

Plymouth University

Board of Governors

Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Board of Governors held on Thursday, 17 December 2015 at 9.00 am

Present:

James Brent (Chairman)	Margaret Schwarz
Professor Mark Cleary	Mike Sheaff
Professor David Coslett	Stephen Tillman
Matthew Dark	Ruth Titmuss
Rong Huang	Henry Warren
Steve Pearce	Denis Wilkins
Dr Ranulf Scarbrough	

Secretary: Jane Hopkinson (University Secretary)

In attendance: Professor Simon Payne (Interim Deputy Vice-Chancellor)
Professor Richard Stephenson (Interim Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

David Alder (Chief Marketing Officer)
Alastair Matthews (Chief Financial Officer)
Vikki Matthews (Chief Talent Officer)
John Wright (Chief Information Officer)

Professor Pauline Kneale (Pro Vice-Chancellor Teaching and Learning)
Professor Kevin Jones (Dean of Science and Engineering)
Professor Trish Livesy (Dean of Health and Human Sciences)
Professor Dafydd Moore (Dean of Arts and Humanities)
Professor Nikolaos Tzokas (Dean of Business)

Matthew Jackson (University Solicitor)
Siân Millard (Head of Strategy and Performance)
Tim Sydenham (Senior Strategy Officer)
Margaret Metcalfe (Executive Administrator to the Board)

	<p><u>Chairman's Introduction</u></p> <p>The Chairman stated that the meeting would be divided into two parts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Part A would be a continuation of the Board meeting held on 24 November 2015 in order for the Board to consider further the Portfolio Review recommendations.• Part B would comprise a joint session with the Executive to consider the implementation of the University's strategy and to discuss generally how the University should be positioned to succeed in a challenging and changing policy environment. <p><i>[Secretary's note: A record of Part B has been prepared separately for information purposes only and will not form part of the official minutes of the Board of Governors.]</i></p>	
PART A		

15/11/1	<u>Membership</u>	Action
1.1	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Noted:</p> <p>Apologies had been received from:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board members: Nick Buckland, Barbara Fuller and Professor Mary Watkins • UEG member: Professor Rob Sneyd 	
1.2	<p>Expressions of Gratitude</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nick Buckland, Professor Mark Cleary and Professor Mary Watkins had completed their terms of office as co-opted governors. The Chairman expressed gratitude for their valuable contributions to the work of the Board. The Board was pleased to note that Professor Mark Cleary would continue as an external member of the Audit Committee. • Jane Hopkinson would be retiring as University Secretary at the end of December 2015. The Chairman thanked her on behalf of the Board and also added his personal thanks for her invaluable support and guidance, which had helped considerably in bringing together the work of the Executive and the Board. 	
1.3	<p>Declarations of interest</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Declarations of interest made for the Board meeting on 24 November 2015 (and set out in the Appendix to these minutes) would continue to apply. • At the Board meeting on 24 November 2015, Dr Mike Sheaff had declared an interest in the proposed discussions concerning the Portfolio Review as he was a programme manager for Sociology which was one of the academic areas to be considered as part of that Review. This declaration was still relevant. The Board's response remained the same. While there was clearly a potential conflict of interest, the value of Dr Sheaff's insight was recognised. He would also refrain from comment on matters relating directly to Sociology. Accordingly and subject as mentioned, it was agreed that he would continue to participate in the Portfolio Review discussions. • No other potential conflicts of interest had been identified. 	
15/11/2	<u>Portfolio Review</u>	
2.1	<p>Chairman's Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This meeting was a continuation of the Board meeting held on 24 November 2015 in order for the Board to consider further the Portfolio Review recommendations arising from the meeting of the Academic Board (ACB) held on 16 December 2015. • An extract of the minutes of the Board meeting of 24 November 2015 relating to the Portfolio Review was tabled. • Based on the evidence produced at the Board meeting on 24 November 2015, the Board was supportive of the Portfolio Review recommendations made at that meeting. The Board recognised the extensive review and consultation process undertaken at Faculty and School level upon which those recommendations were based. However, in order to ensure that decision-making was as robust and comprehensive as possible, the Board had agreed to the ACB undertaking a further review of the 	.

