

HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY

Board of Governors

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Governors held on 27 November 2019 in the Boardroom

Present:	Mr Peter Nixon	Chair
	Dr David Llewellyn	Vice-Chancellor
	Mr Colin Bailey	
	Mr Peter Cowdy	
	Dr Tim Watson	
	Mr Richard Hambleton	
	Mr Vernon Blakeman	Staff Governor
	Mr Dominic Wong	Vice-Chair
	Daniel Jervis	SU President
	Prof Mark Ormerod	
	Dr Julia Pointon	
	Mrs Christine Snell	
	Dr Martin Thomas	
Apologies:	Mrs Emma Foulkes	
	Mr Tim Burnhope	
	Dr John Donaldson	Staff Governor
	Mr Campbell Tweed	
	Mrs Debbie Winstanley	
	Mr Stephen Vickers	
	Rebecca Payne	Staff Governor
	Sarah Mukherjee	
	Prof Peter Mills	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
In attendance:	Dr Catherine Baxter	University Secretary & Clerk to the Board
	Mrs Liz Furey	Director of Finance

Register of Interests

Members were reminded to complete or update their entry in the Register of Interests as necessary.

The Chair thanked Laura Pilsel, Head of Library Services for leading the Board's pre-meeting visit to the Library.

19/20 **Welcome to Board Apprentice and Staff Observers**

Welcome: Members welcomed Adeola Olufayo and Marisa Virseda, Board Apprentices. The Chair also welcomed Lisa Wood, Student Records Officer, Staff Observer and Rosy Louis, SU Vice-President, Student Observer, together with Alastair Burr, SU Director.

19/21 **Minutes and Notes of the Planning Day held on 27 September 2019**

Approved:

- i) the minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors held on 27 September 2019 (19/01 – 19/19);
- ii) the notes of the Board of Governors/University Executive Planning Day held on 27 September 2019.

19/22 **Matters Arising**

Received: a report from the University Secretary including a table tracking progress made to date to complete actions arising from the Board's Effectiveness Review 2019 and from one to one discussions with the Chair during summer 2019;

- Noted:
- i) that as agreed by the Board, Mr Lewis and Mr Thomas had taken action to agree minor changes to the Student Disciplinary Policy to reflect new OIA guidance;
 - ii) that the OfS Prevent Team and CUC had now agreed that the reference to Degree Level Apprentices in the refreshed IPN on Prevent was indeed incorrect and this would be updated. The final updated IPN would be circulated to members to illustrate how Harper Adams meets the IPN guidance; **CEB**
 - iii) that members were content that actions arising from the Effectiveness Review (ER2019) marked as “completed” had been fully addressed and these could be removed from the tracking document. They were also content that other actions were in progress and welcomed the progress made to date. Members confirmed that they were supportive of the proposal to offer the four briefings requested on the afternoon of 1 July 2020 and that the requested Board dinner would also take place that evening, with the Board meeting following the next day;
 - iv) that with regard to opportunities for Lead Governors to contribute at meetings on their area of focus, it was suggested that it might be more appropriate to ask members to review the relevant section of the Vice-Chancellor’s Report ahead of each meeting, and for the Chair to ask Lead members to advise if they had any queries as a standing item; **CEB**
 - v) In discussion, it was agreed that asking Lead Governors to comment on the Vice-Chancellor’s Report where relevant, would be preferable to creating a standing agenda item for each lead governor to prepare annually where their lead area does not already feature formally as an agenda item during the usual cycle of Board business. It was also agreed that members were aware that they were welcome to make arrangements to meet staff responsible for the relevant areas of the University’s work as and when suitable. Such requests could be made directly to the staff member(s) or via the University Secretary; **ALL**
 - vi) that feedback from Mrs Winstanley on her experience with the Food Department as a “Student for a Day” had been very positive and she wished to recommend the experience to other members. Mr Nixon advised that he had also thoroughly enjoyed his day with students and staff. He had found the quality of teaching and engagement to be excellent, and he noted that using the campus environment / buildings for teaching had been particularly interesting to witness in action and that this worked well. Mr Nixon had also been able to have lunch with postgraduates (including international students) and the Vice-President of the Students’ Union which he had found very helpful. Mr Nixon also recommended the experience to all members as very worthwhile;
- Agreed:
- i) to endorse the action taken by Mr Lewis and Mr Thomas to approve minor changes to the Student Disciplinary Policy;
 - ii) that the Board would review progress with remaining action arising from ER 2019 and one to one discussions at its next meeting; **CEB**
 - iii) that one to one discussions between the Chair and each member would occur as usual in July/August/September 2020. In the

