

**University of Plymouth  
Higher Education Corporation**

**Board of Governors**

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Governors on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

**Present via zoom**

Colin Drummond OBE DL (Chair)  
Hamish Anderson  
Dr Arunangsu Chatterjee  
Tilda Fraser  
Professor Simon Gaskell  
Millie Green  
Michelle Hanson  
Kate Jackson

Professor Kevin Jones  
Bruce Mann CB  
Dr Ursula Ney  
Dinah Nichols CB  
Simon Perry  
Professor Judith Petts CBE  
Isobel Rossiter  
Tom Yoritaka

**In attendance:**

Professor Julian Chaudhuri (Deputy Vice-Chancellor - Education and Student Experience) **(DVC ESE)**  
Alastair Matthews (Chief Financial Officer) **(CFO)**  
Professor Dafydd Moore (Deputy Vice-Chancellor - International and Planning) **(DVC I&P)**  
Professor Jerry Roberts (Deputy Vice-Chancellor – Research and Enterprise) **(DVC R&E)**  
Gordon Stewart (Registrar and Secretary) **(R&S)**

Emma Hellingsworth (Clerk to the Board)

Item		Action
<b>20/03/1</b>	<p><b>Obituaries</b> <b>Noted:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Board remembered Noah Moss, stage 1 MSci (Hons) Ocean Science student who died very recently.</li> </ul>	
<b>20/03/2</b>	<b>Membership</b>	
2.1	<p><b>Apologies for Absence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None received.</li> </ul>	
2.2	<p><b>Notification of Any Other Business</b> <b>Noted:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None received.</li> </ul>	
2.3	<p><b>Declarations of Interest</b> <b>Noted:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None received.</li> </ul>	
2.4	<p><b>Confidentiality Status of Agenda Items</b> <b>Noted:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All items on the agenda are treated as confidential on the grounds of commercial confidentiality</li> </ul>	
<b>20/03/3</b>	<b>Minutes</b>	
3.1	<p><b>Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Governors held on 25 March 2020 (Enclosure A)</b> <b>Decision:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approved.</li> </ul>	