	<p>recommendations at its meeting on 16 December 2015, having had the opportunity to consider further the supporting data. The Board would then consider further the ACB's recommendations. This meeting had been convened to provide the opportunity for the Board to do this.</p>	
2.2	<p>University Executive Recommendations (Enclosure A) Noted: <i>Professor Simon Payne summarised the Portfolio Review Recommendations (Enclosure A)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At its meeting on 16 December 2015, the ACB had been asked to consider the following proposals: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) To withdraw the BSc (Hons) Sociology programme (Recommendation 1); (2) To withdraw the MSc Social and Education Research, MSc Social Research and MSc Social Research Methods in so far as consistent with the University's needs for social research training for post graduate research students (Recommendation 2); (3) To retain the Sociology minor pathway in conjunction with Psychology and with Criminology and Criminal Justice Studies (Recommendation 3); (4) To withdraw the BSc (Hons) Politics major programme (with Criminology; History; Law; International Relations) (Recommendation 4); (5) To retain the Politics minor programme in conjunction with History, International Relations and Economics but withdraw the minor pathway with Criminology and Criminal Justice Studies (Recommendation 5); (6) To close the Elections Centre (Recommendation 6); (7) To withdraw the BSc (Hons) Public Services top up (Recommendation 7); (8) To retain the BSc (Hons) Public Services (Policing) and seek to incorporate it with BSc (Hons) Police and Criminal Justice Studies (Recommendation 8); (9) To close the School of Government and merge those elements of the School of Government not covered by Recommendations (1)-(8) above into the School of Law (Recommendation 9); and (10) To merge the Post Graduate School of Management with the undergraduate Plymouth Business School (Recommendation 10). 	
2.3	<p>Academic Board Meeting held on 16 December 2015 Draft minutes of the ACB meeting held on 16 December 2015 were tabled. The University Secretary was thanked for producing these so quickly.</p> <p><i>Professor David Coslett summarised the deliberations of the ACB meeting.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In advance of its meeting, the ACB had received a comprehensive pack of background information, including all the submissions (both internal and external) relating to the Portfolio Review proposals and the Executive's responses to those submissions (except for two submissions which had been received within the previous 24 hours to which it had not been possible to respond in the time available. Responses would, however, be made to all submissions on the Portfolio Review process.) 	

- Discussions at the ACB meeting had been full and measured. However, some of those discussions had centred on the fine detail of the recommendations and their impact on the areas directly affected rather than considering the proposals from the perspective of what was in the best interests of the University as a whole.
- There had been some questioning of the data but it was necessary to remind the ACB members that the data used was the same as the data provided to Destination of Leavers in Higher Education (**DLHE**), HESA and other agencies.
- Some questions had been raised about the status and remit of ACB and whether the Portfolio Review recommendations should be put on hold pending the establishment of the new Senate. The suggestion was not that ACB was unfit for purpose but that consideration by the Senate of all the recommendations arising from the Portfolio Review (both now and in the future) would ensure a consistency of approach. In response, it was stated that while the reviewing bodies may change, consistency of process would be assured because the remit of the ACB and the Senate would remain substantively the same. It was fitting that the ACB had considered the recommendations. To delay decisions until the Senate's establishment would unduly hold up matters and cast doubt on the whole process.
- The Executive's approach and positioning regarding Portfolio Review had been welcomed.
- At the end of the ACB meeting, one member had called for a vote. However, it had been agreed that the range of views expressed would be captured in a comprehensive set of minutes and that the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Simon Payne, the Dean of Faculty and the wider UEG would consider those views in framing the recommendations to be brought to the Board for approval.
- Following reflection on the discussions at the ACB meeting, two of the recommendations had been amended and the Board was now requested to consider and approve the recommendations as so revised.
- The proposed amendments would offer an opportunity to address certain of the issues identified in the Portfolio Review process. However, there was no guarantee that these issues would be resolved; whether this was the case would depend on the responses of the Faculty and Schools affected by the proposals, their ability to shape a plan to deliver the improvements required and the University's ability to deliver and implement efficiencies in staffing and other areas of expenditure that would prove sustainable.

Professor Simon Payne summarised the changes being proposed to the original Portfolio Review Recommendations set out above:

- Substantive changes had been suggested to two recommendations:-
- **First Change** - Recommendation 1: withdrawal of BSc (Hons) Sociology.
- The alternative proposal was to retain the BSc (Hons) Sociology programme subject to two conditions:
 - (1) the reduction of costs to acceptable and sustainable norms (to be outlined in a formal Business Consultation Document in respect of which formal consultation would commence by not later than 1 February 2016);

	<p>and</p> <p>(2) the development by 31 March 2016 of a detailed plan for reform of the Sociology programme to drive improved recruitment and efficiency of delivery, which would be considered at the April meeting of the Academic Development and Partnerships Committee.</p> <p>A review of progress on sustainability (both costs and recruitment) would take place in December 2016. This would be of crucial importance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationale for the change – the Sociology programme had positive features. The national market for Sociology was growing. The quality measures for the programme were generally good (except for employability; this was lagging behind the rest of the sector and required work, a fact recognised by the team). The key issue for Sociology was recruitment. The numbers of students being enrolled had fallen in recent years to approximately twenty per annum, which placed the whole area in jeopardy as income was insufficient to cover costs. During the Portfolio Review consultations, questions had been raised as to whether there had been sufficient time for the programme team to respond to the outcome of its periodic review and develop plans for the programme’s future. The amended proposals challenged the team to produce a plan which put the programme on a sustainable footing going forward and to have this in place as quickly as possible. This plan would then be reviewed in twelve months to assess whether effective progress had been made in terms of cost and sustainability. • Second Change – Recommendation 4: the withdrawal of BSc (Hons) Politics major. • The key issue was the financial sustainability of the programme. There had been two years of recruitment to the newly re-introduced Politics major programme but this was financially unsustainable when the costs of the Election Centre were taken into account. The alternative proposal was to retain the Politics major programme and review recruitment, sustainability, quality and outcomes in September 2016. This was contingent on the adoption of Recommendation 6 to close the Election Centre. If this was not closed, the area as a whole would be unsustainable. • Rationale for the change – while recruitment to the Politics major programme in the first year had been modest, this year’s applications were up by 50%, providing evidence of growing interest in the Politics programme. A detailed analysis of the area demonstrated that while Politics teaching was sustainable, research costs within the Election Centre (and particularly the lack of regular Research Council income) were a major concern. Accordingly, it was not proposed to change Recommendation 6 relating to the Election Centre. • The Chairman of the Board had received a letter from the two professors in the Election Centre. They had stated that while they accepted the lack of research income, their teaching contribution to Politics in general had not been properly reflected in the data. They had also had a substantial media impact which had contributed positively to the University’s reputation. Another factor to consider was that if the Election Centre was to close, proper provision would need to be made for the election archive material held by the Centre, which was drawn on nationally. 	
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- In response, the financial statements showed that teaching income relative to the Centre's costs meant that the latter was not sustainable. While it was accepted that the Centre did have a high media profile, a substantial reputational benefit had not accrued to the Politics programme in particular or to the University more widely. The concern about the Centre's archive was valid and so this would need to be addressed if a decision was taken to close the Centre.

The following contributions were made to the discussions:-

- An ACB-nominated member of the Board confirmed that they were content with the process which had been undertaken since the November Board meeting. Detailed information had been provided to the ACB which had been instructive. A wide range of issues had been raised at the ACB's meeting which had been accurately reflected in the VC's summary of the discussions.
- At the November Board meeting, the Board had been supportive of the then Portfolio Review recommendations, subject to review and support from the ACB. Following the ACB's further review, the Board was assured that the data had been fully considered by the ACB. The Board found it refreshing that the Executive had listened carefully to the concerns raised and demonstrated its flexibility, while being prepared to proceed to implement the amended recommendations without waiting for the new VC's arrival.
- There was a potential reputational risk for the University in carrying out Recommendation 6 as this may prompt disagreement and was likely to have a negative impact on the staff directly affected. UCU opposed compulsory redundancies. However, it was proposed to work with UCU as part of a formal consultation process prior to any redundancies.
- The decision to qualify the original Portfolio Review recommendations on this occasion may have an impact on the review of future Portfolio Review proposals and raise an expectation of such proposals being qualified in the same way. However, the amendments to the current proposals had been made for very specific reasons. Neither of the amended recommendations were easy outcomes as the conditions attached were substantive. Change was inevitable for some programmes, and this would have to be recognised when considering further reviews.
- At the Board meeting on 24 November 2015, it was acknowledged that Heads of School would have the opportunity to represent the views of their staff. The Governance Review had identified deficiencies in the way in which decisions were made and so the question was raised how Heads of School should represent staff views in the context of the Portfolio Review process. In response, it was stated that the Head of the School of Government had been fully involved in the debate, both in the review discussions and as a member of the ACB where the views of staff were fully represented.
- Given that the University was a learning organisation, the University needed to ensure that it shared data fully at an early stage. However, the ACB/Senate should recognise its role in academic governance which was not to analyse data in relation to individual courses but to take decisions as the steward of academic integrity for the University as a whole. Its decisions relating to a particular programme would be based on the