meantime, the Chair encouraged members to contact him at any time if they had matters they wished to discuss;

- iv) that a standing item on 'Lead Governor' comments on the Vice-Chancellor's Report for matters not included elsewhere on the agenda would be established. **CEB**

19/23 **Vice-Chancellor's Report and Governors Discussion**

- Received:
- i) a report by the Vice -Chancellor on recent developments of note;
 - ii) the fifth draft of the Strategic Plan 2020-2025;
 - iii) the Internationalisation Strategy 2020-2025;
 - iv) correspondence between Mr Lewis, outgoing Chair and the OfS with regard to compliance with a statutory payment;

- Noted:
- i) that the Vice-Chancellor was pleased to note that the range of awards and recognition of high-quality work achieved by staff and students since the Board's last meeting, including inclusion in the University "Table of Tables" where, despite not being included in the Guardian Table, Harper Adams had featured strongly due to its performance in 2 out of the 3 tables which fed into the "Table of Tables";
 - ii) that applications for 2020 entry were lagging behind the level achieved at the same point in 2019. Every effort was being made to improve the position against a backdrop where applications to UCAS are currently overall down, including applications for agriculture;
 - iii) that applications for the Vet School were strong and interviews would be taking place in the next few weeks;
 - iv) that the Vice-Chancellor has attended an OfS briefing for Accountable Officers during November 2019. 'Monitoring & Intervention' would be the next focus of OfS activity. Reportable events guidance remains limited as each HEI is required to determine whether or not an event is 'material' and if it is, such events must reported within 5 working days. Failure to report would be a concern as would reporting events that the OfS judge as not sufficiently material. There are to be partnership managers but it was understood that these roles would not be openly allocated to a range of HEIs. The team would also look after enhanced monitoring, data & whistle blowing matters. There was no intention to balance issues identified against more positive performance or feedback;
 - v) that registered HEIs are also now expected to report 'legal action' but only if it is material. However, there were no clear examples available of what should be reported. The OfS' intention was to 'learn as we go' on what matters with regard to reportable events;
 - vi) that governing bodies are expected to receive and consider all documentation to enable them to carry out their role;
 - vii) that Universities are expected to report on their Student Unions if the later do not manage Freedom of Speech/Freedom of Expression issues properly;
 - viii) that public interest governance principles have now been provided to

Accountable Officers. The Vice-Chancellor would provide this document along with a mapping of how Harper Adams meets the requirements (or where as necessary, further work is needed). This would be an item at the April 2020 Board meeting;

- ix) that the OfS requirements for submission of financial information were issued very late such that some HEIs have had to run special Board meetings to take account of the new requirements and approve the submissions;
- x) that a response to the outgoing Chairs' letter to the OfS had not yet been received. Concern that sufficient numbers of HEIs had received letters about the same matter had been raised, especially as in the case of Harper Adams, there had been an error on the part of the QAA and a subsequent agreement by QAA that payment could be made by a revised date, which had been met. Members were concerned about value for money where a six page letter had been received about a matter that was in fact, erroneous in the University's view. Members asked that their concern be minuted and also that they wished to await the response from QAA but in the meantime noted that the Finance Office had set up a new system to further enhance its requirements. Requests for all statutory fee invoices to be addressed to the CFO/Accountable Officer would be issued. **LF**

[Post meeting note- a response to the Chairs' letter was received on 28 November 2019 which confirmed that the OfS had investigated the University's response and were content that it was accurate and that no record of the matter needed to be kept by OfS after all. It was also confirmed that the Board did not need to take any further action on the matter].

