Coventry University

Board of Governors
Tuesday, 27 September 2016
4.00pm in the Boardroom, ABG20, Alan Berry Building, CV1 5FB

Minutes

Document GM166

166/1
Present:
Mr S Parker (Chair), Mr K Bissett (Deputy Chair), Mr A Adebiyi, Dr B Dhadda, Mr A Enime, Mr M Laverty, Mr A Majithia, Prof J Norton, Mr S Rogers, Ms J Hully, Dr V Cox, Ms F Secondino, Prof J Latham (Vice-Chancellor)

In attendance:
Mr M Challoner (Clerk), Mrs J Hutchison (Assistant Clerk), Mr N Alcock (Deputy-Vice-Chancellor, Group Development and Resources), Mrs S Richardson (Group Finance Director) and Mr S Fallows (Director of Planning) for Minute G166/5.1

Apologies:
Ms J Cox, Mr R Stockdale, Mr T Matthews, Ms M Plant, Mr M Reeves, Mr G McKean, Mr N Crockett

166/2
Items from the Chair

The Chair welcomed Ms Secondino to the Board of Governors, who had recently been appointed as a Staff Governor, and Mr A Enime, who had been appointed as Student Governor

166/3
Declarations of Interest

Mr Parker declared an interest in Minute 166/9 as a Senior Advisor to FEV Group GmbH. He left the meeting during consideration of this item.

166/4
Confirmation of Minutes and Matters Arising

.1
The Minutes of the 165th meeting held on 19 July 2016 (Document GM165) were approved and signed as a correct record.
The Chair reported that work was underway to create a schedule of key discussion topics for each Board and Committee meeting for the coming year.

166/5
Corporate Plan Outturn Report 2015/16

Consideration was given to the 2015/16 Q4 Corporate Plan Outturn Report (Document G166/1) presented by the Vice-Chancellor.

The Vice-Chancellor reported that overall the outturn in performance for the year had been positive, with improvement in all metrics particularly:

(a) student numbers;
(b) High quality research income;
(c) SME interactions in Coventry University Enterprises Limited.

However, performance against a number of metrics had fallen below target and would be the focus of attention over the next academic year.

The Vice-Chancellor reported that work continued to establish a joint venture in China, to be considered by the Strategy and Resources Committee in October, which would support the delivery of increased TNE numbers.

The Board was also advised that work continued to develop the University’s offer of degree apprenticeships and that this activity was likely to be delivered through Coventry University College Limited.

The Board agreed that the format of the Corporate Plan Report provided it with the appropriate detail regarding performance against the Corporate Plan and requested that future Reports include the outturn position for the most recent year end position.

166/6
Financial Update, including P12 Group Management Accounts

Consideration was given to the management accounts for Coventry University Group period 12 (Document G166/2) presented by the Group Finance Director.

The Group Finance Director reported that whilst the accounts were still subject to audit the year-end turnover figure was in line with the Corporate Plan target and that the projected surplus had exceeded target. The Board was advised that the change to accounting standard FRS102 would mean that the accounts were likely to be more volatile going forward and that the pension liability figures remained estimates ahead of the year-end actuarial valuations.
The Board noted the financial position of Serious Games International Limited, whose income at year-end (subject to audit) was adverse to budget. The Board of that company would be assessing its sales pipeline at a meeting in October 2016 and considering the company’s future strategy.

166/7
Strategic Priorities for 2016/17

Consideration was given to the presentation of the Vice-Chancellor outlining the executive priorities for 2016/17.

The Vice-Chancellor highlighted to the Board those key themes and areas of focus which were most likely to be of significance over the coming year, including:

(i) Protecting the pipeline (home)
(ii) The HE Bill
(iii) Brexit
(iv) Estates
(v) International
(vi) Consistency of Group wide activities
(vii) Large scale projects

166/8
League Table Update

The Chair welcomed the Director of Planning to the meeting who had been invited to provide an overview to the Board of the position of the University in the League Tables.

The Director of Planning presented an overview of the methodology behind the various League Tables and the University’s performance over the previous five years in these and highlighted that:

(a) The University had risen in both national and international league tables in recent years;
(b) The performance in the Times and Complete Universities Guide tables was not as strong, which was important for international recruitment;
(c) There had been good progress with several metrics (e.g. student satisfaction, graduate prospects, spend). However, continued focus on these was required to maintain and improve performance further;
(d) Areas for improvement were completion rates and entry tariff points. An entry qualifications project was underway to address this area;
Research remained an area of focus and an area of significant opportunity for improvement as research indicators (including reputation surveys and citations) often carried significant weight especially in the international league tables;

In the international tables, high scores were achieved for international student/staff metrics however, this was in markets which were becoming increasingly challenging due to competition and government policy;

It was important that the University maintained its focus on league table performance, particularly given the University’s ambition for further growth;

A number of competitor universities were performing strongly making it more difficult for the University to maintain its position.

