

CONFIRMED

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON HIGHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Minutes of the Board of Governors held on Tuesday 6 July 2021 in Room KD.2.22, Knowledge Dock, Docklands

Present: Anulika Ajufo (Chair)(via Teams), Ismail Amla (via Teams), Amanda Broderick (Vice-Chancellor & President), Jackie Craissati, Adam Doyle, Insia Durrani, Les Ebdon (via Teams), Regina Everitt, John Garwood, Bindi Karia, Mottie Kessler, Tommy MacDonnell (via Teams) , Michael Nartey (via Teams) , Doris Olulode, Naveen Pradeep, Gary Stewart (via Teams) and Janette Withey

In attendance: Hassan Abdalla (Provost), Jim Benson (University Secretary), Verity Brown (PVC Impact and Innovation), Dean Curtis (DVC & Chief Finance Officer), Paul Marshall (PVC Careers and Enterprise), Ian Pickup (Chief Operating Officer) (via Teams) and Vanessa Varvas (Chief Marketing Officer)

Officer: Jane Thomas (Governance Manager)

20/111 NOTICE OF INTENTION TO SPEAK TO STARRED ITEMS

111/01 NOTED: the item on academic partnerships was unstarred.

20/112 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

112/01 NOTED: there were no declarations of interest.

20/113 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 MAY 2021

113/01 RECEIVED and CONFIRMED: the minutes of the Board of Governors' meeting held on 25 May 2021.

20/114 MATTERS ARISING

114/01 NOTED that:

- a) the Governance and Search Committee would consider the term of office of the current Chancellor.
- b) In relation to the number of students accessing the Student Wellbeing Service, it was noted that 175 students had been seen by Wellbeing Advisors, 250 students had been seen by the Counsellors (including CBT and Togetherall Live Therapy and 350 students had been seen by the Mental Health Practitioner, giving a total of 775 students seen by the service. Appointments attended included 725 appointments with

Wellbeing Advisers, 258 appointments with Counsellors, plus 100 appointments for Togetherall Live Therapy Sessions and 1114 appointments with Mental Health Practitioners, giving a total of 2697 sessions in total. It was recognised that a more efficient and accurate method of collecting data and the CRM would help in this once the reporting functions had been built.

- c) a presentation was provided by the Provost on how the academic strategy helped to improve the student experience.
- d) a volunteer from the Board of Governors was still being sought to undertake the training on Health and Safety.
- e) the Annual Report on Prevent would be provided in November 2021.

20/115 REPORT FROM THE MEETINGS OF THE TRANSFORMATION PROJECT COMMITTEE

115/01 RECEIVED: a report from the University Secretary on the meetings of the Transformation Project Committee held on 26 May 2021 and 15 June 2021.

115/02 NOTED that:

- a) the committee had recommended the approval of the Connected Campus project.
- b) the committee had also reviewed the proposal for the medical school and invited details for further consideration to be presented at a later date.

20/116 BUSINESS DISCUSSED AT STANDING COMMITTEES

116/01 RECEIVED and NOTED: a report from the Governance Manager on business discussed at standing committees.

20/117 UPDATE BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR & PRESIDENT

117/01 RECEIVED: a presentation from the Vice-Chancellor & President.

117/02 NOTED that:

- a) a summary of the achievements over the last year was provided to governors. A request was made for a crib sheet to be produced which summarised our achievements to ensure governors were equipped to pass the information on. It was also suggested that there should be a section for celebration included on the intranet to ensure that staff were aware of these achievements.
- b) an overview of the KPIs were provided. In relation to sustainable growth and diversification, it was noted that the staff base was needed to ensure that the student experience remained good. It was noted that there had been an 11% growth in UEL's market share against our UCAS competitor set.

- c) there was a need to establish a baseline for employee health and wellbeing. It was noted that a survey had been undertaken in order to gauge people's overall health and well-being. A request was made for information in relation to how many employees responded to the questionnaire, the school or services in which they were based and at what grade, together with details of any negative comments received. It was noted that there would be a focus on developing current staff and bringing in new staff in order to fill gaps in the skills portfolio in specific areas. It was agreed that this information should be presented to the Remuneration and Staff Committee and then on to the Board.
- d) in relation to our future graduates, there were two core components relating to student experience and student educational success. It was noted that it would be good to measure where students were happy and although it was recognised that self-assessment was important, it was also important to have the views of employers on student employability and whether skills were being developed which were appropriate for the market. It was noted that the net promoter score of employers would capture this information. It was also noted that career readiness scoring was also being introduced based on student self-assessment, but taking into account their level of scores and outcomes to ensure there was alignment between student success and employer expectations. It was noted that the KPIs for next year would seek to address the issue of the depth of engagement by students.
- e) feedback was received from employers in relation to our students from two different sources. A survey was undertaken by apprentice employers and it was noted that the response had been positive. In addition, feedback was collected from placements which had also been positive and those employers were also happy to take on further placements.
- f) a large number of employer partnerships had been launched and consideration was being given to classifying these partnerships. It was also noted that partners were advertising jobs through our system and work would be undertaken to formalise this and ensure there was an appropriate structure in place.

