

CONFIRMED

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON HIGHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Minutes of the Board of Governors held on Tuesday 26 March 2019 in Room KD.2.22, Docklands Campus

Present: Geoff Thompson (Chair), Professor Amanda Broderick (Vice-Chancellor & President), Amy Butterworth-Fernandes, Sally Dyson, John Garwood, Tommy MacDonnell, Tony Mullee, Sunitha Narendran Elham Peserlay, Gary Stewart and Janette Withey

In attendance: Dean Curtis (Chief Finance Officer) and Tristan Foot (Acting University Secretary)

Officers: Jane Thomas (University Governance Officer)

Apologies: Anulika Ajufo, Solomon Alexis, Bindi Karia, Mottie Kessler, Michael Nartey and Krunesh Patel

18/47 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

24/01 NOTED: that Geoff Thompson declared an interest in relation to the item on the Youth Charter.

18/48 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 NOVEMBER 2018

48/01 RECEIVED and CONFIRMED: the minutes of the Board of Governors' meeting held on 27 November 2018.

18/49 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 JANUARY 2019

49/01 RECEIVED and CONFIRMED: the minutes of the Exceptional meeting of the Board of Governors held on 30 January 2019.

49/02 NOTED: that the approval of Vision 2028 took place during the course of the Board Development Day. However, as the sessions earlier in the day were not minuted, the approval of Vision 2028 had been incorporated into the minutes of the exceptional meeting. It was noted that, following comments received, the minutes would be amended to show that the discussion and approval of Vision 2028 occurred earlier in the day.

18/50 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

50/01 NOTED that: all the outstanding actions had been completed.

18/51 MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE HELD ON 26 FEBRUARY 2019

51/01 RECEIVED: the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 21 November 2018.

51/02 NOTED that:

- a) the co-opted member of the Audit and Risk Committee had resigned. A number of issues had been raised by him which were fully addressed and confirmation of the same from the external auditors had been received. It was noted that Chair's Action had been taken to appoint a new co-opted member, Daniel Regan, to the Audit and Risk Committee, together with two members of the Board of Governors, which represented a full membership for the committee.
- b) there were a number of risks with high scores on the risk register. These were predominantly in relation to GDPR and data quality. It was noted that internal audit reviews were planned in relation to GDPR, Cyber Security, Data Quality and Student Number forecasting.

18/52 MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 28 JANUARY 2019

52/01 RECEIVED and NOTED: the minutes of the Finance and Resources Committees held on 28 January 2019

18/53 MINUTES OF THE GOVERNANCE AND SEARCH COMMITTEE HELD ON 5 FEBRUARY 2019

53/01 RECEIVED: the minutes of the Governance and Search Committee held on 5 February 2019.

53/02 NOTED that:

- a) the membership of the Board was considered. An advert had been placed on the Advance HE portal for potential new governors and a good response had been received. The applicants would be considered at the next meeting of the Governance and Search Committee.
- b) a review of the recruitment exercise for members of the University Executive Board was undertaken and there were lessons learned for future recruitment exercises.
- c) the outcomes of the Board Development Day were discussed and members of the Board had been sent a request for feedback.

- d) the process for the annual review of governors was discussed and a self-assessment form would be sent out for completion by governors ahead of their review meeting with the Chair.

53/03 RECEIVED and APPROVED: the amended Terms of Reference for the Audit and Risk Committee, the Finance and Resources Committee and the Remuneration Committee.

18/54 REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

54/01 RECEIVED: an oral update on the business discussed at the meeting of the Remuneration Committee held on 5 February 2019.

54/02 NOTED: that the Remuneration Committee received a presentation on the remuneration framework and it was agreed that the Director of HR should undertake some additional work on this.

18/55 VISION 2028

55/01 Strategic Route Map – Timeline

RECEIVED: a presentation from the Vice-Chancellor & President on Vision 2028.

55/02 Core Transformation Projects

NOTED that:

- a) 68% of our students were undergraduate taught students and it was this category of students which provided the majority of our revenue. As a result, it was this area of our work which needed to be developed to ensure sustainability.
- b) 11% of our students were international students. These figures were growing and there was an aim to increase this target to 20% as part of a staged growth over a 10 year period.
- c) the importance of growing the total revenue stream was recognised but there was a need to build competency and capability as well as a fundamental change to our working practices. It was recognised that all these factors were challenging to manage and govern.

55/03 Building a global education, skills and innovation eco-system (Implementation pillar 3)

F4 A Learner Pathway Group

Vertical integration – educational trust

NOTED: the potential for vertical integration with the Royal Albert Docks Educational Trust, Talent Future Limited, Barking and Dagenham Educational Trust and the UTC would be investigated, together with the possibility of expanding the activity undertaken by UELPS.

55/04 Horizontal integration – University Campus of Football Business (UCFB) proposed partnership

NOTED that:

- a) the UCFB was a for profit private education provider who was currently partnered with New Bucks University. However, an opportunity had arisen to shift the entire business into the University of East London and the direct benefit of undertaking this was a £1.5m PA revenue stream with high levels of surplus. It was noted that the Chair of the Board and the Vice-Chancellor & President had dealt with UCFB or a UCFB executive professionally in the past, although neither had a personal interest in UCFB to declare.
- b) the partnership with UCFB would result in two of their campuses becoming part of the University of East London and would allow us to expand our provision in the sports area. It was also noted that UCFB had established relationships in the US, Canada and Australia, which would help us to enhance the student experience by giving our students access to international experiences.
- c) detailed due diligence was being undertaken and, if satisfactory, the transfer would be completed by June, allowing us to deliver the first students of UCFB from 2020.
- d) it was recognised that the biggest risk was in relation to the Tier 4 Visas. It was noted that UCFB had its own large compliance team and the way they operated would be reviewed as part of the engagement process and a mini-audit of their procedures would be undertaken. This would also help drive our working practices more generally in enhancing our collaborative provision processes. It was also noted that the Tier 4 provision at UEL had recently been audited and had received a significant assurance with minor improvement opportunities which were being taken forward.
- e) the Board of Governors fully supported the progression of the proposed contractual partnership between UEL and UCFB. The Board heard that detailed due diligence would follow and heads of terms would be

agreed. The Academic Board, and its associated sub-committees and procedures would have oversight of academic approval. The Board of Governors would receive future updates on progress but it was not necessary for formal approval of execution of the contract to be given, as it was within the executive authority of the Vice-Chancellor & President to do so.

55/05 Developing operational competencies and business process optimisation (Implementation pillar 4)

F4 Digital First

NOTED that:

- a) we now had a process for assessing recruitment progress data. It was noted that 50% of our students were recruited in the main cycle and it was recognised that it was critical to focus on conversion going forward.
- b) the way we used technology to support our learning activity was being investigated as well as ways in which we could respond to alternative ways of studying e.g. digital learning.
- c) the possibility of migrating to a cloud environment was being investigated, although it was noted that there was an investment requirement for this. However, as a service, the use of a cloud environment means that you “pay as you go”, rather than an up-front investment. It was noted that a full business case would be presented to the Finance and Resources Committee for oversight prior to being presented to the Board of Governors.

55/06 Facilitative Transformation Projects

F1 Connected Campus

NOTED that:

- a) the work on the connected campus was ongoing and there was a need to tie together both the virtual and physical.
- b) there was a large amount of potential development space on the Docklands Campus and it had been identified that the core requirements on the Docklands campus could be delivered using just the East building.
- c) there was much less potential development area in Stratford. The possibility of acquiring the areas of USS which were currently owned by Birkbeck was being investigated.
- d) the driver for these changes was not efficiency, but to enhance the provision of the student experience and promoting a London campus.

55/07 **F2 Stakeholder Engagement**

NOTED that:

- a) a radical repositioning of our corporate identity was currently underway. The possibility of renaming the institution “Queen Elizabeth University of East London” was being investigated taking into account core feedback relating to the importance of our heritage. It was noted that our own archives were being used to gather information before putting together the submission.
- b) a number of stakeholder campaigns were being developed in parallel relating to student recruitment, late applicants, conversion and impact. These would be focused around “Be The Next ...”. For example, VIP alumni could be used as heroes for student recruitment.
- c) strategic partnerships were also being developed and it was noted that the use of co-branding was an area which was being investigated. The key areas in relation to partnerships included business facilitation, value added to core proposition, income diversification and philanthropic donators.
- d) a template for members of the Board of Governors to use when proposing new partnerships had been developed and it was agreed that the proforma would be sent to Governors with the minutes of the meeting.
- e) a number of events were also being developed including an “Ideathon”, a Network Reception and a staff reception incorporating Vice-Chancellor & President Excellence Awards.

55/08 **AGREED:** to provide the partnership template to governors with the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting.

55/09 **F3 Flourishing Talent Framework**

NOTED that:

- a) the University had previously been working on some contractual amendments to academic contracts. However, on review a decision had been made not to take this work forward any further and to use an Activity and Performance Alignment (APAM) model in its place which would address three key elements including an equitable and fair work allocation model, a career framework and a training and development structure.

- b) the APAM model was part of a task and finish group which provided a proposed solution to the issues faced as a result of REF. It was noted that this model was being developed and had been to Academic Board for consultation. This work was currently being led by the Director of HR and related to the academic staff.
- c) a query was raised as to how the success of this work would be tested and it was noted that a staff survey would be undertaken in 2020.

18/56 FINANCE

56/01 Q2 Financial Update

56/02 RECEIVED: a report from the Chief Finance Officer providing an update of the financial position of UEL as at the end of January 2019.

56/03 NOTED that:

- a) the budget forecast position was for a breakeven, in comparison to the submitted budget deficit of £2.6m. It was noted that this was a considerable achievement given the challenges that the University had faced.
- b) a high level of work had been undertaken around expenditure control which had resulted in the improved cash position, although it was recognised that there was a need to achieve an increase in income growth in order for the University to retain the improved position. It was also noted that the process for testing affordability levels had been very effective, resulting in improved collections against forecast.
- c) the Board gave a vote of thanks to the Chief Finance Officer and his team for all the work that had been undertaken in order to achieve the breakeven position.

