implications for staff skills.

08/14 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

09/14 INTERIM REPORT OF THE STUDENTS' UNION FOR 2013/14

The President of the Students Union provided an update on the work of the Union during the current year and tabled its One Page Plan for the period 2012-2015 for information.

In addition to the Union's collaborative work on the NSS (see Minute 14/14 below), a range of initiatives had been implemented to enhance the student experience and to ensure that as many students as possible were able to participate in activities such as induction events, volunteering projects and societies. In accordance with the Union's Strategic Themes and Goals to 2015, a Data Bank of Student Opinion had been established and services had been enhanced at the School of Art, the Conservatoire and Parkside.

Overall, feedback from students on the University's estates plans was extremely positive and the new facilities at Parkside had been extremely well received by both current and prospective students.

10/14 REPORT FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR ON KEY BUSINESS ISSUES (BGOV.14.01.04)

The Vice-Chancellor presented the paper to the Board.

Current indicators for the University's full-time undergraduate recruitment were positive overall with applications showing a 12.3% increase against the same period in the preceding year. This figure compared favourably to the national position and UCAS Competitor group position of +4.2% and +5.1% respectively. At faculty level, BIAD's overall performance had been adversely affected by a downturn in applications to the four programmes listed in the paper. However, the latest application data showed an improved position, with all of the programmes concerned now showing a positive variance compared to 2013. In order to maintain recruitment momentum in an increasingly competitive marketplace, faculties had been directed to ensure that offers were made earlier in the cycle and that unconditional offers were made to high calibre applicants who met certain criteria and who identified the University as their first choice institution.

The Board was pleased to note that one of the University's Senior Lecturers in Film Distribution and Marketing had been nominated in the short film category at the forthcoming Oscars.

11/14 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

12/14 UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN 2020 (BGOV.14.01.06)

A paper was received that invited the Board to approve the new University Strategic Plan and outlined plans for its implementation.

The Plan, which focussed on four transformational areas, had been finalised following discussion of an initial draft at the Board Awayday in October 2013 and institution-wide consultation with staff. Clear targets had been identified for each of the four areas, against which performance would be monitored regularly and progress reports made to the Board.

RESOLVED:

That the University Strategic Plan 2020 at Annex 1 to BGOV.14.01.06 be approved.

13/14 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

14/14 UPDATE ON ACTIONS RELATING TO THE NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY (BGOV.14.01.08)

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Professor Mary Carswell, presented a paper that provided an update on actions relating to the National Student Survey (NSS) 2014. Thanks were extended to the Students' Union for the extensive collaborative work undertaken with the University to publicise the NSS and to ensure that students were aware of its context and importance.

15/14 REPORT OF FINANCIAL ISSUES (BGOV.14.01.09)

The Director of Finance and Resource Allocation presented a report of financial issues, including treasury management, high value purchase orders and a recommendation in respect of contracts for the supply of monographs, e-books and alternative media.

The University's overall liquidity position remained strong, with cash at bank and on deposit £6.1m ahead of budget at 31 December 2013.

RESOLVED:

That the University enter into two-year contracts with the following suppliers from 1 August 2013 to 31 July 2015, with an option to extend the contracts for a further two years, at the total estimated spend for the four years outlined in Annex 1 to BGOV.14.01.09.

Coutts (English Language Books)
Coutts, Dawsons and Askew Holts (E-books)
Coutts (English Language Standing Orders)

16/14 MEMBERSHIP OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND MILLENNIUM POINT PROPERTY LTD (BGOV.14.01.10)

A paper was received that presented proposals in respect of the appointed member on the Board nominated by Senate and the University's nominee on the Board of Directors of Millennium Point Property Ltd.

RESOLVED:

- 16.1 That Professor Stuart Brand be re-appointed as the Senate-nominated member on the Board of Governors for a term of office commencing on 1 April 2014 and concluding on 31 March 2016.
- 16.2 That Mr Graham Rhodes replace Mr Richard Spilsbury as the University's nominee on the Board of Directors of Millennium Point Property Ltd with immediate effect.

17/14 REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE NOMINATIONS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE (14.01.11)

Due to time constraints, a report of the meeting of the Nominations and Governance Committee held on 30 January 2014 would be submitted to the meeting of the Board in April 2014.

18/14 REPORT OF THE MEETING OF SENATE HELD ON 20 NOVEMBER 2013 (BGOV.14.01.12)

A report was received of the matters considered, decisions taken and information received by Senate at its meeting held in November 2013.

19/14 APPLICATION OF THE SEAL (BGOV.14.01.13)

The University Seal had been applied on one occasion since the previous Board meeting; on 10 December 2013 to a Compromise Agreement in respect of Land and Buildings at Paradise Circus, Birmingham between Birmingham City University and Birmingham City Council.

20/14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board would be held on Thursday 10 April 2014 at 4.00 pm.

Chair:

Date: