

Board of Governors

**CONFIRMED MINUTES**

**DATE: Thursday 12 May 2022**

**TIME: 4:00pm**

**LOCATION: Conference Rooms 1 to 3, B Block, Cyncoed Campus**

**Governors Present:**

1. John Taylor CBE (Chair of the Board and Independent Governor)
2. Professor Cara Aitchison (President and Vice Chancellor)
3. Nick Capaldi (Independent Governor)
4. Roisin Connolly (Independent Governor)
5. Karen Fiagbe (Independent Governor)
6. Venkateswaramma Gonavaram (Student Governor)
7. Dr Malcolm James (Academic Staff Governor)
8. Paul Matthews (Independent Governor)
9. Professor Myra Nimmo (Independent Governor)
10. Menai Owen Jones (Co Vice Chair and Independent Governor)
11. Kirsty Palmer (Academic Board Representative Governor)
12. Alison Thorne (Independent Governor)
13. Dr Chris Turner (Co Vice Chair and Independent Governor)
14. Scott Waddington (Independent Governor)
15. David Warrender (Independent Governor)
16. Naomi Wrigley (Student Governor)
17. Denn Yearwood (Professional Services Staff Governor)

**In attendance:**

1. Professor Jacqui Boddington (Pro Vice Chancellor for Student Engagement)
2. Christine Fraser (University Secretary and Clerk to the Board of Governors)
3. Professor Sheldon Hanton (Pro Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation)
4. Mairwen Harris (Head of Strategy, Planning and Performance)
5. Professor Rachael Langford (Deputy Vice Chancellor)
6. David Llewellyn (Chief Officer Resources)
7. Emily Voisin (Governance Officer)
8. Greg Lane (Head of Governance and Deputy Clerk to the Board of Governors) (minutes)

# **Part A (1): Items for Brief Discussion and/or Approval**

# **Apologies for Absence and Preliminaries (agenda item 1)**

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Sheila Hendrickson-Brown, Chris Pilgrim, David Surdeau and Matthew Tossell (all Independent Governors).

# **Declarations of Conflict of Interest (agenda item 2)**

# 2.1 There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

# **Minutes of the Previous Meeting: 31 March 2022 (agenda item 3)**

# 3.1 The Board Resolved:

1. To approve the minutes of its meeting held on 31 March 2022 as a correct record.

# **Matters arising (agenda item 4)**

4.1 There were no matters arising.

# **Chair’s Report (agenda item 5)**

5.1 The Chair of the Board introduced their report and advised that he had attended three days of graduation ceremonies for the class of 2021 during w/c 25 April 2022. The Chair advised that the inauguration ceremony for Stephen Wordsworth, the University’s new Chancellor had been held on 29 April 2022. The Chair commended staff for their work in delivering a successful round of graduation ceremonies.

5.2 The Chair updated the Board on the Training, Education and Research (TERC) Bill that was continuing its progress through the Senedd. The Bill had started Committee Stage 2 that day where a number of amendments had been put forward by the Government for consideration by the Senedd that placed specific duties on the new Commission. These covered Research and Innovation, greater promotion of Welsh language provision, taking due regard of the ‘Learner Voice’, Academic Freedom and encouraging enhanced ‘Social Partnership’ with trade unions. The Chair undertook to update Board members as further consideration of the Bill progressed.

5.3 The Chair confirmed that he would be conducting individual annual appraisal reviews with all Board members between mid-June and early July. The process with Board members was being introduced for the first time with Board members and was in follow up to recommendations of the Board Effectiveness Review and received best practice across the HE sector.

5.4 The Board Resolved:

1. To note the Chair’s Report.

# **Vice Chancellor’s Report (agenda item 6)**

## The Vice Chancellor introduced their report that provided an update on the higher education policy landscape. The Vice Chancellor outlined key areas of concern raised by Universities Wales and ChuW on the Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Bill that was progressing through the Senedd. The most significant concern for the University related to proposals for Welsh Government to retain powers to dissolve Higher Education Corporations. The University was one of only three universities in Wales classified as a Higher Education Corporation.

## The Vice Chancellor updated the Board on Post-16 Education and Funding Developments in England and outlined the potential implications for universities in Wales.

## The Board was informed that Universities UK and Guild HE had launched the Fair Admissions Code of Practice in early March 2022. The Code was self-regulatory that set out expectations for universities to improve stability, fairness and transparency in the admissions system whilst maintaining high academic standards. The University intended to sign up to the Code in the next academic year to align itself with the wider sector.

## The Vice Chancellor advised the Board that a Wales Higher Education Sector Group for Ukraine had been formed by Welsh Government, Universities UK International and Universities Wales. The Group would be chaired by the Vice Chancellor and was tasked with ensuring that universities in Wales developed a co-ordinated and proactive approach to welcoming and supporting academics, students and others displaced by the war in Ukraine. The Vice Chancellor also highlighted the specific package of support that the University had directly implemented following its ‘Supporting Ukraine’ event held on 24 March 2022.

## The Board was updated on the graduation ceremonies that had been successfully held in April 2022 for those students that had their graduation ceremonies postponed in July 2020 and July 2021 due to the pandemic. Eleven graduation ceremonies had been held at the Wales Millennium Centre with more than 3000 students from 110 countries having attended. A further seven graduation ceremonies were planned for students set to graduate in July 2022.

## The Vice Chancellor outlined proposals to merge the University’s Academic Board and Management Board for the 2022-23 academic year. The University had previously used a Combined Academic Board during the pandemic and this on the whole had been successful in achieving agile and streamlined decision making. Detailed terms of reference for the new combined body would be provided to the Board of Governors at its meeting on 7 July 2022.