	<p>conditions for the sustainability of the particular programme but in the context of the other programmes being provided. Its discussions should focus on the wider interests of the University and its sustainability. Regarding the data, the key aspects were the underlying trends rather than marginal movements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wealth of information had been provided for the ACB meeting and assurance was given that the ACB had had sufficient time to review the data. While it was not for ACB to review the data in fine detail, it was clear that ACB members were well-briefed on the data provided. For example, they had identified from that data the burden placed by the Election Centre on the Politics programme. • The amount of information provided to the Board had also been extensive. Again, it was not the Board’s role to review and analyse this data in detail – it would be reliant on the Executive for this purpose. • In terms of whether the revised recommendations would achieve the planned savings, the financial impact was likely to improve in the initial year because costs would be reduced while income (which would have reduced on the closure of the programme) was retained. Going forward, the amendments would only apply if the programmes concerned satisfied the sustainability conditions laid down for them. There was optimism that these conditions could be met. Sociology was developing a good plan for recovery and there was evidence of growing demand for the Politics programme. Therefore, instead of closing the programme now, it was right to reconsider and adjust the two recommendations. However, the key test would be the review of each programme in twelve months. The fact remained that the cost base in both areas needed to be addressed; if this was not done, the University would find itself in the same position in twelve months’ time. • Ensuring the welfare of students on the programmes affected would be very important. There was no reason for current students to be concerned about the quality of provision or the future of their own programmes. The situation was more problematic for prospective students who had had delays in responses to their applications. Meetings had taken place with student representatives from the affected programmes and their concerns had been communicated to the ACB via UPSU members. Student governors had initially felt less able to represent the views of those students but at meetings with the University, those students had demonstrated a mature approach to the problems being encountered by their programmes and were looking to contribute to resolving those problems. • Heads of School needed to be clear about the importance of the periodic review process. • It was necessary to have a comprehensive matrix in place as soon as possible to assess the progress made by Sociology and Politics over the course of the next 12 months. In relation to Recommendation 1 (Sociology), any review of the reform plan should make specific reference to employability data. • Congratulations were extended to the Executive for the thoroughness of its work on the Portfolio Review, to ACB for being able to provide assurance to the Board on the steps which had been taken, and to those attending this meeting for the quality of the debate. 	UEG
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	<p>Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board gave its formal approval of the amended Portfolio Review recommendations as tabled at today's meeting. <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given his potential conflict, Dr Mike Sheaff did not express a view. 	
15/11/3	<p>Update on Other Portfolio Review Work</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work had been completed in 15 of the 17 areas under review. Three further sets of recommendations had been submitted to the Executive at its meeting on 16 December 2015. These would require Board approval on one aspect only and would be submitted to the Board in February 2016. Different schools were having varied experiences of the Portfolio Review process. This was not the result of an inconsistent approach but of differences in the ways certain schools had interacted with that process. Some schools were engaging in a pro-active way, others less so. But it was recognised that the level of engagement within the University was markedly higher than might be expected in other types of organisations. The general message was that the University was not considering retrenchment only but was also looking to make investments for which a sound business case was made. The Board would receive a Portfolio Review update at its February meeting. 	UEG
15/12/4	<p>Date of Next Meeting Thursday 28 January 2015</p>	
Part B	[Secretary's note: As noted above, a separate record of Part B has been prepared.]	
3	<p>Chairman's Closing Remarks</p> <p>Noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over the next 12 months, the Executive and Board would need to consider the likely position of the University in five years' time. This would incorporate a "bottom-upwards" review process and a holistic view of the University's optimum size and shape over this period. It was necessary to make the necessary adjustments and investment (for example, in library facilities) to achieve the University's strategy. Gratitude was expressed to the Board, the Executive and the VC for all their hard work during the year, together with wishes for a Happy Christmas and New Year. 	

