Coventry University

Board of Governors
Tuesday, 15 February 2016
1600hrs in Alan Berry Board Room (ABG20), Alan Berry Building, Priory Street, Coventry

Minutes

Document GM162

162/1 Present:
Mr S Parker (Chair), Mr K Bissett (Deputy Chair), Mr G Berry, Prof J Norton, Mr N Crockett, Mr A Majithia, Mr D Clarke, Dr B Dhadda, Mr S Rogers, Mr R Stockdale, Ms J Cox, Mr G McKean, Mr T Matthews, Mr M Reeves, Mrs L Noble, Dr V Cox, Mr E Inyang, Mr A Adebowale, Prof J Latham (Vice-Chancellor)

Apologies for Absence:
Mr S Calvin, Ms J Hully

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

162/2 Declarations of Interest

None

162/3 Items from the Chair

The Board congratulated the EC Futures Team on winning the Best Placement Service at the recent 2016 National Undergraduate Employability (NUE) Awards.

162/4 Confirmation of Minutes and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the 161st meeting held on 26 November 2015 (Document GM161) were approved and signed as a correct record.
162/5
Corporate Strategy 2021: Dashboard and Q1 Performance

1. Consideration was given to a report of the Vice-Chancellor in respect of the Q1 Performance against the 2021 Corporate Strategy (Document G162/1). The Board also received a presentation from the Director of Planning in respect of the development of a business intelligence dashboard for the Corporate Strategy 2021.

2. The Vice-Chancellor provided the Board with an update in respect of the China Joint Venture, reporting that considerable work had been undertaken to drive the initiative forward. A number of sino-UK programmes with Chinese academic partners had been terminated as a result of the Ministry of Education recently introducing a cap on the number of programmes permitted by UK Universities in China.

3. With regard to the business intelligence dashboard, the Board was assured that the data would be validated before uploading and that performance against the metrics would be reported on a quarterly basis, although the student number targets would be updated weekly. It was recognised that as the dashboard developed the integrity of the data would improve and the data point for extraction of the data needed to be confirmed.

4. The Chair of the Audit Committee referred to the diminishing pipeline of research grant income, particularly from Research Funding Councils, and the challenge in achieving the Corporate Plan target. The Vice-Chancellor reported that whilst the University was projected to fall short of the research income target, it currently had over 500 research funders which brought diversity to the research portfolio. Through the Research Strategy the University was seeking to secure greater funding from Research Councils as well as from Horizon 2020, although the UK’s forthcoming EU referendum had created some uncertainty amongst European funding funders. The Vice-Chancellor reminded the Board that whilst research income was down against target, all other metrics were ahead of target.

5. The Board was advised that following the recent retirement of Prof Kevin Warwick as Deputy-Vice-Chancellor (Research) Prof Olivier Sparagano would be acting Deputy-Vice-Chancellor. It was also reported that one of the University Research Centres had been dissolved due to under-performance.

162/6
Presentation: Marketing Approach and the Move to Digital

1. The Board received a presentation from the Director of Marketing and Communications in respect of new approaches to marketing and the move to digital and online marketing and communications.
Following the presentation the Board discussed the branding of Coventry University Group and each of the entities within it. Governors were of the view that Group and entity branding should tie with the University’s mission and values and that it needed to have traction at a local, national and international level. It was considered that this would different the University from its competitors. The Board was also of the view that the branding of the Group raised fundamental questions about the structure of the University going forward.

3.
It was noted that the next steps was to develop the brief for brand consultants in order to present the findings to the Board.

162/7
Realignment of Governor Roles and Responsibilities

.1
Consideration was given to a report presented by the Chair of the Board in respect of the realignment of Governor roles and responsibilities and the appointment of individuals to the Board of Governors and its Committees (Document G162/2)

.2
Resolved:

(A) That approval be given to the realignment of Governor roles and responsibilities as the next step towards improved and simplified governance.

(B) That as a principle two executives be appointed to each Subsidiary Board of Directors with one being an executive who mirrors the function and purpose of the subsidiary company and one being the investor representative which in most circumstances will be the Deputy-Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Resources).

(C) That the following individuals be appointed:

   (i) Mrs Marion Plant as an Independent Members of the Board of Governors with immediate effect until 31 August 2018 (1 term of office).
   (ii) Mrs Liz Watson as an External Co-opted Member of the Academic Affairs Committee with immediate effect until 31 August 2018 (1 term of office).
   (iii) Mrs Helen Nixseaman as an External Co-opted Member of the Audit and Risk Committee with immediate effect until 31 August 2018 (1 term of office).

(D) That the proposed changes to Committee memberships as detailed in the presentation be approved.

162/8
Corporate Governance Update

.1
The Board noted a report of the Clerk to the Board (Document G162/3).
2
Resolved:

(A) That the proposed approach for the review of Board/Committee/Chair effectiveness be endorsed.

(B) That the progress being made against the CUC Code of Governance previously adopted by the Board of Governors be noted.

(C) That approval be given to the establishment of a Remuneration Committee, as a Committee of the Board of Governors, and that the Chair of the Board and Human Resources Committee be delegated authority to approved the Terms of Reference.

(D) That the name of the Committee of the Deputy Chair be amended to the Investment Committee and that amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Committee be approved.

162/9
Financial Update

The Board noted the Management Accounts for Period 6 for Coventry University Group presented by the Deputy-Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Resources) (Document G162/4).

162/10
Update from Student Governors

The Board received an oral progress report on matters of interest from the Student Governors in respect of the Students’ Union. Of particular note was:

(i) A Varsity competition was planned with Warwick with over 35 events taking place over the week.

(ii) The annual elections for the elected officers had begun with opening of nominations. This year there would be an additional sabbatical post dedicated to Postgraduate students.

(iii) Work had begun on developing the CUSU Business Plan for 2016/17 and the University Leadership Team had been invited to contribute to this process as a major stakeholder. The business plan would form the rationale for CUSU’s submission for grant funding from the University after approval by the Board of Trustees of CUSU.

(iv) It was considered that there were a number of areas of the student experience which required clearer strategic and policy direction, which CUSU could fulfil, including freshers/refreshers, multi-faith on campus; students in sports competitions and the high demands on time; community liaison; all promotions to potential students and much more.

(v) CUC membership of the Union had become a challenge due to the high participation of CUC students in CUSU activities, compared to University students, which had resulted in the cross-subsidiary of Union activity. CUSU were discussing with CUC management potential changes to membership fees for CUC students.
(vi) Work continued with the University on the new Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) although a data sharing agreement for CUSU support remained outstanding from the University.
(vii) There had been delays in grant payments from the University, which had caused issues for the Union’s cash flow and our reserves, experiencing 3 month delays.

162/11
Updates from Committee Chairs

.1 The Board received an oral update on matters of interest from the Chairs of Committees, which had met since the last meeting of the Board.

.2 The Board also received for information the Minutes of meetings of Committees of the Board of Governors which have taken place since the last meeting of the Board:

(i) Academic Affairs Committee - 9 November 2015
(ii) Audit & Risk Committee - 10 November 2015
(iii) Committee of the Deputy Chair - 10 November 2015
(iv) Strategy & Resources Committee - 20 October 2015, 10 November 2015, 8 December 2015 and 26 January 2016

.3 Redacted for reasons of confidentiality

.4 Redacted for reasons of confidentiality

.5 The Board also received the Minutes of meetings of the Board of Directors of Subsidiary Companies within the University Group which have taken place since the last meeting of the Board:

(i) CULC Ltd - 19 October 2015CUC Ltd - 5 November 2015
(ii) CUSE C.I.C - 3 November 2015
(iii) CU Services Ltd - 2 November 2015
(iv) Futurelets Ltd - 27 November 2015

162/12
State Pension Changes: impact on National Insurance Costs

The Board noted a joint report of the Group Director HR Services and interim Director of Finance in respect of changes being made to State Pension by the Government and the subsequent impact on the University obligations regarding employer and employee national insurance contributions (NI) (Document G162/5).
162/13
Fulfilling our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice - Consultation

The Board endorsed the University’s response to the HE Green Paper Consultation: Fulfilling our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice (Document G162/6).

162/14
Prevent Duty Compliance: Self-assessment Report

The Board noted the University’s Prevent Duty Compliance: Self-assessment Report (Document G162/7).

162/15
Confirmation of Chairs Actions

The Board endorsed approval of amendments to the University’s General Regulations taken by the Chair since the last meeting of the Board (Document G162/8).

162/16
Any Other Business

The Board expressed its appreciation to Mr David Soutter, who would be retiring as Deputy-Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Resources) at the end of March. Governors acknowledged Mr Soutter’s contribution to the University’s success over the recent past and wished him a long and happy retirement.

162/17
2015/16 Schedule of Meetings

The Board is asked to note the schedule of meetings for 2015/16. All meetings start at 1600 hrs in the Board Room (ABG20), Alan Berry building unless otherwise stated:

18 May 2016 1200 – 1600hrs (Board Away Event)
18 May 2016
19 July 2016 (followed by annual dinner)

Matt Challoner
Clerk to the Board of Governors