3.2	<b>Necessary Redactions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None received.</li> </ul>	
3.3	<b>Matters Arising (Enclosure B)</b> <b>Noted:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All items were as noted on Enclosure B.</li> </ul>	
3.3.1	<b>Unstarred Item</b> <b>Covid-19 Academic Quality and Standards Statement (Enclosure B(i))</b> <b>Noted:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the meeting of the Board that took place on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020 it was requested that a summary highlighting the measures the University had taken to date and were planning to take to ensure academic standards were maintained should be forwarded to the Board. This was completed and included at the meeting as Enclosure B(i).</li> <li>• In order to maintain both the academic standards and the integrity of degree awards, the University introduced alternative forms of summative assessments that would ensure that students could continue to meet their programmes' learning outcomes.</li> <li>• Assurance of requirements for programme learning outcomes and hence academic standards was prioritised and flexibility was implemented to allow students to complete or progress in their original timeframe.</li> <li>• A Safety Net Policy, approved by Senate, was introduced, to ensure the quality and standards of awards was maintained and to support our students with a portfolio of measures addressing extenuating circumstances, ensuring ample time to complete their assessments, and calculation of the 2019/2020 year aggregate mark to mitigate as far as possible any disadvantage during the pandemic. Senate approved the Policy on 22<sup>nd</sup> April and the documents that Senate received are available, on request.</li> <li>• The Safety Net policy was produced by the Covid-19 Teaching and Learning Group (which was subsumed by the University Teaching, Learning and Quality Committee (UTLQC) on the 15<sup>th</sup> April), chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) and including members from UTLQC, the Students' Union and other academic and professional services staff. The Group carried out modelling of the safety net scenarios to test validity and grade inflation. As a result, procedures were included in the Policy to ensure students receive the most appropriate classifications. An addendum to the University's Academic Regulations was introduced to codify the Safety Net changes.</li> <li>• UTLQC's interpretation of the latest Office for Students (OfS) guidance indicates that modified transcripts do not need to be provided for this academic year.</li> </ul> <b>Decision:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Board discussed the measures taken to assure quality and standards and were supportive of the rigorous approach that the University has taken in maintaining academic quality and standards and had confidence that the processes behind the decision making were robust to ensure that neither academic standards nor the classification of the University's awards would diminish as a result of the measures put in place during the pandemic.</li> </ul>	
20/03/4	<b>Chair's Remarks</b> <b>Noted:</b>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The importance of ensuring continuing good governance despite the ongoing challenges facing the University Executive Group (UEG), staff and students and the requirement for efficiency at meetings.</li> </ul>	
<b>20/03/5</b>	<p><b>Covid-19 Update</b></p> <p><b>Noted: Government/Sector Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vice-Chancellors weekly discussions with University's UK (UUK), daily UUK updates and weekly updates from the Cabinet Office.</li> <li>• The OfS recently spoke with the Vice-Chancellor and the Chief Financial Officer, to confirm the University's current position in light of covid-19. This was a positive conversation and is one which the OfS is having with all Institutions across the sector.</li> <li>• Further to a submission from UUK to Government on the 10<sup>th</sup> April, the Government responded on the 4<sup>th</sup> May with a 'support package' which was seen as a first step in responding to sector needs. The support package considers a number of elements including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Stabilising admissions, allowing providers to recruit home and EU undergraduate students for 2020/2021, to the level of the provider plan plus 5%.</li> <li>➢ An OfS temporary condition of registration, which aims to stabilise recruitment with measures including increasing control over unconditional offers, the management of lower offers and the resistance of adding undue pressure on students. Complications to the proposal include the date from which the revised condition should be backdated as well as the length of time it is due to run. The proposal remains under consultation.</li> <li>➢ UCAS are preparing a consultation for the introduction of Clearing Plus for the summer which would offer alternative opportunities direct to students who enter clearing unplaced, based on a number of factors including achievements.</li> <li>➢ The Student Loan Company will bring forward tuition fee payment so that 50% is paid in Autumn 2020 to help cash flow.</li> <li>➢ Confirmation that existing funds can be used to offer more hardship funds for students.</li> <li>➢ The introduction of a taskforce on university research sustainability across a number of government departments to ensure the health of UK research.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Restart and Recovery Planning is taking place across the sector and includes sharing of good practice when considering plans for example around social distancing and the procurement of Personal Protective Equipment.</li> <li>• The announcement on the 4<sup>th</sup> May that where institutions continue to provide appropriate support for learning and progression, students should not expect a fee refund for the current semester or the next academic year.</li> <li>• The ongoing, national concern around student accommodation. The University refunded students who returned home from University managed halls and have written to local providers to ask for assistance for students with rent on a case-by-case basis, if it is not already being provided.</li> <li>• The Government issued clarification to international students regarding visas and the potential impacts of quarantine for students coming into the UK are being considered.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UUK has established a taskforce to consider support required for graduates seeking employment and for graduates that were due to undertake internships and apprenticeships that have now been withdrawn or postponed.</li> </ul> <p><b>Noted: University Covid-19 Actions and Planning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The introduction of the Safety Net Policy, see 20/03/3.3.1 and confirmation that marking and exam boards will take place slightly later than usual with a small delay in the issue of outcomes. The OfS were content with the Safety Net Policy and the delayed issuing of outcomes.</li> <li>• A number of adjustments made to recruitment and conversion practices for 2020. The University remains hopeful that Clearing will take place on campus, in a risk managed way, as usual.</li> <li>• Many student support mechanisms are in place. Around 350 applications for the short-term financial assistance grant have been received to-date with a total of £30,000 awarded so far.</li> <li>• A number of staff wellbeing support mechanisms are also in place. Staff are working hard, flexibly and managing well. Staff morale is high and local online social events have been organised to assist with this.</li> <li>• A major programme of restart and recovery is underway. The programme comprises 5 component projects (Semester 1+, campus, operations and people, international, strategic planning and research) each being led by a member of UEG.</li> <li>• Communications, both in terms of quantity and clarity, remain key.</li> </ul> <p><b>Discussed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was confirmed that the University does provide longer-term career support for alumni and will reconsider this support in light of current events.</li> <li>• The OfS appetite for involvement in individual institution's regulations and admissions policies and their legal position for this under the Higher Education and Research Act.</li> <li>• The potential benefits of low covid-19 cases in the South West and the possible impacts on recruitment. Student Recruitment and Admissions are considering appropriate strategies.</li> <li>• There were no reports of decreasing student participation further to the Easter break.</li> <li>• The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience has received assurance from the Associate Deans Teaching and Learning that all expected tutorials are taking place with students. An end of module feedback questionnaire will be issued on Monday and the results, together with National Student Survey data will be included in the Semester 1+ project.</li> </ul>	
20/03/6	<b>Update on Strategic Implementation Planning (Enclosure C)</b>	
	<p><b>Noted:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The paper considers the refinement and reprioritisation of high-level issues with respect to the University's Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP), outlines an approach to the SIP and how it might respond to challenges during and post covid-19 and consider new possibilities for the next academic year.</li> <li>• The paper considers whether the 2030 Strategy remains the right strategy given likely changes and the best use of the University's strengths, which remain unchanged.</li> </ul>	