117/03 AGREED:

- a) to provide a crib sheet to governors on UEL's successes
- b) to provide details of the number of employees who responded to the recent survey on health and wellbeing and any negative feedback which had been received. This would be considered by the Remuneration and Staffing Committee prior to being presented to the Board.

20/118 IMPACT AND INNOVATION STRATEGY

118/01 RECEIVED: a report from the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Impact and Innovation on the strategic direction for Impact and Innovation.

118/02 AGREED: to discuss this item at the next meeting of the Board of Governors.

20/119 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE 2020/21

119/01 RECEIVED: a report from the Director of Finance and Deputy Vice-Chancellor on the 2020/21 Q3 Financial Position.

119/02 NOTED that:

- a) the Q2 forecast position included a range of outturn scenarios which were linked to retention, fee payment and cost control. This variability was increased as a result of the impact of the pandemic. However, the Q3 position showed an improving situation. Despite concerns about student retention, the data showed that this was doing well and the reserve for non-continuation would not be necessary for 2021.
- b) there had been challenges in relation to staff recruitment and it was anticipated that underlying expenditure was likely to be lower than forecast. The cash position was significantly ahead, and it was anticipated that there would be a surplus of between £10m and £15m.
- c) some of the savings were non-recurrent as they related to our inability to recruit this year. It was recognised that the biggest issue in relation to this was the potential impact on students.
- d) there would be some adjustments to the student debt, particularly in relation to Indian students, however, it was noted that there had been increasing applications from students from the rest of the world.
- e) it was recognised that the financial position could cause friction due to the disputes with the Trade Union in relation to restructuring and the workload allocation model. It was therefore agreed that the communications should be prepared in relation to the accounts prior to them being published.

119/03 AGREED: to prepare communications in relation to the accounts before they were published.

20/120 BUDGET 2021/22

120/01 RECEIVED: a report from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Director of Finance on the Budget for 2021/22.

120/02 NOTED that:

- a) the budget had been set in line with the Medium Term Financial Strategy which was submitted to the OfS in November 2020. The budget was based on a position where it was not believed that the pandemic would have a significant impact on the 2021/22 academic year.
- b) there had been significant demand for our programmes both nationally and internationally and the budget had been set taking into account an £8.8m investment in staffing.
- c) the partnership with UCFB would start in September 2021 and would contribute £1m to the bottom line. Although the budget recognised the payment, it was not used to underpin any existing activity.
- d) the budget did not take into account any growth in new first year entrants and the number of returning students had been reduced by 10%. It was also noted that there was an expectation that government funding would reduce and it was possible that London Weighting would also be removed.
- e) the surplus for 2021/22 was forecast at £2.4m with a cash forecast of 46 days. It was noted that the reduction directly related to the proposed capital expenditure.

120/03 AGREED: to approve the budget for 2021/22.

20/121 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021/22

121/01 RECEIVED: a report from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Director of Information Technology, Director of Projects and Estates Development and the Director of Estates Operations on the Capital Programme for 2021/22

121/02 NOTED that:

- a) there were a number of capital investment proposals which had been presented to the Transformation Project Committee and had also been considered by the Finance and Resources Committee.
- b) the first project related to the Connected Campus and the proposed works to be undertaken over the summer which would have a big impact on the students in September as work was undertaken to develop a centre where staff and students could interact, creating a social space where catering was available and students could gain access to different services. It also sought to improve facilities across the three campus locations.
- c) the second project related to laying the foundations of Digital 1st.

- d) the third project related to Net Carbon Zero and proposals had been made as part of UEL's commitment within Vision 2028. It was noted that discussions had taken place at both the Transformation Project Committee and the Finance and Resources Committee in relation to Phase 1 of this project. There had been concern in relation to the repayment period for this project and, although it had been agreed that this should be contained within the budget, there would be no spend until there had been a further review by the Finance and Resources Committee.

121/03 **AGREED:** to approve the capital expenditure.

20/122 ANNUAL REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE REMUNERATION AND STAFFING COMMITTEE

122/01 RECEIVED and APPROVED: the Annual Report on the work of the Remuneration and Staffing Committee for publication.

