Coventry University

Board of Governors
Wednesday, 27 November 2013
1600hrs in the Board Room (ABG20), Alan Berry Building, Coventry University

Document GM150/1

Minutes

150/1
Present:
Prof A Richardson (Chair), Mr I Caulfield (Deputy Chair), Mr A Majithia, Mr G Berry, Mr D Clarke, Mr T Matthews, Dr M Short, Mr G Long, Dr B Dhadda, Mr P Ashdown, Mr S Calvin, Mr S Parker, Mr M Reeves, Prof V Cox, Mrs L Noble, Mr R Beasley, Prof MJ Atkins (Vice-Chancellor)

Apologies for Absence
Mr K Bissett, Prof J Norton, Mr M Stone

In Attendance:
Mr J Latham (Deputy-Vice-Chancellor (Business Development)), Mr DGM Soutter (Deputy-Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Resources)), Mr M Challoner (Clerk)

150/2
Declarations of Interests

None

150/3
Items from the Chair

The Chair reported that Mr John Latham (Deputy-Vice-Chancellor (Business Development) had been appointed as Acting Vice-Chancellor with effect from 14 December. The University would be advertising for Vice-Chancellor’s post the week commencing 2 December 2013.

150/4
Final Accounts for Year Ending 31 July 2013

.1 Consideration was given to the audited statement of accounts for the University Group and for the University, presented by Mr David Hall of Deloitte LLP (Document G150/2).

.2 Both the Finance and Estates Committee and the Audit and Risk Committee had considered the Accounts, which were updated as a result of their comments, and had recommend approval to the Board of Governors.
In recommending the accounts for approval the Chair of the Audit Committee, Mr Geoff Berry, highlighted the contribution which the Vice-Chancellor, Prof MJ Atkins, had made to the University Group during her leadership over the past eight years. The Board echoed the comments of the Chair of the Committee.

The Chair of the Finance and Estates Committee, Mr Graham Long, highlighted the risks associated with the continued level of pension liability shown in the accounts.

The Board expressed its appreciation to the Deputy-Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Resources) and his team for the efficient preparation of the accounts and the strong financial results at the year end position.

A copy of the Annual Report and Accounts for the following University subsidiaries as approved by their Boards was available at the meeting:

(i) CU Services Ltd
(ii) Coventry University Enterprises Ltd
(iii) ACUA Ltd
(iv) ACUA Solutions Ltd
(v) Serious Games International Ltd
(vi) Coventry University London Campus Ltd
(vii) Coventry University College Ltd

A copy of the Annual Report and Accounts for Coventry University Charitable Trust as approved by the Trustees was also made available at the meeting.

Resolved that the University Group accounts for the year ending 31 July 2013 be approved.

150/5
Annual Report from the Audit Committee

Consideration was given to the Audit Committee’s annual report to the Board of Governors, and its submission to HEFCE, presented by the Chair of the Audit Committee, Mr G Berry (Document G150/3).

The report included the following annexes:

Annex A - Audit Committee Constitution and Terms of Reference
Annex B - Internal Audit Annual Report 2012/13 from the Internal Auditors
Annex C - External Audit Annual Report 2012/13 from the External Auditors
Annex D - Value for Money Report 2012/13
The Chair of the Audit Committee reported that IT infrastructure and the student experience would be reviewed as part of the Committee’s activity during 2013/14.

Resolved that the annual report of the Audit Committee be approved for submission to HEFCE.

Workshop: Coventry University Research Strategy to 2020 “Excellence with Impact”

The Board received the University’s Research Strategy to 2020 “Excellence with Impact” presented by the Vice-Chancellor (Document G150/4).

Following consideration of the report it was suggested the University Research Committee be named Research Board and that this be considered by the Governance Working Group.

The Board also received a presentation from the Dean of BES, Prof Denise Skinner, detailing the Faculty’s journey in enhancing the quality of research and its reputational standing, together with its plans for improving the quality of research with impact.

Governors then participated in a workshop exercise, meeting with some of the University’s leading researchers, all of whom would form part of the University Research Centres identified in the Research Strategy or had been submitted as part of the University’s 2014 REF submission.