	<p><b>Discussed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The uncertainties, such as student numbers, that are contributing to some actions not being taken straight away and the benefits of early investment in areas in which the University has clarity. It was confirmed that there is no intention to change the Strategic Plan but there could be some modifications with the timing of delivery.</li> <li>• That the paper is concerned with the execution of the Strategy and high level considerations, rather than details.</li> <li>• The potential for a rolling process of review, which may need to be considered as part of the planning process.</li> <li>• Online learning is likely to evolve as the University moves out of an emergency situation. It will be important that staff are receptive to new forms of delivery whilst preserving the best of what is currently being delivered.</li> <li>• That the strengths of the University haven't changed because of covid-19 but new strengths may now have been realised and these should be used to good advantage going forward.</li> <li>• The importance of understanding competitor behaviour in order to retain and possibly increase, market share.</li> <li>• The importance of the University's agility in responding to new situations and technologies.</li> </ul>	
<b>20/03/7</b>	<p><b>Vice-Chancellor's Report non- Covid Matters (Enclosure D)</b></p> <p><b>Noted:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The UCAS deadline was extended, across the sector, to early May. A further update on student numbers will be available when all applications have been received.</li> <li>• Professor Richard Thompson OBE FRS was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society. The accolade recognises his place at the forefront of research into microplastics and comes more than two decades after he began work on the first study outlining their presence and threats in the environment.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chair to write to Professor Thompson to congratulate him on his outstanding success.</li> </ul>	
<b>20/03/8</b>	<p><b>Students' Union Report (Enclosure E) (Confidential)</b></p> <p><b>Noted.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chair thanked both Matilda Fraser and Millie Green for their contributions to the Board as well as to the University as a whole. They have provided well- balanced and committed student union representation this year.</li> </ul>	
<b>20/03/9</b>	<p><b>Governance</b></p>	
<b>9.1</b>	<p><b>Outcome of Board Effectiveness Review Report (Enclosure F)</b></p> <p><b>Noted:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The results of the Effectiveness Review were mostly positive and very similar to last year.</li> </ul> <p><b>Decision:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the Registrar and Secretary should proceed with the actions outlined in the Report.</li> </ul>	
<b>9.2</b>	<p><b>Review of Board's Statement of Primary Responsibility (Enclosure G)</b></p>	

