

MINUTES

BOARD OF GOVERNORS, BG-126

Date: Wednesday 21 September 2022

Time: 1430

Location: CA105/6, Catalyst, Leek Rd

1. Items marked with an asterisk (starred items) were for information only or regarded as noncontentious.
2. Items classified as Confidential, and their subsequent minutes (highlighted here in blue), will be redacted before publication of the agenda and minutes on the University's public website.

Members		
Hannah Blackburn	Student Governor (President, Students' Union)	P
Jonathan Chapman	External Member	P
Kevin Gould	External Member	P
Saima Hussain	Staff Governor (professional services staff)	P
Colin Hughes (Chair)	External Member	P
Professor Martin Jones	Vice Chancellor	P
Baljinder Kuller	External Member	P
Juliet Oosthuysen	External Member	P
Vikki Sylvester	External Member	A
Dr Simon Smith	Staff Governor (academic staff)	P
Hayden Tsang	Student Governor (Vice-President, Students' Union)	P
Jonathan Vardon	External Member	A
Sara Williams	External Member	A
In attendance		
Ian Blachford	Chief Operating Officer and Clerk to the Board of Governors	IA
Dr Annabel Kiernan	Pro Vice Chancellor - Education	IA
Professor Kevin Hetherington	Deputy Vice Chancellor	IA
Sally McGill	Chief Financial Officer	IA
Professor Raheel Nawaz	Pro Vice Chancellor – Digital Transformation	IA
Lauren Rooke	Assistant Clerk to the Board of Governors (<i>minutes</i>)	IA

P = Present; A = Apologies; Ab = Absent; L = Late; IA = In Attendance; T = via Teams

Know Your Business session, 1430 – 1500:

A session on first impressions and priorities was delivered by Sapreena Kumari, Executive Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions; and Dawn Vos, Executive Director of Marketing and Communications.

Members and attendees commented as follows:

- Juliet Oosthuysen highlighted the key nature of the rebranding exercise, noting that buy-in was required at the highest level.
- Colin Hughes asked about timing and Martin Jones noted that a short update would be given on this in his VC report elsewhere on the agenda.

- Jonathan Chapman asked about Executive and Governor support and Dawn Vos confirmed that this had been appreciated so far, and that any further assistance that Governors could give in helping to raise the University's profile nationally would also be invaluable.

1 MEETING MANAGEMENT																					
2854	Apologies for Absence were received from Victoria Sylvester, Jonathan Vardon and Sara Williams. Saima Hussain was welcomed to her first meeting of the Board of Governors.																				
2855	There were no new Declarations of Interest .																				
2856	<p>Membership of the Board of Governors for 2022-23:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">Constitution</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Membership</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>External Members</td> <td>Dr Jonathan Chapman Kevin Gould Colin Hughes (Chair) Baljinder Kuller Juliet Oosthuysen Victoria Sylvester Jonathan Vardon (Deputy Chair) Sara Williams <i>VACANCY x2</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Student Governors</td> <td>Hannah Blackburn (President, Students' Union) Hayden Tsang (Vice President, Students' Union)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Staff Governors</td> <td>Dr Simon Smith (Academic Staff governor) Saima Hussein (Professional Support governor)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Vice Chancellor</td> <td>Professor Martin Jones</td> </tr> <tr> <td>In attendance</td> <td>Ian Blachford, Chief Operating Officer & Clerk to the Board Professor Kevin Hetherington, Deputy Vice Chancellor Dr Annabel Kiernan, Pro Vice Chancellor - Education Sally McGill, Chief Financial Officer & Deputy Chief Executive Professor Raheel Nawaz, Pro Vice Chancellor – Digital Transformation</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Co-opted Committee Members for 2022-23:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mohit Dhingra</td> <td>Audit and Risk Committee</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mike Herbert</td> <td>Sustainability and Resources Committee</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ian Jenkinson</td> <td>Sustainability and Resources Committee</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Constitution	Membership	External Members	Dr Jonathan Chapman Kevin Gould Colin Hughes (Chair) Baljinder Kuller Juliet Oosthuysen Victoria Sylvester Jonathan Vardon (Deputy Chair) Sara Williams <i>VACANCY x2</i>	Student Governors	Hannah Blackburn (President, Students' Union) Hayden Tsang (Vice President, Students' Union)	Staff Governors	Dr Simon Smith (Academic Staff governor) Saima Hussein (Professional Support governor)	Vice Chancellor	Professor Martin Jones	In attendance	Ian Blachford, Chief Operating Officer & Clerk to the Board Professor Kevin Hetherington, Deputy Vice Chancellor Dr Annabel Kiernan, Pro Vice Chancellor - Education Sally McGill, Chief Financial Officer & Deputy Chief Executive Professor Raheel Nawaz, Pro Vice Chancellor – Digital Transformation	Co-opted Committee Members for 2022-23:		Mohit Dhingra	Audit and Risk Committee	Mike Herbert	Sustainability and Resources Committee	Ian Jenkinson	Sustainability and Resources Committee
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2857	The Minutes of the last meeting of the Board of Governors , 29 June 2022 BG/126/01 and Notes from Strategic Event , 11 July 2022 BG/126/02, were confirmed as true and accurate records (subject to minor corrections to the latter to a) note that Simon smith had not been absent at the July Strategic Event and b) to add clarification around branding discussions at the event.)																				
2858	<p>Matters arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Events – a) it was noted that the Summer BofG and executive Strategic Event had taken place on Monday 11 July 2022, at Staffordshire University London; and b) it was further noted that the previously scheduled 17 Nov 2022 Strategic Event would no longer take place. Development Board update – it was noted that this paper, which was originally scheduled for this meeting, would now go to Sustainability & Resources Committee on 9 November 2022, following a review by UEB to align the external philanthropic fundraising strategy with the new University Strategy and strategic KPIs. (It would subsequently be referred through to Board of Governors on 16 November 2022.) 																				
2 STRATEGIC OVERVIEW																					
2859	<p>The Board received an update on Strategic Developments and Organisational Performance BG/126/03, from the Vice Chancellor, covering the following main areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> External context, including an overview of current HE consultations University performance, including an overview of recent student surveys and nominations 																				