Following the workshop exercise the Board considered that there was perceived fragility in the relationship between the areas of research and the University and there was a need to nurture the relationship in order that the University could realise its ambition of enhancing the quality of research. The Board recognised the importance of strategic leadership in the successful delivery of the strategy and highlighted the need for academic freedom for researchers and a supportive infrastructure. The diversity of funding available to support research activity was also key and it was considered that resources should be prioritised and targeted accordingly.

The Board discussed the importance of retaining key research staff and the role which they would play in driving the quality of research from 3* to 4*. It was also suggested that there needed to be greater alignment between international research and academic partnerships. However, the Vice-Chancellor indicated that the nature of academic and research partnerships was very different and the University had therefore deliberately not aligned such activities.

Vice-Chancellor’s Report

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Vice-Chancellor (Document G150/5).
The Vice-Chancellor reported that the University would be making its submission to the REF2014 prior to the deadline on Friday, 29 November 2013. The Board expressed its appreciation to the Deputy-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) for the work undertaken in preparation for the REF.

The Deputy-Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Resources) provided the Board with an update on the financial performance of the University Group at the end of the first quarter. It was noted that the position was positive due to expenditure being below target and strong performance in overseas recruitment; although recruitment at CULC was below plan. The Board was provided with details of the forecast position at year end, noting that income was projected to be ahead of target, again due to international recruitment. Research income was also forecast to be slightly below plan. With regard to the subsidiary companies, it was noted that the majority were performing against plan.

The Student Governors referred to the proposed industrial action by UCU on 3 December and the potential impact on the student experience. The Vice-Chancellor assured the Board that the situation was being closely monitored and that contingency plans were in place.

Reference was made to the proposed QAA audit in 2014/15. Resolved that the Board be provided with a presentation on the University’s preparation plans in the Spring 2014.

150/8
Update from Student Governors

The Board received a report of Mr Ryan Beasley, Chair of CUSU Executive Committee, which was circulated at the meeting.

With regard to proposal for gender neutral toilets on campus, the Deputy-Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Resources) agreed to take the matter forward.

It was noted that the presentation from Mr Matt Stone, Student Governor, in respect of the Impact of Engagement in Sport on Graduate Employability would be deferred to a future meeting of the Board.

150/9
Updates from Committee Chairs

The Board received an update from Mr Graham Long in respect of the meeting of the Governance Working Group commissioned by the Board.

Resolved that the notes from the Working Group be circulated to the Board for information and that a progress report be presented to the Board meeting in January 2014.
150/10  
**Confirmation of Minutes and Matters Arising**

.1  The Minutes of the 149th meeting held on 16 September 2013 (Documents GM149) were approved and signed as a correct record.

.2  The Chair provided the Board with an update following a recent visit to Kadir Has University in Turkey. It was suggested that a wider group of Governors participate in the visit by Kadir Has delegates in March 2013.

150/11  
**Annual Sustainability Assurance Report**

.1  Consideration was given to a presented by the Deputy-Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Resources). Document G150/7

.2  **Resolved** that the report be endorsed and submitted to HEFCE.

150/12  
**Board of Governors Vacancies and Renewals**

.1  Consideration was given to a report presented by the Clerk to the Board (Document G150/8).

.2  **Resolved** that Prof Alan Richardson be appointed as Chair of the Board of Governors for a further year, taking his date of retirement to 31 August 2015.

150/13  
**Any Other Business**

The Board expressed its sincere gratitude and appreciation for the contribution which Professor Madeleine Atkins had made to the University’s success under her leadership. Governors wished her every success in her new role as Chief Executive of HEFCE.

150/14  
**Schedule of Meetings 2013-14**

The Board is asked to note the schedule of meetings for 2013/14. All meetings start at 1600 hrs in the Board Room (ABG20), Alan Berry building unless otherwise stated.

27 January 2014  
17 March 2014
12 May 2014
14 July 2014 (followed by annual dinner)

Matt Challoner
Clerk to the Board of Governors
Telephone (024) 7688 7696
Fax: (024) 7688 7760
Email: matthew.challoner@coventry.ac.uk