	<p><b>Noted:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Statement of Primary Responsibility reflects the principles outlined in the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) Higher Education Code of Governance and is unchanged since it was last reviewed in July 2018.</li> <li>A consultation of the Higher Education Code of Governance is currently on hold and the Statement will be reconsidered against any revised Code when published.</li> </ul> <p><b>Decision:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approved.</li> </ul>	
9.3	<p><b>Terms of Reference Update (Enclosure H)</b></p> <p><b>Noted:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The minor amendments to the Terms of Reference raised at the meeting in January 2020 to modernise the terminology used in the Terms of Reference and to ensure consistency in current practice and across the Bye-laws.</li> </ul> <p><b>Decision:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approved.</li> </ul>	
20/03/10	<p><b>Finance</b></p> <p><b>2019/20 Period 8 Finance Report including full year forecast (Enclosure I)</b></p> <p><b>Noted:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Report includes detailed consideration of the financial impacts of covid-19.</li> <li>The net negative financial impact of covid-19 results from the refunding of costs for University managed accommodation for the end of term 2 and for not charging term 3.</li> <li>A net surplus is forecasted.</li> <li>Delays to the start of some capital projects will have a temporary, positive impact on the cash and investments position which is likely to end the year at c£125m.</li> </ul> <p><b>Discussed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Board recognised that the University is currently in a robust position in terms of financial sustainability. This position could add to the University's overall attractiveness and potentially assist with recruitment of both students and staff.</li> <li>The University has sufficient financial strength to invest in new capabilities, and should take opportunities,</li> <li>The Finance Committee will look at additional financial stress testing.</li> </ul>	
<b>Items for information</b>		
20/03/11	<p><b>Health and Safety update (Enclosure J)</b></p> <p><b>Noted.</b></p>	
20/03/12	<p><b>Interim Sustainability Update (Enclosure K)</b></p> <p><b>Noted.</b></p>	
20/02/13	<p><b>Committee Minutes</b></p>	
13.1	<p><b>Draft Minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee 8th April 2020 (Enclosure L)</b></p> <p><b>Decision:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approved.</li> </ul>	

13.2	<b>Draft Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020 (Enclosure M)</b> <b>Decision:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approved.</li> </ul>	
<b>20/01/17</b>	<b>Date of Next Meetings</b> 16 July 2020 <b>Forward items for July :</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HSAC annual report</li> <li>• H&amp;S Update</li> <li>• Management accounts for the period</li> <li>• Quality Assurance update (tbc)</li> <li>• University Plan and Five year financial forecasts to OfS</li> <li>• Annual Review of Risk Management Policy</li> <li>• Strategic Risk Register (for discussion)</li> <li>• Draft October Away Day Agenda</li> <li>• APP Impact Report (tbc)</li> </ul>	

#### Appendix 1: Action Plan

Minute		By	Deadline
20/03.7	<b>Vice-Chancellor's Report non- Covid Matters</b>  <i>The Chair to write to Professor Thompson to congratulate him on his outstanding success.</i>		Completed.

#### Appendix 2: Declarations of Interest

Colin Drummond OBE DL	Somerset NHS Foundation Trust	Chairman (non Exec)	Financial
	Calvert Trust, Exmoor (Charity No. 1005776)	Honorary Vice-President	Non-financial
	1610 Society (alumni legacy fund raising for Wadham College, Oxford)	President	Non-financial
	Water Conservation Trust (provision of bursaries for post graduate study in the water and environmental sectors) (Charity No. 1007648)	Trustee	Non-financial
	Deputy Lieutenant of Somerset		Non-financial
Hamish Anderson	Norton Rose Fulbright LLP Nottingham Trent University Law School Advisory Group, Kingston University Le Page Architects Ltd (Company No. 07204847)	Consultant Honorary Professor Member Wife is a director	Financial Non-financial Non-financial Indirect financial Non-financial
	Peninsula Medical Foundation	Committee Member	