20/123 ANNUAL REPORT ON HEALTH AND SAFETY AND THE HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

123/01 RECEIVED: a report from the Head of Health and Safety

123/02 NOTED that:

- a) the pandemic had had a significant impact on UEL business and it was noted that UEL had adapted well on a hybrid basis in relation to government guidance, even when this guidance was given with very little notice and it was recognise that the response from both the UEL management and staff had been good.
- b) in terms of overall compliance, it was noted that UEL had achieved a good level of overall compliance in almost all areas across the university, despite some slippage in our internal auditing and in person training provision. However, this was directly as a result of the adverse impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- c) accidents had remained low and were small in terms of impact. There had been a number of breaches of the Covid-19 regulations in residences, but staff and security had been professional in managing the situations.
- d) an inspection had been undertaken by the insurers who had rated UEL performance as good overall. The annual submission to ROSPA had resulted in UEL retaining the gold award for the 13th consecutive year.
- e) a total of seven senior managers had attended health and safety training for senior executives which was provided by the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health. It was noted that a decision would need to be made regarding the level of training to be provided, which should be measurable and reports made to the Board of Governors. It was agreed

that the University Secretary would discuss with the Health and Safety Manager an appropriate cycle of reporting.

- f) the Health and Safety Manager and his team were congratulated for achieving the gold standard ROSPA award for the 13th consecutive year.

123/03 AGREED:

- a) the University Secretary to discuss with the Health and Safety Manager an appropriate cycle of reporting to the Board of Governors.
- b) to approve the Health and Safety Policy Statement.

20/124 OFFICE FOR STUDENTS – REGULATION DURING THE CURRENT PHASE OF THE PANDEMIC

124/01 RECEIVED and NOTED: a report from the University Secretary, ProVost, Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Chief Marketing Officer on OfS Regulation during Covid-19. The Board were satisfied that the University had put in place arrangements that can be seen to reasonably meet student expectations in terms of the commitments made during the pandemic period and were of sufficiently high standard to meet the expectations of the OfS.

20/125 REPORT ON EQUALITY, INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

125/01 NOTED: that a report on Equality, Inclusion and Diversity had not been produced for 2019/20 due to operational reasons. It was confirmed that a report would be produced for 2020/21.

20/126 STUDENT PROTECTION PLAN

126/01 RECEIVED: a report from the Interim Head of Quality, Quality Assurance and Enhancement on the Student Protection Plan for 2021/22.

126/02 NOTED that:

- a) a number of minor amendments had been made to the Student Protection Plan in response to OfS requirements. The key areas included measures which were put in place to ensure the quality and standard of the academic service was being met.
- b) the report on the Student Protection Plan had been received late as it was necessary for this to be considered by the Education and Experience Committee prior to being seen by the Board of Governors. It was noted that the timing of meetings would be taken into consideration in future to avoid the late presentation of the report.

20/127 DEGREE OUTCOME STATEMENT

127/01 RECEIVED: a report from the Interim Head of Quality, Quality Assurance and Enhancement on the Degree Outcomes Statement

127/02 NOTED that: the degree award statement focussed on the number of first class and upper second-class awards. It was noted that there was strong evidence from external examiners that improvements had been made as a result of innovative methods being introduced which were less traditional, but enhanced student learning.

127/03 AGREED: to approve the degree outcome statement.

20/128 MEMBERSHIP OF THE BOARD FOR THE FORTHCOMING ACADEMIC YEAR

128/01 RECEIVED: a report from the Governance Manager on the membership of the Board of Governors for 2021/22.

128/02 AGREED: to approve the membership of the Board of Governors for the forthcoming academic year.

20/129 UPDATE ON THE APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIR

129/01 RECEIVED: a report from the University Secretary on the appointment of the Chair.

129/02 NOTED that: a number of search consultants would be interviewed and then a recommendation made to the Board of Governors.

20/130 UPDATE ON THE APPOINTMENT OF GOVERNORS

130/01 NOTED: that the Reverend Trevor Critchlow had been nominated by the Portal Trust and had been interviewed by the Governance and Search Committee and was recommended for appointment. It was noted that his community reach would be of value to both the Board of Governors and the community.

130/03 AGREED: to approve the appointment of the Reverend Trevor Critchlow.

20/131 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR 2021/22

131/01 RECEIVED and NOTED: a schedule of meetings for the 2021/22 academic year

20/132 CHAIR'S BUSINESS

132/01 NOTED: that there was no Chair's business.

20/133 REPORT OF BUSINESS DISCUSSED AT ACADEMIC BOARD

133/01 RECEIVED and NOTED: a report from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Officer on the business discussed at Academic Board.

20/134 ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS

128/01 RECEIVED: a report from Academic Partnerships outlining the progress of business development of new and existing partnerships.

128/02 NOTED that: the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Careers and Enterprise apologised for the content of the report and confirmed that an updated report would be provided for the next meeting of the Board of Governors.

20/135 ANNUAL CYCLE OF BUSINESS

135/01 RECEIVED and NOTED: the annual cycle of business.

20/136 USE OF THE CORPORATION'S SEAL

136/01 NOTED: that the Corporation's seal has not been used since the last meeting of the Board held on 25 May 2021.

20/137 DATES OF MEETINGS

137/01 NOTED: that the dates of meetings for 2021/22 were as follows:

- 19 October 2021
- 23 November 2021
- 25 March 2022
- 24 May 2022
- 7 July 2022

SIGNED:

Chair of the Board of Governors

DATED: