

Plymouth University
Higher Education Corporation
Board of Governors

Minutes of an extraordinary meeting of the Board of Governors held on Tuesday 7 October 2014.

Present: Steve Pearce (Acting Chairman) Dr Ranulf Scarbrough
Sarah Bowman Dr Mike Sheaff
James Brent Richard Skipper
Duncan Currall Stephen Tillman (*by phone*)
Professor Terence Lewis Henry Warren
Stephen Pryor

Secretary: Jane Hopkinson, University Secretary and Clerk to the Board

In attendance: Margaret Metcalfe, Executive Administrator

		Action
14/04/1	<u>Membership</u>	
1.1	<p>Apologies for absence Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apologies from Margaret Schwarz and Denis Wilkins (who had sent proxy votes). 	
14/04/2	<u>Chairman of the Board of Governors</u>	
2.1	<p>Appointment of the Chairman of the Board of Governors <i>James Brent absented himself from the meeting for this item</i> Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a tabled paper outlining proposals for the election of the Chair • this was an extraordinary meeting, called without the standard 5 days' notice, given the need to resolve the position of Chairman following Judge Taylor's resignation with effect from 1 October 2014 • Steve Pearce had automatically taken on the role of Acting Chair at that time but had indicated that he had no wish to take on the appointment on a permanent basis, believing that his skills and expertise were best used by the University in his substantive role as Chairman of the Employment Committee. In addition, his term of office as a member of the Board was due to end in July 2015 • HEFCE had been briefed following Judge Taylor's resignation and had advised that if possible the Board should identify a Chairman from within its current membership • since Judge Taylor's resignation, James Brent had been Acting Vice-Chairman, in which position he had given considerable support to both the University and the Acting Chairman: he had indicated that he would be willing and able to take on the role of Chairman for a period of c12 months from 3 November 2014 • concerns at the impression that only one candidate had come forward: it was explained that other governors had been willing to stand, albeit that 	

	<p>the role would not be their preference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • following the recruitment process which had led to the appointment of a Chair from outwith the Board, the Board had itself agreed that going forward it would look for a Chairman from within its membership: this may be something which the Board might choose to review at a later stage • concerns that given recent events, it was important that the Board was able to demonstrate strong leadership going forward: on that basis governors did not feel it appropriate that any appointment should be time limited. Clearly any Board officer was able to resign their role at any point in light of their personal or professional commitments but the appointment should be that of a full term Chair • student governors sought assurance that James was committed to upholding the ethos of the University in terms of widening participation, while recognising that the role of the Chairman was not personally to set the University's academic direction but to lead and manage the Board • in discussion with the Acting Chairman, James Brent had outlined the key tasks going forward in the short to medium terms: to have a functioning Vice-Chancellor in role; to strengthen the Board through the appointment of new governors; to complete the external governance review process as recommended by HEFCE and put appropriate governance arrangements in place; and the review and definition of, and development of an implementation plan for, Strategy 2020 • some reservations about the potential response to the appointment from across the city more widely, given James' business interests • should the Special Committee report to the Board after James had assumed the role of Chairman, he would hand over the Chair to the Vice Chairman for that discussion to avoid any potential conflict of interest <p><i>A brief adjournment was called to enable the Acting Chairman to speak to James Brent about issues raised by members</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Acting Chairman confirmed that he had spoken to James Brent, who had acknowledged the validity of the concerns raised about announcing an appointment with limited tenure and confirmed that he had a good working relationship with both the business community and City Council, particularly the officers. • comments from individual governors are recorded in a confidential annex to these minutes, not for circulation. <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unanimously, to elect James Brent as Chairman of the Board with effect from 3 November 2014. <p><i>Secretary's note: James Brent was invited to rejoin the meeting at this point</i></p>	
2.2	<p>Appointment of the Vice-Chairman</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steve Pearce had announced his intention to resign the role of Vice - Chairman, given the time limitations on his tenure • one nomination had been received, unprompted, for the role but it was suggested that the incoming Chairman have the opportunity to discuss his views of the role with all members of the Board before any decision was confirmed • the Board stressed that this was in no way a reflection on the candidate 	

	<p>whose nomination had been put forward</p> <p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to defer the decision to the 21 October meeting. 	
2.3	<p>Co-option of further governors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the meeting was halted prematurely due to a fire alarm the nomination of additional co-opted members will form part of the incoming Chairman's discussions with the Board. 	
14/03/3	<p><u>Date of next meeting</u></p> <p>Tuesday 21 October 1000-1300</p>	