- xii) that members acknowledged the need to receive and consider detailed reports and draft submissions to the OfS to meet governance requirements. The use of 'Lead Governors' and including the initials of a member against all key items was intended to help by assisting members with specific expertise to 'lead' on such items, while others 'led' on other items. All members also have a clear opportunity to read and comment on all agenda items at the meeting. Detailed scrutiny at committees was also undertaken and helped assure the Board that Governors with specific expertise had previously already reviewed items in detail and were able to make recommendations to the Board from a position of knowledge and understanding of the matter being presented. The role of Audit and Risk Management Committee in providing assurance and engaging with independent auditors who also reviewed and audited the University's arrangements for managing risks and key governance processes, data integrity and financial probity was also acknowledged and agreed to be vital;
- xiii) that an agro-chemical company was interested in exploring opportunities to work with the University on a non-exclusive basis (as the University regularly welcomes engagement with a wide range of companies), and possibly creating its research and development centre on or near the University's Farm. The challenge of finding farmland to accommodate such a request was noted as 35 hectares had already been set aside for the 'Hands Free Farm' project. Other options were being explored. It was proposed that F & GP be kept informed of any firm plans; **DGL**
- xiv) that opportunities to open up further markets in the USA and India were in hand. Attendance at a recent North American event had been

very worthwhile. 3 undergraduate students from India had started in September 2019;

- xv) that the University had been successful alongside Warwick, Aston, Birmingham and Leicester Universities in securing a Doctoral Training Partnership funded by BBSRC. A BBSRC visit was to take place in 2020;
 - xvi) that the University was shortlisted in three categories of the Times Higher Awards and was attending the THE Live Event;
 - xvii) that the fifth draft of the Strategic Plan included comments made by Governors and the University Executive at the September 2019 Planning Day and thereafter by staff and students who were invited to comment on the draft. In discussion it was agreed that an aim to achieve 3,500 students was appropriate as this was in line with the financial forecast to 2024. The OfS required growth to be reported so it could plan appropriately. Unexpected or sudden growth changes were likely to constitute a reportable event; **DGL**
 - xviii) that students' feedback had mainly focused on ensuring that student facilities such as sports and residences grew sufficiently to support further students. Overall, feedback had been very positive and helpful;
 - xix) that the Vice-Chancellor had shared the general themes of the Strategic Plan with the Parish Council who were supportive;
 - xx) that sustainability- financial and environmental remained a key theme of the Strategic Plan. Further work to help support initiatives such as the NFU Zero Carbon Pledge was in hand;
 - xxi) that in his role as Lead Governor, Mr Burnhope had spoken to Mr Jones on Internationalisation The discussion had been positive. Members agreed that sound progress was being made and the revised strategy was clear on both opportunity and challenge. The aim to take a global perspective and to support diversity was particularly welcome;
 - xxii) that while the University had engaged in trans-national education (TNE) with certain selected partners, challenges such as changes to the Chinese taxation system were challenging. Dr Pointon agreed to contact Andy Jones to share a few ideas for further opportunities; **JP**
 - xxiii) that the SU had been supporting diversity and social/cultural preferences for all students via its 'Give it a Go' programme and by supporting Planet Harper and offering drop-in chat sessions. The University also seeks to encourage interaction between different student groups by allocating rooms in flats/residences carefully to encourage integration. The local community had also been responding well, e.g by holding Chinese New Year celebrations in Newport each year. There had also in the past been a host family programme. This would be checked with Student Services; **CEB**
- [Post-meeting note: the University continues its membership of HostUK which facilitates international students to be hosted by UK families].*
- xxiv) that the SU would welcome reintroduction of the Beijing Cultural exchange programme and this had also benefited wardens; **AJ**

