Coventry University

Board of Governors
Tuesday, 18 July 2017
4.00pm at The Place, Westwood Heath, Coventry, CV4 8GP

Minutes

Document GM174

174/1
Present:
Mr S Parker (Chair), Mr K Bissett (Deputy Chair), Mr A Adebanjo, Mr F Ahanonu, Dr V Cox, Mr D Frost, Ms J Hully, Prof J Latham (Vice-Chancellor), Mr M Laverty, Mr A Majithia, Mr T Matthews, Prof J Norton, Ms M Plant, Ms V Mahendra, Mr G McKean, Mr A Meehan, Mr S Rogers, Ms F Secondino, Mr R Stockdale

In attendance:
Mr M Challoner (Clerk), Ms H Fulford (Principal Registry Officer), Mr N Alcock (Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Group Development and Resources)), Mrs S Richardson (Group Chief Finance Officer)

Mr I Dunn (Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience)) for Minutes G174/5 and 6
Mr S Fallows (Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Strategy and Planning)) for Minutes G174/7 and 8

Apologies:
Dr M Reeves, Dr B Dhadda, Prof N Crockett

174/2
Declarations of Interest

None

174/3
Items from the Chair

The Chair welcomed Mr A Adebanjo and Mr F Ahanonu who had recently been appointed as Student Governors.
174/4
 Confirmation of Minutes and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the 173rd meeting held on 18 May 2017 (Document GM173) were approved and signed as a correct record.

174/5
 Online Learning

.1
The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) and Strategic Transformation Office Business Analyst joined the meeting.

.2
Consideration was given to the Business and Investment Case for the establishment of a new wholly owned subsidiary to support the delivery of online education, presented by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) and Business Analyst (Documents G174/1, 1a and 1b).

.2
The Deputy Vice-Chancellor presented the approval history of the project to-date, noting that the preliminary business case had been considered and approved by the Investment Committee, and considered by the Academic Affairs Committee.

.3
The Deputy Vice-Chancellor provided an overview of the proposed operating model, noting that courses would be designed to be delivered online, on campus, and as a blended model. This would allow students greater flexibility in moving between modes of study on the same course if necessary. Whilst marketing, recruitment and the studio for creation of online content for the online courses would be based within a new academic subsidiary, the Faculties and other academic subsidiaries would be responsible for the production of the academic content, in order to maintain a robust quality monitoring procedure.

.4
The Board discussed the anticipated completion rates for students studying wholly online. It was noted that students would enrol on a module-by-module basis in order to mitigate risk of affecting overall completion rates of the Group, and that the enrolment model used by the CU Group had been used as a basis for the proposed model.

.5
The Board considered the external dependencies of the proposal, including IT infrastructure, marketing and administration. It was confirmed that additional resource in respect of these dependencies had been included within the business plan. The student number and associated income targets were discussed, and it was acknowledged that these were stretch targets.

.6
Resolved that:

(A) The full business case in respect of the development of online learning provision be approved;
(B) Redacted for reasons of confidentiality;

(C) Approval be given for the incorporation of Coventry University Online Limited as a company limited by shares with the appointment of Mr N Alcock and Mr I Dunn as Directors;

(D) Authority be delegated to make all the necessary filings with Companies House to complete the incorporation of the Company.

174/6
Education Strategy and Teaching Excellence Framework

.1 Consideration was given to the Education Strategy and Teaching Excellence Framework report presented by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) (Documents G174/2, 2a, 2b and 2c).

.2 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor presented an overview of the actions taken within each Faculty in respect of module satisfaction rates, and the actions proposed to continue to maintain teaching excellence across the Group. The wide-ranging proposals were grouped under four main areas: University systems and processes, people and organisational development, teaching and learning approaches, and support for students.

.3 Resolved that:

(A) Endorsement be given to the proposals within the project plan;

(B) A timed roadmap with targets, an impact analysis and detail of the associated investment required to deliver the projects be presented to a future meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee.

.4 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor reported that the NSS results were due to be published shortly, with sector-wide data made available in August. It was noted that the effect of the change in questions within the survey was unknown, but would likely affect the position of a number of institutions within sector league tables.

.5 The Board congratulated the executive and wider staff on the Gold rating recently awarded to the University in the Teaching Excellence Framework, noting the positive statement of findings for the institution. The Board welcomed the recent award made to all staff in recognition of this achievement.

.6 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) and Business Analyst left the meeting.
League Tables and Competitor Analysis

.1 The Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Strategy and Planning) joined the meeting.

.2 Consideration was given to a presentation in respect of League Tables and Competitor Analysis presented by the Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Strategy and Planning).

.3 The Board received an overview of the positions of the institution in current league tables and the metrics used by each league table to calculate the position of each institution, noting that there was a lag of up to 4 years between an activity taking place and its associated effect on league table position.

