

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON HIGHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Minutes of the Board of Governors held on 17 October 2023 at The Gantry, 40 Celebration Avenue, London, E20 1DB

Present: John Garwood (Chair), Matthew Almond, Steven Armstrong, Bibin Bobacham, Amanda Broderick (Vice-Chancellor & President), Jazz Bhogal, Sophia Bokhari, Fiona Bolton, Ben Buckton, Jackie Craissati, Trevor Critchlow, Les Ebdon, Regina Everitt, Sarah Fahy, Amanjit Jhund, Bindi Karia, Tommy MacDonnell, Aswin Mathew, Doris Olulode and Gavin Poole

Hassan Abdalla (Provost), Bugewa Apampa (PVC, Education and Experience), Matt Bellgard (PVC, Impact and Innovation), Jim Benson (University Secretary), Sophie Bowen (Chief Student Officer), Laura Clayton (Director of Strategy), Joseph Cooper (Director of People and Culture), Dean Curtis (DVC & Chief Finance Officer), Deborah Lewis (Head of Strategic Engagement), Paul Marshall (PVC, Careers and Enterprise), Jummy Okoya (Interim Dean of the Office for Institutional Equity), Nikki Patel (Head of Strategic Projects), Amy Rogerson (Chief of Staff), David Tann (Vice Provost (Technology)), Vanessa Varvas (Chief Marketing Officer), and Scott Williams (Deputy Chief Marketing Officer)

Officer: Jane Thomas (Governance Manager)

23/01 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

23/02 MEMBERSHIP OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

02/01 RECEIVED and NOTED: the membership of the Board of Governors and Standing Committees for 2023/24.

23/03 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 JULY 2023

03/01 RECEIVED and CONFIRMED: the minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2023.

23/04 MATTERS ARISING

04/01 RECEIVED: a list of matters arising from previous meetings.

04/02 NOTED: that the Stratford New Build required planning approval to move forward. The next planning meeting being held by Newham Council was due to

take place on 23 November and it was anticipated that this would be discussed at that meeting.

23/05 REPORT OF BUSINESS DISCUSSED AT STANDING COMMITTEES

05/01 RECEIVED: a report from the Governance Manager on business discussed at standing committees.

05/02 NOTED that: the Governance and Search Committee had discussed student representation on the Finance and Resources Committee and the Governance and Search Committee, and a recommendation was made to the Board to appoint a student representative to each of these committee.

05/03 AGREED: the Board agreed to the appointment of student members to the Finance and Resources Committee and the Governance and Search Committee.

23/06 RISK SUMMARY

06/01 RECEIVED: a risk summary from the University Secretary

06/02 NOTED: that the Risk Manager was currently on maternity leave and there had been an issue with the interim Risk Manager who was no longer at the University. The risk register was due to be discussed at UEB and work would be undertaken to secure the appointment of a new interim Risk Manager.

23/07 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE EVOLUTION

07/01 RECEIVED and NOTED: a report from the Interim Dean of the School of Psychology, Dean of EduCom and the Acting Head of HR.

23/08 MEDICAL EDUCATION UPDATE

08/01 RECEIVED: a report and presentation from the Dean of Medical Education

08/02 NOTED that:

- a) in 2022 the Board agreed criteria and evidence to be used to decide whether or not to add medical education to the University's health portfolio with a view to reaching a "go/no" decision in October 2023. Based on previous discussions, it was noted that any decision would be based primarily on 8 forms of evidence which included strategic alignment, potential financial return, potential home demand, partnership arrangements, placement capacity, level and nature of residual risk and the balance of opportunity costs and opportunity benefits. When set against these eight criteria, it was noted that the evidence was clearly not supportive of a medical course delivered independently by UEL. Whereas the evidence for the two options based on partnership-delivery was either supportive or neither clearly in favour nor clearly against. It was therefore clear that the Board was not yet in a position to provide a "go/no" decision as any decision to go ahead in a partnership would currently depend on a robust partnership being established, which would reduce the risk to sustainability for UEL.

- b) it was necessary for a final decision to be made within the next 12 months which would need to be supported by a model and detailed proposal. It was noted that although there had been good initial responses from primary care organisations and investigations were currently underway to try and establish the number of placements which these organisations could provide.
- c) the question of prioritisation was raised and whether medical education was a priority over other projects and whether it fitted with Vision 2028. A query was also raised as to the length of time before there was a return on the investment. It was noted that figures showed that with sufficient numbers, a teaching dominant medical school could be successful, however, the length of time taken to secure any financial benefit could be significant.
- d) concern was raised that if a medical education proposal did not work, it's the current strong financial position of the University could be adversely impacted. It was noted that the rationale for seeking partnership was to provide a contingency against such an outcome. It was noted that the University would need to provide 130-150 places to be feasible.
- e) it was suggested that information should be provided as to what decisions needed to be made and when, and the point at which the cost outweighed the benefit. Over the next 12 months it would be necessary to remain agile, right up to the point at which any bid could be finalised. It was agreed that the reports provided to the Board had not provided sufficient information for a decision to be made.

08/03 AGREED: the Board agreed in principle for the medical education proposal to continue to be investigated and for a further proposal to be brought back to the Board for approval.

23/09 THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND THE STUDENTS' UNION

09/01 RECEIVED: a report from the University Secretary, Chief Student Officer and Chief Executive Officer of the Students' Union on the Students' Union and the student experience.

09/02 NOTED that:

- a) the Chief Student Officer was currently providing support to the Students' Union and was providing line management to the CEO of the Students' Union (SU). It was recognised that there were some complexities in the relationship between the University and the SU and this needed to be reset going forward.
- b) a number of matters required formal ratification by the Board including the Code of Practice for the SU and the Memorandum of Understanding.
- c) it was proposed that a joint University-Students' Union Student Experience Committee would provide a forum and regular connection between the University and SU for the benefit of enhancing the student experience. It was also proposed that there would be a Students' Union Performance and Assurance Group which would provide a forum for the SU to give assurance

to the University in relation to KPIs around impact, financial performance and governance of the SU. It was noted that both groups would feed through to the University Executive Board.

- d) it was recognised that the biggest issue in the past had been in relation to a number of issues which the University were not made aware of in advance. It was noted that issues could only be dealt with if the University were made aware of them, and it was anticipated that these formal arrangements would reduce the risk of any surprises going forward.

09/03 AGREED: to approve the Memorandum of Understanding and the Code of Practice.

23/10 Q4 FINANCIAL POSITION

10/01 RECEIVED: a report from the Director of Finance and Associate Directors of Finance on the Pre-Audit Report on 2022/23

10/02 NOTED that:

- a) there had been a positive outcome for the University, with an operational surplus of £6.2m, subject to audit and further adjustments. The closing meeting with the Auditors was due to be held shortly, but the Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Chief Finance Officer had been advised that subject to technical Audit opinion there did not appear to be anything of substance to cause concern. The only area where there had been some discussion was in relation to the bad debt provision.
- b) the financial statements would be presented to the Audit and Risk Committee and the Finance and Resources Committee in November, with the full accounts to be presented for approval at the Board meeting due to be held on 5 December 2023.

23/11 ANNUAL REPORT ON EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

11/01 RECEIVED: the annual report for EDI for 2022/23 from the Senior EDI Data and Information Analyst

11/02 NOTED that:

- a) the mean and median gender pay gaps were at their lowest levels since 2017, at 2.4% and 4.7% respectively for hourly earnings.
- b) the mean and median disability pay gaps were not significant with a mean pay gap of 0.2% and a negative median pay gap of - 0.5%.
- c) whilst it was noted that there were no issues with the gender and disability pay gaps, the ethnicity pay gap remained problematic with the mean and median ethnicity pay gaps increasing slightly in 2022/23 to 13.2% from 12.7% in 2021/22 and to 11.8% from 9% in 2021/22 respectively. It was noted that there had been an increase in black academic women employed at the University, whilst there had

been a reduction in white academic women employed at the University from 67% to 62%. It was noted that there had been a steady decline in fixed term contracts, with female staff more likely to be on these contracts.

