Coventry University

Board of Governors
Tuesday, 27 January 2015
1600hrs at MIRA Ltd, Watling Street, Nuneaton, CV10 0TU

Document GM156

Minutes

156/1
Present:
Prof A Richardson (Chair), Mr S Parker (Deputy Chair), Mr G Berry, Mr K Bissett, Mr J Norton, Mr N Crockett, Mr S Rogers, Mr R Stockdale, Mrs J Cox, Mr P Ashdown, Mr S Calvin, Dr V Cox, Ms J Smith, Prof J Latham (Vice-Chancellor)

Apologies for Absence:
Dr M Short, Mr D Clarke, Mr T Matthews, Mr E Enoidem, Dr J Hully,

156/2
Declarations of Interests

None

156/3
Items from the Chair

The Chair highlighted the importance of Governor attendance at Board and Committee meetings.

156/4
Gender Neutral Toilets

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Student Governors setting out resolutions recently approved by the Students’ Union in respect of gender-neutral toilets (Document G156/2):

(A) To enforce a Zero Tolerance Policy against Homophobia, Biphobia and Trans*phobia.
(B) To ensure students or staff know how to report and who to report to if such happenings occur.
(C) To work alongside the University so that all new buildings and renovations include Gender Neutral Facilities and make sure that the Student Voice is always heard.
(D) To do as much as possible to develop the implementation of gender-neutral toilets across campus within the next few years.
(E) That the Students’ Union is frequently updated with any progress of this implementation.
Following consideration of the report the Board supported in principle the proposals in the report.

Resolved that the University work alongside the Students’ Union in order that all future new buildings and renovations include gender-neutral toilets.

156/5
Confirmation of Minutes and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the 155th meeting held on 26 November 2014 (Document GM155) were approved and signed as a correct record.

156/6
Presentation from the Vice-Chancellor

.1 The Board received a presentation from the Vice-Chancellor looking back over the previous twelve months and future strategic developments for the University Group.

.2 Following the presentation the Board highlighted the University’s outstanding success in teaching and learning and supporting widening participation, and sought an assurance that these would remain a priority for the University in the new Corporate Plan. The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that widening participation would continue to be a priority for the University and that it was actively looking at ways of supporting students through their journey from undergraduate to postgraduate in order to support higher levels of attainment.

.3 The Board discussed a number of the strategic initiatives outlined within the presentation and suggested that these needed to be articulated in the new 2015-2021 Corporate Plan.

.4 Reference was made to the University’s IT infrastructure and the risks previously identified by the Board. Governors were of the view that the strategy for IT needed to be both robust and able to keep up with pace of change as the University progressed through the planned period.

.5 The Vice-Chancellor provided the Board with details of recent appointments to the senior executive team, particularly Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellors, in order to build resilience.

156/7
Coventry Council City Centre Site Update

The Board received a presentation from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Resources) in respect of the proposed acquisition of city centres sites from the City Council. It was reported that
negotiations continued and that a formal investment case would be presented to the Strategy and Resources Committee.

156/8
Updates from Committee Chairs

The Board received an update on matters of interest from the Chairs of Committees that had met since the last meeting of the Board.

156/9
Coventry University Group Structure Review

.1 The Board noted a report of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Resources) detailing progress of the review of the University Group governance structure (Document G156/3).

.2 The Board was advised that proposals would be presented at an extra-ordinary meeting of the Board arranged for 24 March 2015.

156/10
The Higher Education Code of Governance

.1 Consideration was given to a report presented by the Clerk to the Board of Governors outlining a new Code of Governance published by the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) (Document G156/4).

.2 The Board was advised that there was an expectation that Governing Bodies would adopt the Code and in doing so meet or exceed the requirements of the supporting statements outlined within the Code.

.3 Following consideration of the report the Board supported the adoption of the Code in principle, but was of the view that a number of the examples given to meet the requirements may not be appropriate. It was therefore requested that consideration be given to other appropriate means of meeting the requirements of the Code.

.4 Resolved that the Clerk bring back proposals to the next meeting of the Board setting out those provisions to be adopted, and where appropriate, setting out alternative arrangements for those which are considered to be inappropriate.
156/11
Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014 Results

.1 The Board received a presentation from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) in respect of the results from the recent REF exercise.

.2 Following the presentation the Board welcomed the results (particularly when compared with the REF 2008 exercise) and noted the challenges associated with delivering on a number of the key metrics outlined in the new Research Strategy, particularly increasing the number of research students.

.3 Governors recognised the need to improve research capability within the University and noted that the new Corporate Plan would include specific targets relating to research income, quality and PhD completions. The Board would be provided with details of progress against research outputs on a periodic basis.

.4 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor provided the Board with details of the work being undertaken in preparation for the next REF exercise in 2020. Work was progressing to develop a model for projecting those metrics to be achieved in order to deliver the Research Strategy.

.5 The Board discussed the impact of the REF outcome on the University’s league table position and noted that the formula used to populate the league tables may change in the future, which may positively or negatively impact the league table position. There was also a suggestion within the research community that there may be a focus on research power in the REF 2020 exercise.

.6 With regard to Research Council UK funding the Board highlighted recent announcements by the Government which suggested that future funding was likely to be targeted at research-intensive universities. The Vice-Chancellor reported that whilst research Council Funding would be a priority Ministers had indicated that funding would be targeted at those institutions where there was expertise and impact, whatever the type of institution. The Board was advised that through the Research Strategy the University would be seeking to collaborate with research-intensive universities.

156/12
Drapers’ Hall Project Update

The Board noted a report of the Executive Dean of Coventry School of Art and Design providing an update in respect of the Drapers’ Hall Project (Document G156/5).
156/13  
Disruptive Media Learning Lab Update

The Board noted a report of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) providing an update in respect of the recently created Disruptive Media Learning Lab (DMLL) (Document G156/6).

156/14  
Review of Mid Module Evaluation and Preparations for National Student Survey (NSS)

The Board noted a report of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) providing an update in respect of preparations for the forthcoming NSS (Document G156/7).

156/15  
Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Higher Education Review (HER)

The Board noted a report of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor in respect of the forthcoming HER review by the QAA (Student Experience) (Document G156/8)

156/16  
Any Other Business

None

156/17  
Schedule of Meetings 2014-15

The Board is asked to note the schedule of meetings for 2014/15. All meetings start at 1600 hrs in the Board Room (ABG20), Alan Berry building unless otherwise stated.

19 May 2015
11 June 2015 0900 – 1300hrs (Board Away Event)
21 July 2015 (followed by annual dinner)

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