

CONFIRMED

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON HIGHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Minutes of the Board of Governors held on Tuesday 23 November 2021 in Room US.G.19/20, University Square Stratford

Present: Anulika Ajufo (Chair), Ismail Amla, Amanda Broderick (Vice-Chancellor & President), Trevor Critchlow, Adam Doyle, Les Ebdon, John Garwood, Regina Everitt, Bindi Karia, Mottie Kessler, Jackie Craissati, Irfana Kottikulam-Aboobacker, Tommy MacDonnell, Doris Olulode, Lavanya Rajendran, and Janette Withey

In attendance: Hassan Abdalla (Provost), Bugewa Apampa (Dean of the Office for Institutional Equity), Jim Benson (University Secretary), Verity Brown (PVC Impact and Innovation), Dean Curtis (DVC & Chief Finance Officer), Dalia Dasgupta (HR Director), Paul Marshall (PVC Careers and Enterprise), Ian Pickup (Chief Operating Officer) Vanessa Varvas (Chief Marketing Officer) and Scott Williams (Deputy Chief Marketing Officer)

Officer: Jane Thomas (Governance Manager)

Apologies: Gary Stewart

21/24 NOTICE OF INTENTION TO SPEAK TO STARRED ITEMS

24/01 NOTED: there was no notice of intention to speak to starred items.

21/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

25/01 NOTED: there were no declarations of interest.

21/26 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 OCTOBER 2021

26/01 RECEIVED and CONFIRMED: the minutes of the Board of Governors' meeting held on 7 October 2021.

21/27 MATTERS ARISING

27/01 NOTED that:

- a) an electronic copy of information for governors to share on social media had been requested and this was still to be provided.
- b) the Governance and Search committee would consider the terms of the current appointment at their next meeting; however, the focus was currently on the appointment of the Chair. It was noted that future appointments would be limited to 5 years.
- c) the PVC Impact & Innovation was working with Bindi Karia and Gary Stewart on the proposal for an IP spin-out company. Legal advice was being sought and this would be presented to the Board for approval at a future meeting.
- d) the first draft of the complaints and appeals annual report had been produced and it was confirmed that it contained the benchmark data as requested.

27/02 RECEIVED: a report from the Director of Careers and Student Enterprise and the Director of Strategic Planning on the proposed new careers and enterprise KPI: Graduate Progression.

27/03 NOTED that:

- a) the proposed KPI had been reviewed taking into account the feedback at the recent Board strategy session and a request for the indicator to be focused on a wider view of value-added from studying at UEL. It was proposed that a new Board KPI "Graduate Progression" be approved which combined a broader view of the outcomes with the graduate voice to provide a holistic view of graduate progression. It was recognised that the data used for this KPI was still lagged and continued to capture historical data.
- b) a request was made for the weighting of the KPIs to be clarified.

27/04 AGREED: for clarification to be sought on the weighting of the KPIs

21/28 BUSINESS DISCUSSED AT STANDING COMMITTEES

28/01 RECEIVED and NOTED: a report from the Governance Manager on the business discussed at standing committees.

21/29 FINANCIAL POSITION: QUARTER 1

29/01 RECEIVED: a report from the Director of Finance on the financial position for Quarter 1.

29/02 NOTED that:

- a) there was an adverse variance in relation to student recruitment and it was noted that, although there had been strong early recruitment, there were much fewer students in the late recruitment cycle, which was a peculiarity of this recruitment cycle. However, despite this, there had been 6% income growth and the market share had increased.
- b) there had been an issue due to assessed qualifications and the impact of that grade inflation had resulted in record number of students gaining entry into their first-choice university. It was also noted that this year was also a transition year, with teacher assessments as well as timed assessments being used to calculate grades.
- c) student recruitment was down by approximately 1400 students. It was noted that a reduction in undergraduate recruitment would lead to an impact in years two and three.
- d) there had been a higher number of students who had continued their studies from last year, however, it was expected that there would be further impact next year, but it was unlikely that it would be as significant.
- e) a request was made for an analysis in relation to:
 - the percentage of students who had not returned for their second or third year.
 - how that changed the composition of the demographics.
 - the percentage of international students.
 - what percentage were from partnerships.

29/03 AGREED: to provide an analysis in relation to student recruitment as detailed in 29/02 (e)

21/30 RISK MANAGEMENT

30/01 RECEIVED: the annual risk report from the Risk Manager.

30/02 NOTED that:

- a) this report provided an update on the work that had been undertaken to uplift the university's risk maturity level. It was noted that our level of risk maturity was progressing along the five point scale towards "defined and measured" and the aim was to achieve "measured" during 2022.

- b) consideration would need to be given as to whether it was desirable to aim for the upper end of the risk maturity indicator to achieve “self-optimising”, noting that this would involve a high level of work and resourcing. UEB would give consideration as to how far the University should progress on the risk maturity indicator.
- c) the Audit and Risk Committee had considered the report and were confident that the work on risk management was going in the right direction. It was recognised that it was still a work in progress and it was important for there to be oversight by the Board. It was agreed that the Chair would discuss this issue with the Chair of ARC, the Vice-Chancellor and President and the University Secretary before presenting back to the Board.

30/03 AGREED: the Chair of the Board to discuss oversight of risk by the Board with members of the executive.

30/04 RECEIVED and NOTED: a report from the Risk Manager on Institutional Risks

30/05 RECEIVED: a report from the Risk Manager on risk appetite.

30/06 NOTED: that the need to document the risk appetite was identified by an internal audit which had been undertaken in September 2020. In drafting the risk appetite document risk owners had been consulted and it was recognised that they had to take responsibility for making judgements in their own areas. The draft risk appetite had been drafted with UEB.