6.7 The Vice Chancellor informed the Board that the Research Excellence Framework 2021 (REF 2021) results had been released nationally earlier that day. Significant progress had been made in a range of areas since the previous Research Excellence Framework had been undertaken (REF 2014). A full analysis of the University’s performance was scheduled to be considered by SPPC on 6 June 2022 and the Board on 7 July 2022.

6.8 The Pro Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation provided the Board with an initial brief overview of the Research Excellence Framework itself and the University’s headline performance in REF 2021. The University’s REF 2021 submission had been its largest ever with four times as many full time staff being submitted when compared to REF 2014. Women comprised 45% of the REF 2021 submitted staff compared to 31.5% in REF 2014, while BAME staff comprised 13.4% of staff submitted in REF 2021 compared to no staff in REF 2014. The University’s submission included researchers from all of the University’s Schools and the University’s International Centre for Design and Research (PDR). Overall, 70% of the submission had been rated either Internationally Excellent or World Leading, with all units of assessment containing world leading research. The University’s submission had achieved a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.83 ranking it 5th in Wales and 81st in the UK. The University’s Research Power score was 34 ranking it 6th in Wales and 99th in the UK. The Pro Vice Chancellor concluded by providing headline information on the results of the submissions for Art and Design, Sport, Health, Business and Education.

6.9 Board members thanked the Vice Chancellor for her wide-ranging report and congratulated the Pro Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation and all staff involved with the University’s REF 2021 submission. Board members had a brief discussion on the REF 2021 results and future potential opportunities and challenges for the University in the research area.

The Board Resolved:

1. To note the Vice Chancellor’s Report.
2. To note the initial update from the Pro Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation on the REF 2021.
3. To note that a full analysis of the University’s REF 2021 performance will be considered by SPPC on 6 June 2022 and the Board on 7 July 2022.

# **Students’ Union Report (agenda item 7)**

## The SU President and Vice President jointly introduced their report. The SU Vice President advised that the SU had been partnering effectively with the University to review the Student Charter in readiness for the 2022-23 academic year. The Board was also updated that arrangements to recruit the Student Leadership Team for the 2020-23 academic year were already underway with the deadline for SU School Reps and SU Part Time Officer applications having closed on 6 May 2022.

## The SU Vice President was pleased to report that there had been a significant increase in the activities of SU clubs and societies as the UK continued to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic. The SU President updated the Board on the SU Sports Awards 2022 evening held on 4 May 2022 and the annual Varsity event held away at the University of Bath on 6 May 2022. The Board was also updated on the SU Student Achievement Awards 2022.

## The Board Resolved:

1. To the note the Students’ Union Report.

# **Part A (2): Items of Specific Importance for Discussion and/or Approval**

# **Strategic Planning and Performance Committee Summary Report (4 April 2022) (agenda item 8)**

# 8.1 The Chair of the Board, as Chair of SPPC, introduced the report that summarised proceedings of the SPPC meeting held on 4 April 2022.The Committee had considered progress updates on: Student Recruitment; Strategic Comparators and Competitors; and the Development of the Estates Masterplan. The Committee had also received an informative report on progress against specific Measures of Success covering: Student and Civic Mission; Financial Sustainability and Staffing; Entry Tariffs; and Student Metrics. As part of its academic assurance remit the Committee received the HEFCW Triennial Quality Assurance Report from HEFCW and also considered the Spring Interim Quality Assurance Report.

# 8.2 The Board Resolved:

# 1. To note the Strategic Planning and Performance Committee Summary Report from its meeting held on 4 April 2022.

# **Student Recruitment Update (agenda item 9)**

## The Deputy Vice Chancellor introduced the report and advised that applications for places on full time undergraduate programmes commencing in September 2022 had increased by 8% in comparison to the previous year. Of these applications, 97% had already been processed. Offers were also 6% ahead of the previous year. The Deputy Vice Chancellor advised that overseas applications for September 2022 entry had also risen significantly by around 78%. There would be a clear focus on conversion of applications by Marketing and External Relations and Global Engagement over the next few months to maximise student recruitment. The Deputy Vice Chancellor provided details on the number of student applications received by each of the five Academic Schools and highlighted notable changes on recruitment for specific programmes.

9.2 Board members noted the growing trend for students to accept places on programmes at a later point in the year than previously. This trend was evident across the wider sector. The importance of effective marketing of programmes was discussed, this included the effective use of social media and ensuring that programmes had relevant and marketable programme names/titles. Board members were advised that students experience of the University’s admissions process was very positive with most students indicating a ‘propensity to recommend’ the University. The role of alumni in attracting potential applicants was also discussed.

## 9.3 The Board Resolved:

1. To note the Student Recruitment Update.

# **Governance Report (agenda item 10)**

## 10.1 The University Secretary introduced the report and advised that Committee Chairs had recently met to discuss issues relating to the operation of Board and Committee meetings. The report summarised these discussions and detailed actions that would be taken forward by the Governance team. The report also included proposed recommendations for Board to consider and approve in readiness for the 2022-23 academic year.

## 10.2 The Board Resolved:

1. To approve the following recommendations from the Committee Chairs:
2. That Board meetings take place in person (with an option for hybrid) in 2022-23.
3. That Committees meet primarily online but with at least one in-person meeting per year.
4. That the Committee Chairs sign off meeting dates and committee membership outside of the regular meeting schedule with final committee membership approval aligned to the timing of governor appraisals.

# **Any Other Business (agenda item 11)**

11.1 There was no other business.

# **Part B: Items for Noting**

# **Board of Governors Work Programme for 2021-22 (agenda item 12)**

12.1 The Board Resolved:

1. To note the Board of Governors Work Programme for 2021-22

**(Meeting concluded 5.10pm)**

**John Taylor CBE**

**Chair of the Board of Governors**

**Cardiff Metropolitan University**