

**ARTS UNIVERSITY PLYMOUTH
MEETING OF BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

Date: Tuesday 17 October 2023
Time: 10.00 am – Barns-Graham Room, Tavistock Place, University.

Present:	Dr Sue Brownlow	Chair
	Anna Corbett	Deputy Chair
	Prof Paul Fieldsend-Danks	Vice-Chancellor
	Ciara Eastell	Independent Member
	Beth Evans	Student Member
	Nigel Godefroy	Independent Member
	Mark Greaves	Independent Member
	Tim Gundry	Staff Member (Academic)
	Andy Honey	Independent Member
	Ian Parry	Independent Member
	Dame Janet Ritterman	Independent Member
	Rachel Soundy	Independent Member
In attendance:	Nadyne Ebbens	Deputy Clerk virtually via Google Meet
	Prof Stephen Felmingham	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
	Dr Robin Kirby	Registrar & Deputy Vice-Chancellor
	Jacqui Moore	Director of External Relations
	Rich Watson	Chief Operating Officer
	Liz Wiltshire-Meads	Clerk to the Corporation

CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

BG/23/33 WELCOME, APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & QUORACY

Apologies were received from Margaret Campbell, Staff Member (Support). There were no unregistered declarations of interest and the meeting was quorate.

BG/23/34 MINUTES

BG/23/34/1 Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 4 July 2023 were considered to be a true and accurate record of proceedings.

RESOLVED: that the minutes be approved for signature by the Chair.

BG/23/34/2 Action Tracker

It was noted that all actions were either complete, reported on the agenda, or the target completion date had not yet been reached.

BG/23/35 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

The Vice-Chancellor introduced his report and noted that there were additional to the report five appendices as follows: Teaching Excellence Framework 2023 Outcomes; GuildHE 'Expertise in Action' report; Art is Essential (Creative Coalition Manifesto); Press Cuttings (June - October 2023); and External Relations.

The Vice-Chancellor took the Board through his report and highlighted that the University had, after much hard work in pushing the metrics up, been awarded Silver in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). The Ofsted inspection outcome of "Good" was also highlighted. The National Student Survey (NSS) results for 2023 had been

exceptional with the University scoring as the highest arts institution in five out of seven categories.

The University had been part of the Expertise in Action (2023) report by GuildHE on the real world impact of knowledge exchange funding at smaller and specialist institutions. Being a part of the project demonstrated the University's duty of impact beyond teaching, to the city and regional placemaking for economic growth.

The Vice-Chancellor highlighted the following areas of note:

- Extended Degree pathway;
- Graduation
- postgraduate common unit framework;
- artificial intelligence;
- research and innovation team driving diversity of the business, income streams and commercialisation of the estate;
- Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF3).

The Chair on behalf of the Board congratulated and thanked the Vice-Chancellor and University staff for all the achievements, particularly in the context of the recent past.

Following questions and comments from Board members and further discussion it was noted that:

- a) the Graduation had been uplifting with inspirational speeches which put into very clear context the work of the Board;
- b) the mental health of young people was changing and it was timely and important to ensure that the University's students were supported in order to have the best experience possible.

Noted.

BG/23/36 2023 STRATEGY MONITORING

The Registrar & Deputy Vice Chancellor introduced the first monitoring report for the new Strategic Plan and noted that the report had been considered by Academic Board. The report provided a brief overview of the University's current performance against academic performance indicators and key performance indicators set out in the 2030 Strategy's Creative Endeavour operational plan.

It was further noted that PIs and KPIs for the Sustainable Futures and People and Place operational plans would also be presented regularly to the Board; the themes of those two plans were not so closely linked to the Academic Board committee architecture, but were reported directly and regularly to SLT and would be reported to the Board as part of current cycles of business.

The Vice-Chancellor, as Chair of Academic Board, noted that it was useful to have the data in one place and for both Boards to have sight of the KPIs. It was noted that although the University was not in the REF, the KPI of staff research mirrored benchmarks and as such would be ready for the REF. The Academic Board took assurance from the new KPI monitoring.

At executive level, there was a monthly rolling review of KPIs against the Strategic Plan which was consistent and a new approach by the University to deliver the Strategic Plan.