- d) in relation to sexual orientation, there remained a high level of non-declaration and it was recognised that staff needed to feel safe to be themselves.
- e) a number of networks had been established including a disability and neuro diversity network and a women's network.
- f) the Board recognised the huge level of progress which had been made in this area.

23/12 ANNUAL REPORT ON RESEARCH INTEGRITY CONCORDAT

12/01 RECEIVED and APPROVED: the Annual Statement for the Concordat to support research integrity, academic year 2022-23, including risk analysis for compliance.

23/13 REPORT ON BUSINESS DISCUSSED AT ACADEMIC BOARD

13/01 RECEIVED: a report from the Quality Assurance Officer providing a summary of business discussed at the Academic Board meeting held on 20 September 2023.

13/02 NOTED: that a summary of the main business discussed at Academic Board was presented to the Board of Governors to provide assurance that academic governance was working effectively.

23/14 CHAIR'S BUSINESS

14/01 NOTED: that there was no Chair's business.

23/15 REPORTABLE EVENT

15/01 NOTED: that the UCFB had moved their campuses in Manchester, which constituted a reportable event. It was noted that this was low risk and there was no information to suggest anything untoward.

23/16 GOVERNANCE EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW UPDATE

16/01 NOTED: that Advance HE had been appointed to undertake the governance effectiveness review. A questionnaire would be issued to all governors and members of the University Executive Board, and they would be observing a number of meetings, including the next meeting of the Board of Governors. There would also be a number of individual and group interviews. It was anticipated that they would have all the information they required by the end of the year to produce the report which would be finalised in February and presented to the Board of Governors' meeting due to be held in March 2024.

23/17 CHANCELLOR APPOINTMENT UPDATE

17/01 NOTED: work was continuing to engage with the two primary targets, however, it was recognised that there was a need to appoint a Chancellor. A meeting of the Governance and Search committee was due to take place in November and it

was noted that a report would be presented to the Board at either the November or December meeting.

23/18 APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS, 2024/2025

18/01 NOTED: that the appointment of the Chair of the Board of Governors had been discussed by the Governance and Search Committee who had recommended that we do not use a search consultant, but to advertise externally. Any independent members who were interested in the role were strongly encouraged to put themselves forward.

23/19 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS AND SCHEME OF DELEGATION

19/01 RECEIVED and APPROVED: a report from the Director of Finance on the update to the Financial Regulations 2023, together with a report from the University Secretary on the review of the University's Scheme of Delegation.

23/20 COMPLIANCE WITH OFS PUBLIC INTEREST PRINCIPLES AND CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

20/01 RECEIVED: a report from the University Secretary on compliance with OFS public interest principles and conditions of registration.

20/02 NOTED: that UEB and the Governance and Search Committee were content to confirm that the University was compliant in every area.

23/21 COMPLIANCE WITH THE CUC CODE OF GOVERNANCE

21/01 RECEIVED: a report from the University Secretary on compliance with the CUC Code of Practice.

21/02 NOTED: that UEB and the Governance and Search Committee were content to confirm that the University was compliant in all areas, with the exception of non-financial reporting which was under consideration and should be in place early in the 2023/24 academic year.

23/22 USE OF THE CORPORATIONS'S SEAL

22/01 NOTED: that the Corporation's Seal has not been used since the last meeting of the Board.

23/23 DATES OF MEETINGS

23/01 NOTED: the dates of meetings for 2023/24

28 November 2023
5 December 2023 (via Teams)
20 February 2024
26/27 March 2024
21 May 2024
9 July 2024