18/57 GOVERNANCE ASSURANCE

57/01 International Student Enrolment – report to OfS

57/02 RECEIVED: a report from the Acting University Secretary on international enrolment numbers for 2018/19

57/03 NOTED that:

- a) as a result of the Medium Term Financial Strategy which was sent to the OfS in September, UEL was required to provide the OfS with a detailed plan on how it intended to achieve the forecast student number growth for international students including the number of applications, offers, acceptances and enrolments and the mitigating actions that could be taken if the predicted numbers were not achieved.

- b) the Board of Governors reviewed the proposed plan at the exceptional meeting of the Board of Governors held on 30 January, which was subsequently submitted to the OfS. At that time, we committed to reporting back to them in March on our actual international enrolment numbers for 2018/19.
- c) the enrolment figures showed that we had exceeded our international recruitment targets and a number of actions were highlighted which were designed to ensure that we delivered our growth plans.

57/04 AGREED: the Board agreed the draft letter to be sent to the OfS in relation to our international student numbers.

57/05 Risk Register

57/06 RECEIVED: a report from the Acting University Secretary on the updated risk register, together with a copy of the strategic risk register.

57/07 NOTED that:

- a) a query had been raised with regard to the possible catastrophic risks/major risks to the university and the level of oversight from the Board on these risks. It was noted that the Audit and Risk Committee reviewed the risk register at their meetings. There were a high number of risks included on the risk register and it was acknowledged that, at this time, we did not have the mechanisms in place to take assurance that these risks were being managed elsewhere. However, it was noted that the revised planning process, which was currently under way, would result in a detailed review of risk registers and it was anticipated that this would enable us to provide assurance that risks were being managed at a lower level and therefore negating the need to include them on the strategic risk register.
- b) a risk workshop was being arranged and, once this had been held, there could be a better focus on the risks at Board level.

18/58 STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES

58/01 Health, Sport & Well-Being

58/02 AGREED: that the item on the Mental Health Charter should be rescheduled for the next meeting.

58/04 Youth Charter

58/05 RECEIVED and NOTED: a minute of a UEB item relating to Youth Charter.

18/59 CHAIR'S BUSINESS

59/01 NOTED that:

- a) the CUC were considering using UEL as a potential exemplar for the Autumn plenary on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- b) the Commonwealth week commencing 11 March had resulted in a great deal of activity.

18/60 STUDENT ACTIVITY REPORT

60/01 RECEIVED and NOTED: a report from the Acting Chief Marketing Officer on student activity.

18/61 ANNUAL REPORT ON STUDENT COMPLAINTS – 2017/18

61/01 RECEIVED and NOTED: a report from the Complaints and Appeals Officer providing a summary of formal complaints received during the 2017/18 academic year.

18/62 ACADEMIC BOARD

62/01 RECEIVED and NOTED: a report from the University Secretary on the business discussed at Academic Board held on 27 February 2019.

19/63 ANNUAL CYCLE OF INFORMATION

63/01 RECEIVED and NOTED: the annual cycle of information.

18/64 DRAFT SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR THE FORTHCOMING ACADEMIC YEAR

64/01 RECEIVED and NOTED: the draft schedule of meetings of the Board and its standing committees for 2019/20.

18/65 USE OF THE CORPORATION'S SEAL

64/01 NOTED: that the Corporation's seal has been used to seal the following documents since the last meeting of the Board of Governors held on 27 November 2018:

- Deed of Surrender – John Smiths campus shop
- Deed of Release of Security by GLA Land and Property Limited
- Deed of Release between Barclays Bank PLC and UEL
- Deed of Variation relating to Land on the South side of Royal Albert Way among GLA Land and Property Limited and Royal Management Authority Limited Management Company and UEL.
- Deed of Confirmation – Barclays Bank

18/66 DATES OF MEETINGS OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

66/01 NOTED: that the dates of remaining meetings of the Board of Governors are as follows.

- Tuesday 21 May 2019
- Tuesday 9 July 2019

18/67 DATES OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS AT UEL

67/01 NOTED: that the following events were due to be held at UEL:

- Microsoft Ideathon: Hackathon with employers, students, staff to increase the strength & diversity of the talent pipeline in East London. Hackathon: 24th & 25th April. Final on 12th June.
- House of Lords University Network Reception: Launch of Vision 2028 to employer partners, VIP and honorary alumni. W/c 29th April
- University Forum: Staff reception incorporating VC&P Excellence Awards. 9th May.
- UK International Vision 2028 Launch (including the celebration of our Malvern House partnership). 15th May.
- VIP University Showcase: programme of showcase visits including Universities Minister and engagement with the Association of Commonwealth Universities. Dates TBC.
- Royal Docks Education and Enterprise Festival. 12th June.
- West Africa launch: Programme of VIP events 27th June -7th July
- Talent Futures: one-year 'inspiring careers' programme for lower sixth form students. Launch of programme September 2019.

SIGNED:


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Chair of the Board of Governors

DATED:

21.05.2019
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