	(Charity No.1060423/Company No.03300591)	(Director)	
Dr Arunangsu Chatterjee	St Andrew's Church of England Primary School, Plymouth South Asian Society of Devon and Cornwall (Charity No. 1110925)	Vice Chair & Governor Secretary & Trustee	Non-financial Non-financial
Matilda (Tilda) Fraser	University of Plymouth Students' Union UPSU Trustee Board (Company No.10676070/Charity No.1172830)	Vice-President President Trustee Chair	Financial Financial Non-financial
Professor Simon Gaskell	Higher Education Statistics Agency, Data Landscape Steering Group  University of Manchester  Halpin Partnership Advisory Board  Board of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education  CVCP Properties PLC ( Company number 03029225)  Simpson, Thacher and Bartlett LLP  Hawkins\Brown Architects	Chair  Honorary professor  Member  Chair  Chair of the Board of Directors  Daughter as partner  Son as partner	Non-financial  Non-financial  Financial (occasional fee)  Non-financial  Non-financial  Not to SJG  Not to SJG
Millie Green	University of Plymouth Students' Union UPSU Trustee Board (Company No.10676070/Charity No.1172830)	Vice President Education and trustee	Financial Non-financial
Michelle Hanson	Sodexo Trustee Services Ltd (Company No. 02999749)  The Springfields Academy (part of Reach South Academy Trust)	Trustee and Chair  Governor	Non-Financial  Non-Financial
Kate Jackson	Trethawle Enterprises LLP Trethawle Renewables (Company No.08244980) Clean Earth Trethawle Turbine (Company No.08244545) Menheniot School Association (Charity No. 1061162)  Helm Ticketing	Partner Director  Director  Chair and Trustee  Non-Executive Director	Financial Financial  Financial  Non- Financial  Financial
Professor Kevin Jones	Engineering Council (Company No.RC000150) Mayflower Autonomous Ship (Company No.10003369)	Trustee Director	

	UTC Plymouth (Company No.07645326) Plymouth Stem Board PSP Ltd (Company No.03157625) UoPEL (Company No.03707827) Shugenkai	Governor Chair Member of the board Member of the board President	
Bruce Mann CB	Lodestone 1452 Ltd. Clients are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency Planning College/Serco, providing advice and training in emergency preparedness and response.</li> <li>• Cornwall Council and STP, on estate matters.</li> <li>• Southampton Council and public sector partners, on estate matters.</li> <li>• The Government of Saudi Arabia, in building better emergency preparedness and response capabilities</li> <li>• Q5 Ltd, Associate Partner, on public sector strategy and transformation.</li> <li>• JLL Ltd, on public sector estate matters.</li> </ul> (Company no.10671993)	Director	Financial
Dr Ursula Ney	Proteome Life Sciences plc  Department for Education – review of Further Education Colleges Scancell plc (Company No. 11285913)	Non-Executive Director  Sister leading review  Non-Executive Director	Financial   Financial
Dinah Nichols CB	The Land Trust (Charity No.1138337) South West Lakes Trust (Charity No.1079966)	Trustee Trustee	Non-financial Non-financial
Simon Perry	Advisory Board of Arowana International Limited (Company No.10837371)  Richmond Holdings (Jersey) Limited (holding company for Parkdean Resorts) (Company No.BR012993)  Richmond UK Top Holdco Ltd which is a UK subsidiary of Richmond Holdings (Jersey) Ltd. (Company No.1053978)  Forest School, London  Advisory Board of Anmut Limited (Company No.11285913)	Member  Director  Director  Governor  Member	Non-financial  Financial  Financial  Non-financial
Professor Judith Petts CBE	Heart of the South West LEP Board (Company No.08880546)  Marine Biological Association	Director  Trustee	Non-financial  Non-financial

	(Company No.RC000865/Charity No.1155893)		
Isobel Rossiter	None		
Tom Yoritaka	Coinweb	Global Advisor	Financial
	ConXHub	NED & Interim Chief Strategy Officer	Financial
	Research Institute in Secure Hardware & Embedded Systems, Centre for Secure Information Technologies	Member of the Advisory Board	Non-financial
	Tech London Advocates	Member of the Advisory Board	Non-financial
	UCL EDUCATE Ventures	Founding General Partner	Financial
	Nexus FrotierTech	Board Observer & Global Advisor	Financial
	L Marks	Corporate Mentor	Non-financial