The Board discussed those universities whose performance had been improving and considered whether any lessons could be learnt from such institutions. The Board considered the importance of delivering the Corporate Plan targets, whilst maintaining and improving the University’s League Table performance. The Board noted that, looking forward, the areas of focus would continue to be on completion rates, student retention and entry tariffs and that strategies be followed to improve performance in such areas.

Resolved:

(A) That the Director of Planning provide the Board with an update in six months’ time and to focus in particular on qualitative data, and how the League Table performance was managed in conjunction with student number growth.

(B) That the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) be invited to attend a future meeting of the Board to explain how research was supporting the University’s performance in the League Tables.

The Board thanked the Director of Planning for his presentation, who then left the meeting.

Dr B Dhadda left the meeting.

166/9
Low Carbon Vehicle Research Centre – CUE Share Capital

The Chair declared an interest in this item and left the meeting. The Deputy Chair took the Chair for this item.

Consideration was given to the Low Carbon Vehicle Research Centre report presented by the Group Finance Director (Document G166/4).

Redacted for reasons of confidentiality.
Appointment of Co-Chairs of the Academic Affairs Committee

The Chair re-joined the meeting and took the chair.

Resolved that Ms Plant and Ms Hully be appointed as Co-Chairs of the Academic Affairs Committee.

International Governance Update

Minutes for this item are contained in a Confidential Annex.

Teaching Degree Award Powers (TDAP) Update

Consideration was given to the Teaching Degree Award Powers Update (Document G166/6) presented by the Vice-Chancellor.

The Vice-Chancellor reported that following advice from BIS it had been confirmed that it was not possible for any of the University’s subsidiary companies to seek TDAP. Accordingly, the Vice-Chancellor reported that the targets in the Corporate Strategy for Coventry University London Campus Limited (CULC) and Coventry University College Limited (CUC) to seek to achieve TDAP could no longer be achieved.

Resolved that the targets for CULC and CUC to achieve TDAP in the Corporate Strategy be removed.

Governance Review Report

Consideration was given to the Governance Review Update (Document G166/7, 7a and 7b) presented by the Clerk.

The Clerk reported that work continued to develop a delegation framework to clarify the roles, responsibilities and authorities of the UK subsidiary companies following the review of UK Governance by external consultants.

The Clerk reported that by the end of this academic year the review of the governance framework associated with both the UK and international operations would be complete which would provide a strong platform for further growth. He also highlighted the activities
underway to review the risk management processes which was being overseen by the Audit and Risk Committee.

166/14
Update from Student Governors

.1
Consideration was given to the CUSU Report to the Board of Governors presented by the Student Governors (Document G166/8).

.2
It was reported that a data sharing agreement was now in place between CUSU and the University.

.3
The Board congratulated CUSU on its increase in student satisfaction rating in the recent NSS.

.4
The Board discussed the Student Governors’ request regarding membership of the Strategy and Resources and Human Resources Committees. The Chair explained that the membership of the Strategy and Resources Committee comprised the Chairs of the other Board committees, whereas the Human Resources Committee included many specialist and co-opted members who were experts in their field. It was further noted that there would be value in ensuring that the students’ views were engaged in the development of estates projects where relevant. This was an activity which would need to take place ahead of any proposals being brought forward to committees.

.5
The Co-Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee acknowledged the valuable contribution of the Student Governor to the Academic Affairs Committee and it was proposed that the additional Student Governor also be invited to attend.

.6
Resolved that the Student Governor be invited to attend meetings of the Academic Affairs Committee.

166/15
Updates from Committee Chairs

No further updates beyond those matters referred to in other agenda items were received.

166/16
General Regulations

Resolved that the General Regulations, Appendix 7 Student Disciplinary Procedures (Documents G166/9 and 9a) be approved.
Committee Annual Reports

Resolved that the Annual Reports for the Strategy and Resources Committee, the Investment Committee, the Academic Affairs Committee and Academic Board (Documents G166/10a to 10d) be noted.

Any Other Business

The Vice-Chancellor provided the Board with an update in respect of a recent press article.

2016/17 Schedule of Meetings

The Board noted the schedule of meetings for 2016/17. All meetings start at 1600 hrs in the Board Room (ABG20), Alan Berry building unless otherwise stated:

28 November 2016
15 February 2017
17 May 2017
18 July 2017 (followed by annual dinner)

Matt Challoner
Clerk to the Board of Governors