30/07 AGREED: to endorse the direction of travel.

21/31 PREVENT

31/01 RECEIVED: the annual report on the Prevention of Terrorism 2021

31/02 NOTED that:

- a) an accountability statement from the Board of Governors was due to be submitted to the OfS by 5 December 2021 which assured that the University had continued to have ‘due regard’ to the Prevent duty over the previous academic year. This year, OfS require that the accountability statement should summarise how the governing body had shown due regard to the Prevent duty and the evidence it had used to assure itself. The report had been considered by the Audit and Risk Committee, who recommended it to the Board for approval.
- b) there had been extensive work undertaken in relation to training, which had covered sensitive areas.
- c) there was concern with regard to the low level of incidents reported. This was attributed mainly to the lack of presence on campus during the

previous year. It was also noted that less than 25% of institutions reported incidents, but this was an area which required constant monitoring.

- d) it was recognised that the way in which events should be cleared required promotion and work was being undertaken to address this.
- e) it was agreed that some test cases should be reviewed at a future strategy session.

31/03 AGREED:

- a) to discuss some test cases in relation to Prevent at a future strategy session.
- b) to approve the accountability statement for submission to the OfS.

21/32 UPDATE ON HEALTH AND SAFETY LEGAL DUTY: WORK-RELATED STRESS

32/01 RECEIVED: a report from the University Secretary providing an update on Health and Safety Legal Duty in relation to work-related stress.

32/02 NOTED that:

- a) the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) issued the University with an Improvement Notice in relation to a number of cases of work-related stress amongst academic staff. It was noted that the University sought to engage with the Health and Safety Executive to find a way of resolving the issue but the response from the HSE had been disappointing and they had declined the approach suggested and refused to remove the Improvement Notice. Legal advice was sought and as a result the University served notice of its intention to formally appeal the issuance of the Improvement Notice which would allow the University to show the level of confidence in its compliance and allow a conversation to take place. The impact on reputation was raised and it was noted that, although it was public knowledge, details were not currently on the website.
- b) a review of our processes and systems would be undertaken, as well as the mitigation measures and how risks were recorded etc.
- c) the Chair confirmed that it was her view that the right approach had been taken but considered that the Board should have been more engaged with the matter taking into account their responsibilities in this area.
- d) a request had been previously made to members of the Board to undertake the online health and safety training and the importance of the need for the Board to engage in this area was highlighted. It was noted that the Chair of the Board would be undertaking the training and a request for members of the Board to do the same was made. It was

agreed that the University Secretary would send the link to governors to allow them to undertake the training.

32/03 AGREED: the University Secretary to send the link for Health and Safety Training to governors.

21/33 UPDATE ON THE APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIR

33/01 RECEIVED: a report from the University Secretary on the appointment of the Chair.

33/02 NOTED that:

- a) Harvey Nash had undertaken extensive groundwork. A longlist of potential candidates had been produced and reviewed by the Governance and Search Committee. The longlist had been reduced to eight candidates and a meeting had been arranged with Harvey Nash to discuss the outcome of their interviews with these candidates.
- b) there was disappointment expressed that the longlist was not as diverse as was anticipated and it was noted that ways in which to attract more candidates were being investigated including contacting alternative agencies who specialised in inclusive and diverse appointments.

33/03 AGREED: the University Secretary to contact the agencies mentioned who specialised in inclusive and diverse appointments once the candidates on the longlist had been considered for shortlisting.

21/34 UPDATE BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR & PRESIDENT

34/01 RECEIVED: a presentation from the Vice-Chancellor & President.

34/02 NOTED that:

- a) in relation to Covid-19, it was not anticipated that Plan B would become operational in the near future. It was noted that staff were required to report a positive Covid test. A self-certification system to declare the level of vaccination for staff was being introduced, however, it was noted that this was an opt-in rather than an opt-out service. It was not anticipated that an approach would be adopted where this would be compulsory, except in specific areas e.g. nursing students.
- b) there were three capital projects which were being developed. The Board would need to give consideration to the risks associated with these projects. The proposed projects would need to be developed further with resources and time constraints being taken into account. It was anticipated that the timeline for the projects would be developed as they progressed.

- 34/03 AGREED:** to advise the Board of which projects were feasible or not feasible.
- 21/35 ANNUAL REPORT ON THE RESEARCH INTEGRITY CONCORDAT**
- 35/01 RECEIVED and APPROVED:** the annual report on the Research Integrity Concordat.
- 21/36 PRESENTATION BY THE DEAN OF THE ROYAL DOCKS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LAW FOLLOWED BY A TOUR OF THE USS CAMPUS**
- 36/01 RECEIVED:** a presentation from the Dean of the Royal Docks School of Business and Law.
- 21/37 REPORT OF BUSINESS DISCUSSED AT ACADEMIC BOARD**
- 37/01 RECEIVED and NOTED:** a report from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Officer on the business discussed at Academic Board.
- 21/38 ANNUAL REPORT ON UNIVERSITY LEAGUE TABLES**
- 38/01 RECEIVED and NOTED:**
- 21/39 ANNUAL CYCLE OF BUSINESS**
- 39/01 RECEIVED and NOTED:** the annual cycle of business.
- 21/40 USE OF THE CORPORATION'S SEAL**
- 40/01 NOTED:** that the Corporation's seal has not been used since the last meeting of the Board held on 27 October 2021.
- 21/41 DATES OF MEETINGS**
- 41/01 NOTED:** that the dates of meetings for 2021/22 were as follows:
- 25 March 2022
 - 24 May 2022
 - 7 July 2022