



Board of Governors

Minutes of the virtual meeting held on 23rd February 2021

20/44 Attendance

44.1 Present

Mr J Bateman OBE	Independent Governor, Chair
Dr D Beech	Independent Governor
Mr J Bothamley CBE	Independent Governor
Mr S Devlin	Independent Governor
Mr R Dudley	Staff Governor
Mrs D Gant	Independent Governor
Professor D Green CBE	Vice Chancellor & Chief Executive
Mrs A Hooper	Independent Governor
Dr C Jones	Independent Governor
Mr N Khan	Independent Governor
Dr D McDougall	Staff Governor
Dr S Pittaway	Staff Governor
Miss M Price	Student Governor
Mr M Scriven	Staff Governor
Mr I Smith	Independent Governor
Mr H South	Student Governor
Mrs S Speck	Independent Governor

44.2 In Attendance

Mr R Bonham	Director of Finance & Resources
Mrs J Britton	Director of Communications & Participation
Mrs A Cope	Director of Human Resources
Mr M Donovan	Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor (Inclusive Sport & Educational Development)
Professor S Greer	Deputy Vice Chancellor & Provost
Ms H Johnstone	Head of Governance and Regulatory Affairs (Clerk to the Board)
Dr T Jones	Interim Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor Students
Mrs A Jordan	Deputy Provost
Ms T Manning	Vice President, Students' Union
Mrs J Newland	Assistant Clerk to the Board

44.3 Apologies

Mr C Arntzen	Independent Governor
Rev'd Dr A Pettersen	Independent Governor
Mr D Iddon	Independent Governor

20/45 Declarations of Interests

45.1 There were no declarations of interest.

20/46 Minutes

46.1 The minutes of the meetings held on 24th and 25th November 2020 [BG20/39] were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting with the following change: in item 29.3 in the minutes of the meeting of 24th November 2020, 'governor observer' is to be changed to 'governor member'.

46.2 There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

20/47 Chair's Business

47.1 Chair's Actions

47.1.1 The Chair reported that on the Board's behalf he approved UW Worcester Wolves entering into a loan agreement with Sport England, further to UW Wolves securing grant funding and a loan to support with the club's costs incurred due to the pandemic. It was noted the terms of the loan were very reasonable.

47.2 Chair's Report

47.2.1 The Chair reported on an interesting CUC seminar he had taken part in on Re-imagined Learning and Teaching and noted the recent successful Board workshop, research presentations and the University debate on sustainability.

47.2.2 The Chair drew attention to information circulated on HE funding, noting the potential future impact on the University. He noted the CUC had appointed Advance HE to undertake a review of the HE Senior Staff Remuneration Code and this would be considered by the Remuneration Committee. The USS pension issue is ongoing and the CUC meeting on the issue has been deferred to March.

20/48 Vice Chancellor's Report [BG20/40]

The Vice Chancellor presented his report to the Board and drew members' attention to the following:

48.1 The Vice Chancellor noted the situation had changed significantly since the Prime Minister's announcement the previous day on the road map out of the pandemic and more students than expected would be able to return to the University from 8th March. The Vice Chancellor is to hold meetings with staff and students this week.

48.2 There has been significantly more student hardship as a result of the pandemic and the government has increased funding for hardship following many expressions of concern, including an article by the Vice Chancellor in the Times Higher Education.

48.3 As well as continuing to be an education hot spot, the University has remained a relative Coronavirus cold spot. Cases did rise in January but have now fallen back.

48.4 Looking to the future, the University anticipated that there would be a focus on health professions and was successful in being awarded the highest number of extra health student places; nursing applications have increased by a third. In addition, discussions have just begun on the need for professional pathways and qualifications in the care sector. The University has also been very active in seeking to secure government grants and work is well underway at the Severn Campus, in part funded by the grant received from the Getting Building Fund. The Vice Chancellor was pleased to report the University has been successful in being included in Worcester's bid for the Town's Fund and in obtaining a grant from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme for £730,250.

48.5 – 48.7 [NOT FOR PUBLICATION]

48.8 The Chair, on behalf of the Board, thanked everyone involved in keeping the University going and helping it to thrive. The Board received the report.

20/49 Provost's Report [BG20/41]

49.1 *[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]*

49.2 The University worked with the Students' Union on a safety net policy for students in response to the new lockdown and the Provost was very grateful for the help of the Students' Union officers.

49.3 *[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]*

49.4 The Board noted the difficulties for both staff and students to network during the pandemic and support put in place.