- University business (including graduation ceremonies and Welcome Week 2022)
- Staffing, including new appointments, recent senior staff accolades and current recruitment timelines.

Members and attendees commented as follows:

- Colin Hughes noted the University's recent drop in several league tables. Martin Jones confirmed that metrics had recently changed to the University's detriment and that certain specific areas were lowering the overall result dramatically. Kevin Hetherington highlighted his role chairing the League Table Group, which was made up of key non-Exec stakeholders throughout the University (non-Exec) who were able to effectively identify actions (rather than simply to debate the problems).
- Jonathan Chapman underlined the importance of thorough quality assurance (and course leadership) in areas in which we were losing ground. Kevin Hetherington noted examples of interventions such as changing credit structure, clearer communications to students, the provision of alternative part-time pathways, comprehensive ethical training where relevant (e.g., policing). Martin Jones emphasised Strategy & Performance Committee's key role in this, and Annabel Kiernan echoed these comments, highlighting the sharpening of the focus on continuous monitoring across the University.

3 FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR APPROVAL (marked below accordingly)

2860 The Board of Governors received for discussion a **Student Recruitment Update 2022-23** BG/126/04, presented by the Pro Vice Chancellor – Education. The following main points were noted:

- This year, the sector had experienced an unusually slow clearing with significant numbers of unplaced applicants 14 days after results day. Data HE had reported that almost 42% of full cycle applicants were still unplaced and there was concern in the sector about progression routes for these applicants.
- National areas of buoyancy had been in Business, Computing and Psychology. Presently there was a 15% and 20% increase in applicants placed during clearing in Lower and Medium institutions respectively, while Higher institutions continued to see a reduction in placed applicants by 10%.
- Overall, on campus clearing (including early and post a level result clearing) applications and firms were 20.5% (512 vs 425) and 18.6% (434 vs 366) ahead of our position last year, respectively.
- As at 9 September, the Staffordshire University Home undergraduate on campus recruitment position was:
 - 2727 unconditional firm acceptances against an enrolment target of 3128.
 - Based on predictive modelling and current data, we anticipated a total of 2552 enrolments at the end of cycle, if the current trajectory continued, and firm to enrolment conversion was consistent with previous performance.
- The PGT/PGCE Home position was:
 - 296 unconditional firm and 93 condition firm acceptances against an enrolment target of 723 enrolments. Based on our predictive modelling, we are anticipating a total of 389 enrolments at the end of the cycle.
- The international recruitment picture across UG and PG was positive overall.
- The upcoming cost of living crisis had gone some way to apportioning significant shifts to applicant behaviour and choice, and this was reflected in our recruitment position at this point, a position shared with similar institutions such as Nottingham Trent and BCU.
- It was to be noted that all marketing activity was currently on hold due to the mourning period for The Queen (reflected across the sector with some universities choosing to stop activity for the full 12-day period).
- There had been some key changes to our approach to clearing, detailed in the report. A full and comprehensive de-brief was scheduled for September, which would allow the gathering of further insights.