- xxv) that the University's' position in the QS World Ranking had helped to raise its profile as had key successes such as the Hands Free Hectare project. However, some overseas governments would only support students to study at HEIs included in the top 200 universities in the world. HAU was below this level currently and was working hard to try and secure a higher ranking;
- xxvi) that in addition to new engagements in India and USA, work in South America and sub-Saharan Africa continues. Securing funding from the Marshall Papworth Fund had been very helpful;

- Agreed:
- i) to approve the Strategic Plan 2020-2025;
 - ii) to approve the Internationalisation Strategy 2020-2025;

Agreed by Circulation: *Post Meeting: that in light of post meeting note, to note that the OfS had now withdrawn its letter relating to a delayed payment of a statutory fee and there was no longer a need to provide a response from the Board.*

19/24 **OfS Annual Accountability Return 2017/18**

Received: a briefing note on the documentation required for the OfS Annual Accountability Return and the process that is to be followed to seek approval of the various documents required from the Board and its sub-committees.

- Noted:
- i) that the requirement to submit a five-year forecast and commentary in November is a change to the usual timing of July each year;
 - ii) that the paper mapped Governing Body and Committee mechanisms for considering and approving all elements of the return to provide assurance to the Board that due preparation and scrutiny prior to recommendation of the final submissions has occurred;
 - iii) that the five-year forecast considered by the Board in July 2019 has been updated and is included later in the agenda. OfS guidance was received late, however, the final draft reflected the guidance;
 - iv) that the mapping against public interest principles mentioned earlier in the meeting would encompass accountability return assurance as appropriate;

19/25 **Audit and Risk Management Committee**

- Received:
- i) a report on the meeting of the Committee held on 14 November 2019;
 - ii) the Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Management Committee for 2018/19 financial year that will be submitted to the OfS by 2 December 2019, including (as annexes) the reports of the Internal and External Auditors for the Year Ended 31 July 2019;
 - iii) the Value for Money Strategy, VFM Report 2018/19 and VFM Plan for 2019/20;

- Noted:
- i) that the Audit & Risk Management Committee (ARMC) had considered the University's' Annual Report & Financial Statements & Annual reports and financial statements for Cedar Energy Ltd and the Harper Adams University Development Trust together with internal &

external audit reports in detail at its meeting on 14 November 2019. As set out in the Committees' report, ARMC had agreed to recommend the items set out in agenda item 7, Annual Reports & Financial Statements, to the Board for its approval;

- ii) that the Committee continued to assist the Board with its stewardship role and to support the Boards' decision making by providing information relating to its assurance duty with regard to value for money, efficiency and effectiveness, data accuracy, quality, governance, risk management and control arrangements;
- iii) that as stated in the Report of the Governors and Corporate Governance Statement, members of the Board had a duty to satisfy themselves about the quality and accuracy of the reports being made and to advise auditors of any concerns should they arise;
- iv) that ARMC were content that the Statement of Internal Control was supported by the reports of the internal and external auditors. The former had conducted their annual cycle of audits and had reported that the University's performance was good with six audit outcomes of substantial assurance and two of reasonable assurance. This compared well to other HEIs which were RSM clients. RSM had also confirmed that actions arising from the Research Governance audit (partial assurance) reported in 2017/18 had been fully addressed by management and verified by RSM for 2018/19. RSM had confirmed a positive audit opinion as set out in their report;
- v) the RSM had followed up their Governance and Tender audit of the Students' Union in Spring 2019 which had reported poor progress. However, since then, the new SU Director had made substantial progress and had fed back on actions completed to ARMC on 14 November 2019. RSM would complete a final follow up report, but positive evidence of very active engagement was pleasing to note at this stage;
- vi) that after completing the annual review of performance of internal auditors, ARMC wished to recommend RSM be re-appointed for 2019/20;
- vii) that the KPMG external auditors were in the 4th year of a 5-year engagement. The firm continued to also undertake some advisory work, eg, tax but this was undertaken by a different team & ARMC, the CFO and KPMG were monitoring this carefully and where there continued to be no conflict with external auditors independence;
- viii) that KPMG had made a small number of recommendations as part of their work which had been agreed and were being progressed by management. They had also reviewed & supported assumptions relating to LGPS, noting the University's' assumptions were within the KPMG range, towards the prudent end;
- ix) that KPMG would complete their appointment in 2020 and a tender exercise would be conducted ahead of this date to appoint external auditors from the year ending 31 July 2021;
- x) that KPMG's opinion was positive and they had confirmed they would provide an unqualified audit report subject to approval of the final accounts by the Board. After completing the annual review of performance, ARMC wished to recommend re-appointment of KPMG as external auditors;

- xi) that the Committee had reviewed its annual report in draft, external auditors were content with it and wished too recommend it to the Board for its approval prior to submission to OfS. The Committee confirmed its opinion that the University has an adequate and effective framework of control with regard to its key financial systems and other systems reviewed by internal and external auditors and is satisfied that current systems provide sufficient measures to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness and to promote value for money. It had also concluded that governance, risk management and data quality together with demonstration of public benefit were appropriate;
- xii) that ARMC had reviewed progress with the 2018/19 Value for Money (VFM) Plan together with the VFM Strategy and Plan for 2019/20 and were content to recommend these documents to the Board. The Committee had received and noted the OfS VFM Strategy which included reference on how OfS will regulate VFM at registered HE providers.
- xiii) the ARMC had also reviewed proposed changes to the Risk Analysis & Action Plan for 2019/20 and were content to recommend the updated RAAP to the Board as set out in agenda item 11 later on the agenda.

- Approved:
- i) the annual report of the Audit & Risk Management Committee including external and internal audit reports;
 - ii) the VFM report for 2018/19, VFM Strategy & Plan for 2019/20;
 - iii) the re-appointment of RSM (Internal Auditors) ; KPMG (External Auditors);

19/26 **Annual Reports and Financial Statements**

Received: a report on matters considered at the meetings of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 7 November 2019 (including a report on Board level KPIs)

- Noted:
- i) that F&GP had considered the Annual Reports and Financial Statements for the University Group, Cedar Energy and the HAU Development Trust at its meeting on 7 November 2019. The Committee had also reviewed the Letters of Representation & Letter of Support for Cedar Energy and wished to recommend all of these documents to the Board;
 - ii) that the Committee wished to recommend that its minimum membership level be amended to 5 members. In due course when new Board members were secured following the planned public advert for expressions of interest from future governors in 2020, it was suggested that a further member with financial skills and sufficient time to engage with the work of the committee might be appointed subject to Board approval;
 - iii) that the Committee had reviewed a proposal to amend lease arrangements between the University and Cedar Energy and wished to recommend that the University request the lease be relinquished in view of the fact that the University wishes to use the former AD site to house Hands Free Farm activities;

- iv) that the Committee had also reviewed the draft Strategic Plan and had been content for the draft to be recommended to the Board as occurred earlier in the meeting (including some further minor arrangements);
- v) that the Committee had been content with the ASSUR report and recommended it to the Board. It had also reviewed and agreed the annual KPI/PI report and agreed to recommend the report at Board level KPIs to the Board, noting inclusion of detailed Access & Participation Plan related KPIs;
- vi) that the Committee had been updated on progress with securing a loan for the JVS from Barclays Bank and were content to recommend that the loan be progressed and signatories authorised as set out in the Committees' report;
- vii) that since the meeting of F&GP, a small number of final amendments had been made to the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the University group to reflect a £160k improvement of the Smart Dairy and tax changes for Cedar Energy. A small number of typographical matters had also been adjusted and financial ratios updated to reflect the improvement and tax changes. As the Barclays Bank loan had not yet been finalised this had also been reflected in the final version;

Approved: i) the report of F&GP Committee including Board Level KPIs and ASSUR;

ii) the 2018/19 audited accounts for Harper Adams University incorporating the External Auditors' opinion,, Vice-Chancellor's Report and Corporate Governance Statement;

iii) the Letter of Representation for the Harper Adams University Group;

iv) a letter of Support for Cedar Energy Limited from Harper Adams University and a letter setting out loan arrangements;

Agreed to Note: v) the 2018/19 Annual Report and Accounts for Cedar Energy Limited and the letter of Representation;

vi) the 2018/19 Annual Report and Accounts for Harper Adams University Development Trust and the Letter of Representation;

Agreed: viii) that the University would write formally to Cedar Energy Limited asking for relinquishment of the lease for the former AD site. **CEB**

19/27 **Financial Forecast to 2024/25 and Financial Commentary**

Received: i) the financial forecast to 2024/25;

ii) financial commentary for submission to the OfS by 2 December 2019;

iii) financial tables for submission to the OfS by 2 December 2019;

Noted: i) that as noted earlier in the meeting, the Board had considered the Financial Forecast in July 2019 when setting 2019/20 budgets. The forecast had since been updated to reflect changes made since July 2019;

- ii) that key changes made reflected student recruitment and retention, and information received since July 2019 together with known changes to grants due to changes in coding (HECOS) QR & HEIF funding changes. Additional contribution targets had been set and proposed utility savings calculated to help offset increased costs. A Strategic Options Budget was also included for 2019/20 to help prepare for challenging years ahead together with additional efficiency savings;
- iii) that the outcome for 2019/20 was planned to be slightly better due to improved recruitment. However, 2020/21 would be challenging due to strategic investment requirements and retention reductions for foundation year students. While further top-up students may balance foundation year reductions, this was not certain, so a prudent approach had been taken;
- iv) that changes to HECOS codes would result in lower income levels for business programmes;
- iv) that re-securing ISF funding remained vital. Details of the application arrangements had not yet been announced. It was expected that a consultation may emerge in early 2020 after the election. The University had assumed retention of ISF in full;
- v) that the process for submission of the forecast and commentary was supported by the detailed financial tables circulated with the agenda. An initial submission would be subject to a finalisation process. Alignment with other key returns was in hand, although due to timing this was also challenging;
- vi) that the triennial valuation of LGPS which determines the pension contribution rate for the University for 1.4.2020 had been received for consultation. It would not impact on the University's annual report & financial statements for the year 2018-19 & the forecasts had included an assumption of a 2% cumulative uplift which is consistent with this actuated valuation.

- Approved:
- i) the financial forecast to 2024/25;
 - ii) financial commentary for submission to the OfS by 2 December 2019;
 - iii) financial tables for submission to the OfS by 2 December 2019;

Prof Ormerod left the meeting at this point

19/28 Strategic Projects- Joint Vet School

Please see Commercial in Confidence Minutes

Prof. Ormerod re-joined the meeting at this point

19/29 Academic Board, Academic Developments and Annual Assurance Reports on the Management of Quality and Standards

- Received:
- i) a report on the meeting of Academic Board held on 14 November 2019;
 - ii) a commentary on areas for improvement or enhancement arising from the Key Student Indicators (KSI) Report/Student Outcomes by Characteristics and Research Degrees Annual Report provided by the Director of Teaching and Learning and International.

iii) a summary of External Examiners Reports for 2018/19.

Noted:

- i) that the OfS no longer required Boards to make an explicit decision on the management of academic quality and standards as part of the Annual Accountability Return templates. However, the Regulatory Framework was clear that the management of academic quality and standards remained the responsibility of the Board and so the previously agreed reporting on academic matters would continue to ensure Board members were able to access appropriate information to provide assurance on this key matter;
- ii) that each of the three reports had been considered by Academic Board. Copies were available on the Governors' Document Library in addition to the summary of these reports included in the agenda for the Board to consider;
- iii) that every effort was being made to close achievement gaps where these exist. The attainment gap in male student achievement was not unique to HAU nor was the overall slightly reduced performance by those with vocational qualifications. Work was in hand to try and address these challenges;
- iv) that the University had performed well in the Research Degree Student Surveys;
- v) that the new Destination Survey had attracted less responses than the previous DLHE run by Universities;
- vi) that Academic Board had been content with the Strategic Plan 2020-25 subject to inclusion of minor comments now reflected in the draft considered earlier in the meeting;
- vii) that External Examiner reports were positive. A few were awaited and the Secretary would enquire when the deadline was for receipt; **CEB**