.4 The Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor gave a demonstration of the business intelligence dashboard developed by the Strategy and Planning Office, and explained how the dashboard data had informed strategic decisions of the executive, including the proposals in respect of teaching and learning presented by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience). It was noted that similar data at course level was provided by the Strategy and Planning Office to course teams on an annual basis to inform the quality monitoring process. The Board discussed the metrics within the dashboard data and their resultant effect on league table position, noting that progress had been made in the research metrics in respect of PhD completions.

.5 The Board explored the link between the budget setting process and work of the Strategy and Planning Office. It was acknowledged that although there was not a direct link between the two processes, the Group Chief Finance Officer and Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor regularly liaised to ensure a holistic approach.

.6 The Board received an overview of recent changes to reporting within the sector, including the updated NSS survey, a change to the DLHE process, and the recent publication of Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) data by HEFCE.

Corporate Strategy 2021 – Q3 Performance Report

.1 The Board noted the Corporate Strategy 2021 – Q3 Performance Report presented by the Vice-Chancellor and Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Strategy and Planning) (Document G174/3).

.2 The Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Strategy and Planning) left the meeting.
174/9
Budget and Estimates 2017/18 to 2022

.1 Consideration was given to the Budget 2017/18 and Estimates 2018/22 for Coventry University Group presented by the Group Director of Finance (Documents G174/4 and 4a).

.2 The Group Director of Finance reported that the Strategy and Resources Committee had considered the 2017/18 Group Budget and recommended it to the Board for its approval. The Group Chief Finance Officer reported that the proposed budget was aligned to all pillars of the Corporate Plan, and that funding was in place to facilitate the capital programme. It was recommended that the target surplus be reduced below the corporate target in 2017/18 and 2018/19 in order to provide additional investment in academic posts and other initiatives to further improve the student experience. The Group Chief Finance Officer confirmed that the proposed budget met the agreed working capital requirement agreed by the Strategy and Resources Committee.

.3 Resolved that the Budget 2017/18 and Estimates 2018/22 be be approved, and in doing so note that the Corporate Plan surplus target in 2017/18 and 2018/19 would reduce from 7% to 5% of turnover and thereafter remain at 7%.

174/10
Multi-Academy Trust (MAT)

.1 Consideration was given to a report in respect of financial reporting of the Better Futures Multi-Academy Trust (Document G174/5 and 5a) presented by the Group Chief Finance Officer.

.2 The Board considered a summary of the professional advice received by the Group Chief Finance Officer, and discussed the two options presented in the report. It was noted that if the Board chose to consolidate the MAT within the Group accounts, this decision could be changed as the MAT matured, and that the options presented did not adversely affect the levels of financial and reputational risk. The Board discussed the options presented by the Group Chief Finance Officer and the resultant impact on league table metrics.

.3 Resolved that:

(A) The Multi-Academy Trust be consolidated within the accounts of Coventry University Group;

(B) Authority be delegated to the Group Chief Finance Officer to take forward discussions with the External Auditors to agree this approach.
174/11
P11 Group Management Accounts

The Board received the management accounts for Coventry University Group period 11 (Document G174/6).

174/12
Update from Student Governors

.1 Consideration was given to the CUSU Report to the Board of Governors presented by the Student Governors (Document G174/7).

.2 The Student Governors reported the five priorities for the Students Union over the next academic year, including an increased focus on internationalism, the introduction of a leadership award, and working with the University to develop a Sport and Active Lifestyle strategy.

174/13
Updates from Committee Chairs

.1 The Chair reported that action logs were being drafted for all Board Committees. These would be considered as a standing item at each Committee and subsidiary Board meeting, in order to provide greater rigour to the tracking process.

.2 The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee reported that the new External Auditors, BDO, had attended the recent meeting. Other areas of focus for the Committee were the continuing tender process for the internal audit function and the anticipated introduction of a new risk management framework, which was considered to be a priority for the forthcoming academic year. It was noted that a report in respect of fire safety had been commissioned by the Committee and would be considered by the Board following the meeting.

174/14
Offline Items

The Chair noted that the following items would be considered offline following the meeting:

- International and Commercial Common Boards;
- Fire Safety in University Premises;
- Nominations for Honorary Life Fellows;
- Whistleblowing Policy;
- 2017/18 General Regulations;
- Director Renewals for the Educational Common Board.
G174/15
Any Other Business

.1 The Chair reported that the results from the recent Board effectiveness survey would be presented to the next meeting, and requested that any members yet to complete the survey did so by the advertised deadline.

.2 The Chair reminded all members to complete the Coventry Essentials training in respect of the Prevent duty.

G174/16
Schedule of Meetings

The Board noted the schedule of meetings for 2017/18. All meetings start at 1600 hrs:

26 September 2017
28 November 2017
14 February 2018
16 May 2018
17 July 2018 (followed by annual dinner)

Matt Challoner
Clerk to the Board of Governors
July 2017