Members and attendees commented as follows:

- Juliet Oosthuysen asked about market analysis on the current position and trends, and it was confirmed that this would be available for the sector shortly (internal analysis would also be done). It was noted that anecdotally, competition for low-tariff institutions was currently sitting with e.g. Open University and degree apprenticeships.
- Simon Smith raised a point around offsetting deficits and the numbers of part-time students required to effectively offset the loss of a FT UG.
- Discussion continued around the high conversion rates on CAS for international students and the improvement of the clearing operation compared to previous years, which was already starting to deliver a small but promising uptick in 18-yr olds, which was promising.
- Kevin Gould asked for clarity on SUL recruitment numbers. Ian Blachford highlighted that some courses had been closed early on in the cycle, and feedback was showing that more and more students were looking for a less niche course offer, so that they could specialise after graduation and not before. Secondly, as there had been issues with eSports provision both at Stoke and SUL, the decision had been taken to not run eSports from SUL this year to safeguard the student experience for those in levels 5 and 6.

	<p>University had seen a decline in the question area Organisation and Management compared with last year down 4.6pp to 74.8%. Compared with the sector, Staffordshire was mostly in the highest quarter (the top 25% of institutions) for the question areas, in particular: Overall Experience, Assessment and Support and Teaching and Learning. The University was ranked 19th out of 90 institutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES): Compared with last year, the University had experienced a decrease in all but one of the ten question groupings. Research Skills Development has seen the biggest fall on last year 21.8 pp, followed by Support and Guidance for your teaching, down 15.7pp and Induction, Progression Arrangements and Assessment, down 9.4pp. Only Research Culture had seen an increase on last year, up 1.3pp. When compared with the sector, Staffordshire was in the lowest quarter (the bottom 25% of institutions) for the majority of the measures. In particular: Resources, Responsibilities, Progression and Support. 133 of our 340 (39.1%) postgraduate research students answered the survey, this was a decrease on last year's response rate of 41.5% (131/316), a decrease of 2.4pp. The sector response rate this year was 31.4%, compared with 36.1% in 2021, a fall of 4.7pp. • Student View Finder Survey (SVS): The SVS was an internal independent student survey undertaken by Staffordshire University of all undergraduate students studying at a main University campus who were not eligible for inclusion in the NSS. The SVS mirrored the NSS and helped us identify and act to continuously improve our NSS performance and student satisfaction more generally. The survey ran from 30 January to 30 April 2022. • A more detailed breakdown of these headlines was given in the paper. <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hannah Blackburn highlighted that Q26 in the NSS, regarding the Union's support for academic interests, was felt by the Union to be very limiting. Annabel Kiernan clarified for the Board that the Students' Union had been involved in the recent consultation process around the NSS. • Hayden Tsang asked about the 3% positive increase in the results for questions around learning resources and Annabel Kiernan noted that the results for this question seemed to have seen a similar increase across the sector.
2866	<p>The Board received for approval the Collaborative Academic Provision Register 2022-23 BG/126/10, presented by the Pro Vice Chancellor – Education, who highlighted that a new Head of International Partners would start in October, who would bring together a review of existing partners in terms of sustainability and quality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The attached register of collaborative academic provision was a formal record of Staffordshire University's academic partnerships and apprentice employers as at August 2022. An external version of this document (without comments) would be published on the University website. • Collaborative developments were closely linked to the University's recruitment and teaching and learning strategies while enhancing its national and regional profile. Partnership management had been restructured in 2021/2022 with new UK and international strategies to be shaped throughout 2023- including a collaborative portfolio review and new directions for growth. • Consequently, developments in 2021/2022 had not focused on developing new partnerships, but on meeting commitments already made and adding courses with established partners. Course closures had also been effected where student numbers and financial performance were ongoing concerns. • Strategic risks around recruitment, income levels, and the student experience continued to be closely monitored nationally and internationally. A key development was the Ofsted inspection of apprenticeship provision in January 2022, which received a good grading. Areas for improvement highlighted by Ofsted and NSS surveys in Police Constable Degree Apprenticeships were being addressed. • Internationally, two key factors are worth noting: the termination of the partnership with DISTED due to prolonged poor financial performance as mentioned above, and the political and economic upheaval in Sri Lanka which is being followed closely - including regular partner meetings - to determine the University's position on this collaboration. <p>There were no comments from Members and attendees.</p> <p>The Board of Governors approved the Collaborative Academic Provision Register 2022-23.</p>
2867	<p>The Board of Governors received for approval the Students' Union Memorandum of Understanding BG/126/11, with the Chief Operating Officer highlighting the following main points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Internal Audit Report brought to Audit and Risk Committee in June 2019 had initially highlighted the need to review the memorandum that existed between the Student Union and the University, as this had become dated and had not been reviewed for a number of years. • Following this, a substantial overhaul of the memorandum was undertaken drawing from best practice across the sector. The draft revised Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which represented the agreed position between the