49.5 The Board received the report.

20/50 Students' Union business [BG20/42]

50.1 The Students' Union officers presented the update on the Students' Union activities, highlighting their advice and support services and work to boost engagement of Course Reps including support for course reps at Partner Institutions. The officers have been involved nationally in efforts to combat academic misconduct and gave input to Chris Skidmore's 10 Minute Bill: Tackling Essay Mills and Contract Cheating.

50.2 Welfare activities have included care packages for students with children currently home schooling, the launch of an internal pen pal scheme to help tackle loneliness during the pandemic and a Chat service during lockdowns.

50.3 The current RAG (Raise and Give) total is just over £19K, that is on course to beat last year's total. TeamWorc Action days had to be put on hold due to the pandemic but volunteering opportunities have been promoted.

50.4 Semester 1 in 2021/21 has been very challenging for societies and memberships have dropped. The outlook for Varsity however is now looking more positive with a return to outdoor sports likely.

50.5 *[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]*

50.6 Officers asked for feedback on what Board members would like included in their report. Members were in favour of continuing to include what is currently in the report and were appreciative of how well the Board and Students' Union worked together.

50.7 The Vice Chancellor noted there was now a good prospect of graduation ceremonies taking place for last year's students. The Students' Union officers thought this would be very important for students.

50.8 The Board received the report.

20/51 Composition of the Board [BG20/43]

51.1 Further to the Board workshop held in November 2020 on the composition of the Board, the Nominations & Governance Committee considered proposals for amendments to the composition of the Board and made six recommendations relating to the removal of the category of co-opted governor, increase in the maximum number of independent members of the Board, the creation of a specific category of staff governor, the appointment process for staff governors and the number of student governors.

51.2 The Board approved all six recommendations. The changes are to be reflected in revisions being made to the Instrument and Articles of Government and are planned to come into force from the start of the academic year 2021/22.

20/52 Reports from Committees & Academic Board

52.1 Audit Committee [BG20/44]

52.1.1 The Board noted the Committee had met to approve the annual TRAC return for submission to the OfS and had reviewed the effectiveness of the internal and external audit service.

52.1.2 The Board received the report.

52.2 Finance and Development Committee [BG20/45]

52.2.1 The Board noted the update on capital developments, in particular progress on the refurbishment of Berrows House, the Severn Campus infrastructure and the IICEC project.

52.2.2 The Director of Finance & Resources noted the latest financial forecast based upon the latest assumptions regarding lockdown and its impact upon activities, adding there are still a number of unknowns, for example on rent rebates and the outlook for conferencing. *[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]*

52.2.3 *[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]*

52.2.4 The Board received the report.

52.3 Nominations & Governance Committee [BG20/46]

52.3.1 The Committee Chair presented the report on the Committee's work and noted an advertisement had been posted for the recruitment of Independent members of the Board.

52.3.2 The Board approved the new bye-law 11 regarding the appointment of independent governors and approved an addition to bye-law 1 to include a 'Fit and Proper' person declaration.

53.3.3 *[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]*

52.3.4 The Board received the report.

52.4 Board Business Continuity Group [BG20/47]

52.4.1 The Board received the report of the Group for information and agreed to extend the remit of the Group to the date of the next Board meeting on April 27th 2021.

52.5 Academic Board [BG20/48]

52.5.1 The governor observer on Academic Board presented the report on the work of Academic Board including an update on the Research Excellence, Knowledge Exchange and Teaching Exchange Frameworks and the OfS consultation on regulating quality and standards. The Board noted the rationale for the introduction of contextual admissions. Following the recent research presentations to the Board, the Board noted the very positive responses on how well supported researchers felt by the University.

52.5.2 The Board received the report.

20/53 Compliance with OfS conditions [BG20/49]

53.1 The Board received for information an update on matters in relation to the OfS, noting in particular the letter from the Secretary of State to the OfS setting out strategic priorities and that the University had received confirmation its Access and Participation Plan would be rolled over for the 2021-22 academic year.

20/54 Subsidiary Companies

54.1 Directorship of UW Wolves [BG20/50]

54.1.1 *[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]*

54.2 UW Wolves Impact Report [BG20/51]

54.2.1 The Board received for information the annual UW Worcester Wolves Impact Report, setting out the added value the club brings to the University. The Board noted nearly 1000 hours of placements for students were achieved.

20/55 Any Other Business

55.1 Governors thanked the Vice Chancellor for his very powerful message on this year's Holocaust Memorial Day.

20/56 Date of Next Meeting

27th & 28th April 2021.