19/30 **Risk Management**

Received:

- i) updates to the Risk Analysis and Action Plan 2019/20 as set out in the attached summary.
- ii) the updated Risk Appetite Statement 2019/20
- iii) the updated Risk Management Policy 2019/20

Noted:

- i) that following the internal audit of the University's' arrangements for risk management, the Risk Management Policy had been updated to include the scoring set out in the Risk Analysis & Action Plan (RAAP); an assurance mapping document had also been produced and residual/ gross scores had been calculated to together with a target score;
- ii) that as requested by RSM, staff leading on risks had engaged with their wider teams. This has been positive with useful proposals for changes to action plans and management plans identified and included together with a wider range of amendments to overall risk scores;
- iii) that as the Strategic Plan had been approved, the table mapping risks against the Strategic Plan would now be updated; **CEB**

- Approved:
- i) updates to the Risk Analysis and Action Plan 2019/20 as set out in the attached summary.
 - ii) the updated Risk Appetite Statement 2019/20
 - iii) the updated Risk Management Policy 2019/20

19/31 Annual Accountability Return to OfS 2018/19

Received: the Annual Accountability Return 2019 templates for submission to OfS by 2 December 2019;

Noted: that clarification of the meaning of 'very high' cost subjects would be included in the University's response. The University had 'high cost' subjects rather than 'very high cost' subjects'

Approved: the Annual Accountability Returns for submission to OfS.

19/32 Corporate Planning Statement

Received: a progress report on the Corporate Planning Statement 2019/20

- Noted:
- i) that progress remained on track;
 - ii) that the Saputo Senior Managers were keen to continue working with Harper Adams. However, changes had been made and in light of these, the CFO would be seeking to continue a dialogue with Saputo to ensure other academic/collaborative commitments are met; **LF**
 - iii) that a revised CPS would be prepared to reflect the Strategic Plan 2025-25 for consideration by the Board at its April 2020 meeting.

CEB/DGL

19/33 Report of the President of the Students' Union

- Received:
- i) a report from the Students Union President on recent activities;
 - ii) the draft Students' Union audited accounts, including the Trustees' report, external auditors opinion for year ended 31 July 2018.

- Noted:
- i) that feedback from the new Freshers' Festival has been positive. Budgets set have been effective with a higher surplus achieved than anticipated;
 - ii) that there had been no noise complaints to date. It was felt that further effort to inform and engage local residents was proving to be very helpful and beneficial;
 - iii) that a new Events staff member had taken up her role;
 - iv) that as stated under the MOU, the SU would seek assistance from the University's IT team as required;
 - v) that 2,100 engagements with individual students had taken place under the 'Give it a Go' programme. There was a considerable improvement on 2018/19;
 - vi) that an Executive Council had been set up with a Student Chair. This body would hold the President and Vice-President to account;

- vii) that the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Students' Union were overall positive with 3 recommendations being agreed and in hand.
- viii) that some actions arising from the previous years' external audit had not been fully addressed in 2018/19 but would be completed by January 2020;
- ix) that the overall out-turn for 2018/19 was a lower deficit than planned and it was hoped to break even or better in 2019/20;
- x) that the 'Have your Say' sessions had been continuing including one where the Vice-Chancellor met students. Issues raised had included catering options and environmental sustainability related queries. Written feedback had been provided to the SU.
- xi) that a respect campaign was in hand and being widely promoted across campus;
- xii) that the SU's zero tolerance to unacceptable initiation or similar activities was well known and welcomed. The SU would tackle firmly any issues identified in relation to poor conduct by clubs/societies;

Agreed: to note the SU and external audit report Accounts and to thank the SU for all its hard work in effecting positive change for 2019/20.