Minute	ACTION PLAN	By	Deadline
15/11/2	To implement the Portfolio Review Recommendations (as amended) in accordance with the timetable set out above	UEG	As above
15/11/2	To have a clear matrix in place as soon as possible to assess the progress made by Sociology and Politics over the course of the next 12 months.	UEG	As soon as possible
15/11/3	To provide the Board with a Portfolio Review update at its February meeting	UEG	February

Appendix: Declaration of Interests

Name	Organisation	Role
James Brent	<p>Akkeron Group LLP</p> <p>Natatomisam Limited; Akkeron Leisure Limited; Oldway Mansion Limited; Five Directions Limited; HHP Nominee Limited; Akkeron Hotels Group Limited; Akkeron Hotels Management Limited; Saltrock Surfwear Limited</p> <p>Plymouth Argyle Football Club Limited</p> <p>Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust</p> <p>South West Ticketing Solutions Limited; The Plymouth Pavilions Limited; Resurgam (West End) Limited; Suite Hospitality Limited</p>	<p>Chairman and CEO</p> <p>Director</p> <p>Chairman</p> <p>Chairman (non Exec)</p> <p>Director</p>
Nick Buckland OBE	<p>Plymouth University</p> <p>Finance Cornwall /Finance South West</p> <p>Theatre Royal Plymouth</p> <p>PA Central Limited</p> <p>Shebbear College</p> <p>First Great Western</p> <p>Ditchen Farm</p> <p>The British Computer Society</p> <p>The Chartered Management Institute</p> <p>The Royal Society of Arts</p> <p>The Institute of Maths & it's Applications</p> <p>The Royal institution</p> <p>The Institute of Directors</p> <p>The Wellcome Trust</p> <p>Cornwall Adult Education Service</p> <p>Careers SW</p> <p>Tempus Leisure Ltd</p> <p>National Trust</p> <p>SuperFast Cornwall - EDT</p> <p>Slough and Eton Business and Enterprise Academy</p> <p>Council for the Institute of Mathematics</p>	<p>Pro Chancellor & Member of Board of Governors, Associate Lecturer, PhD Student</p> <p>Board Member</p> <p>Board Member and Trustee</p> <p>Director and part owner</p> <p>Governor and Trustee</p> <p>Advisory Board member</p> <p>Joint Owner</p> <p>Fellow</p> <p>Fellow</p> <p>Fellow</p> <p>Fellow</p> <p>Member</p> <p>Member</p> <p>Brother in law is Chief Operating Officer</p> <p>Wife works as a Curriculum Manager</p> <p>Board Member</p> <p>Board Member</p> <p>Non-elected member of Council (Governance Community)</p> <p>Chair Steering Group</p> <p>Chair</p> <p>Governor</p> <p>Elected member of the Council</p>

	Cornwall College PCH Dental Ltd Maxxim Consulting Karst PCH CiC	Member of Council Chair Advisor Trustee Board member
Professor Mark Cleary	Management Development Institute of Singapore University of Bradford Commonwealth Scholarship Committee	Honorary Senate Member Emeritus Professor and Member of Court Selection Committee Member
Matthew Dark	University of Plymouth Students' Union UPSU Trustee Board	Vice-President and trustee
Barbara Fuller	None	
Rong Huang	Association for Tourism in Higher Education Tianjin University of Commerce Quality Assurance Agency Enterprises	Executive member Guest Professor Associate
Steve Pearce	Deputy Lieutenant of Devon Drake Foundation Devon and Cornwall Crimestopper Hamoaze House	Vice-Chairman Member Trustee
Dr Ranulf Scarbrough	BT Group PLC	Employee
Margaret Schwarz	Cornish Mutual Insurance	Governance Lead
Dr Mike Sheaff	University of Plymouth Stoke Damerel Community College () B&Q Green Party	Staff governor Brother is employed by the University (Prof Rod Sheaff in the School of Government, faculty of Business) One son is an employee One son is an employee Younger son has been selected by the Green Party to stand for election to Plymouth City Council in Drake Ward (in which the campus is located)
Stephen Tillman	Altitude(Ascot) Limited Altitude Real Estate LLP– name change to ARE (Properties) LLP Altitude Property Developments Limited Altitude (Arcott) Limited	Director Partner Director Director & shareholder