19/34 **Committees**

- Received:
- i) a report on the meeting of the Health and Safety Committee held on 17 October 2019;
 - ii) a report on the Staffing Committee held on 7 November 2019;

- Noted:
- i) that Mr Thomas continues to engage with the Health & Safety Officer and has noted the positive engagement that she reports. Where there are challenges, these are tackled and support offered to reflect change;
 - ii) that the relatively low level of accidents was positive;
 - iii) that the University is conducting a review of its fire risk arrangements with help from its external advisor. External landlords were being licensed and visited by Telford & Wrekin where 5 or more students were accommodated. The Secretary of State had sought assurance on such matters following fires at Bolton University;
 - iv) that Staffing Committee had approved a range of enhanced policies and procedures at its recent meeting and was pleased to note further positive progress with Staff Development and the Employee Assistance Programme together with a refresh of PDR arrangements;
 - v) that the National Pay Award had led for a need to remove the lowest spine point from 1 April 2020. Detailed work to affect this had been considered at Staffing Committee and the Chair agreed the cost would be c£30k p.a;

- vi) that a revised Dignity at Work Policy had clarified and streamlined any areas to better reflect other grievance related procedures;
- vii) that Gender Pay Gap actions had remained in hand. The data for 2019 was slightly less positive than that in 2018 due to staff changes.

- Agreed:
- i) to endorse the invitation to Mr Wong to join Staffing Committee;
 - ii) to endorse the Committee's decision to approve the deletion of spine point 2 and associated changes as set out in the report of the Staffing Committee;
 - iii) to endorse the approval of the new Dignity at Work Policy & Procedure;
 - iv) to endorse the appointment of Dr Sandy Mackenzie as Chair of AWERB.

19/35 Harper Adams University Development Trust

Received: a report of the meeting of the Trust held on 8 October 2019 including a report on the Trust's work to support the Access and Participation Plan.

- Noted:
- i) that Mr Gurney had agreed to be nominated as Chair of the Trust and had been duly appointed to this role;
 - ii) that the recent Scholarship Fair had been very positive with further companies attending;
 - iii) that the Trust would be supporting students to attend the Royal Agricultural Society of the Commonwealth Conference hosted by Royal Norfolk Agricultural Society in June/July 2020;
 - iv) that the proposal to name the study area of the Vet School building after Mr Burgess had been welcomed by Mrs Burgess and family;
 - v) that feedback from students securing scholarships was vital in relation to the Access & Participation Plan reporting cycle. It was particularly pleasing to note that in addition to helping students to improve their academic performance, scholarships had also helped foster confidence and open up new networks and other opportunities for students;

19/36 Modern Slavery

- Received:
- i) a briefing note on the University's continuing plans to address the Modern Slavery legislation;
 - ii) the University's updated Statement on the Modern Slavery Act for publication in January 2020;

Approved: the University's updated Statement on the Modern Slavery Act for publication in January 2020; **LF**

19/37 Meeting Dates 2020/21

Received: proposed 2010/21 meeting dates for the Board of Governors and its committees;

[Post meeting note; **the July 2021** Board meeting will be held on **8 July 2021**. The date was omitted in error]

19/38 Any Other Business

- Noted:
- i) that congratulations were due to the Pig Unit Team for winning the Best indoor Pig Producer award; **CEB**
 - ii) that there may be opportunities to buy land at a reasonable cost in the next year or so. However, the University wished to consolidate its investment in land and may need to review poultry arrangements in due course. It was recognised that rented land continued to be a risk but further investment would also be a challenge given other priorities;
 - iii) that approaches from potential vertical farm partnerships had not yet led to a firm proposal. This would be kept under review;
 - iv) that the SU wished to seek approval in April 2020 for revisions to its Constitution;. This would be an agenda item. **DJ**

19/39 Risk Management

Received: an updated report from the University Secretary on the key risk areas monitored by the Board of Governors;

Agreed: that arrangements remained appropriate and members had no issues to raise.

19/40 Management Accounts

- Received:
- i) the management accounts report for the period to 31 July 2019;
 - ii) that management accounts for the period to 30 September 2019;

19/41 Committees

Received: a report on the meeting of Farm Strategy Committee held on 17 October 2019;

19/42 OfS & Other Circulars

Received: a list of OfS and other circulars received by the University since the last meeting of the Board.