Following questions from Board members and further discussion it was noted that:

- a) the new approach was welcomed and informative;
- b) understanding of the data could be improved by including benchmark data to demonstrate whether the data was good, bad or indifferent;
- c) going forward all three strands of the strategy would be included in the report;
- d) action plans were in progress to improve graduate level employment stats and nationally creatives were in discussion with survey organisers.

Noted.

BG/23/37 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

This item was deemed to be confidential and was subject to a separate confidential minute.

BG/23/38 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

This item was deemed to be confidential and was subject to a separate confidential minute.

BG/23/39 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

This item was deemed to be confidential and was subject to a separate confidential minute.

BG/23/40 STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

The COO introduced the report and noted that the register had been considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting in September.

Noted.

BG/23/41 ACADEMIC ASSURANCE REPORTS

BG/23/41/1 Academic Board Summary and Minutes

The Vice-Chancellor noted that the Academic Board met on 13 September 2023. A new performance summary report was presented with future reporting to include RAG rating. Academic Regulations were approved in June, with further information on Academic Misconduct and AI to follow. Guidance on AI and Academic Misconduct remained limited; however the regulations had been updated to include some appropriate wording concerning the use of AI.

The Chair noted that a joint meeting of the Board with Academic Board had been scheduled on the Strategic Away Day in May 2024.

Noted.

BG/23/41/2 Annual Academic Assurance Report

The Registrar & Deputy Vice-Chancellor noted that the overview document had been reintroduced as a useful exercise and reminder of what the Board of Governors had received in terms of academic assurance. Externality of assessment during 2022/23 was extensive with the governance effectiveness review, Ofsted inspection and TEF. The report also included Academic Board priorities for 2023/24.

Following questions from Board members and further discussion it was noted that it would be useful for the next report to include key points or themes from validations, external examiners and student feedback.

Noted.

BG/23/41/3 Pre Degree Report including Ofsted Update

This item was deemed to be confidential and was subject to a separate confidential minute.

Noted.

BG/23/41/4 HE Academic Performance Report

The Registrar & Deputy Vice-Chancellor noted that the report captured the NSS and Graduate Outcomes survey that had been reported elsewhere on the agenda. Of note was that the NSS questions had been changed and the outcome was in the University's favour. The Graduate Outcomes survey 2021 graduates 15 months after university and as such there was a lagged effect with work in progress to continue to improve that data.

TEF ratings had been published with 53 results still pending, and no bronze ratings yet published.

The University was early into league tables and although rated bottom of the new Daily Mail league table had scored third for student support and sixth for first generation students.

Noted.

BG/23/41/5 Annual Health & Safety Report

The Board received and noted the annual Health & Safety report for 2022/23.

Received.

BG/23/42 COMMITTEE REPORTS

BG/23/42/1 Governance Report

The Clerk introduced the report containing recommendations from the Nominations & Governance Committee.

The Chair noted that the Deputy Chair had temporarily taken on the Lead Governor for Safeguarding role. Governors were invited to consider whether they might be willing to take this on.

RESOLVED:

- 1. To approve the proposed amendments to Appendix 1, 2 and 3 of the Standing Orders;**
- 2. To approve an attendance target for Board members of 85%;**
- 3. To note the governor resignation and associated vacant roles within the Board's governance framework;**
- 4. To note that 11 of 20 recommendations from the External Governance Review have been addressed and closed, with nine in progress;**
- 5. To note that all Board members will be asked to complete iHasco Equality Diversity and Inclusion training, inline with all staff, as a minimum baseline to demonstrate the Board's commitment to matters of EDI.**

BG/23/42/2 Audit Committee Report: Risk Management and Risk Strategy/Appetite

The COO noted that the risk strategy was revisited annually and was recommended to the Board for approval by the Audit Committee.

ACTION: risk appetite discussion to be included on the Board Development Session agenda.

RESOLVED: to approve the Risk Strategy for 2023/24.

BG/23/42/3 Finance & Estates Committee Report: Financial Regulations

The COO noted that, following Board approval in July 2023, further updates to the Financial Regulations had been considered by the Finance & Estates Committee and were recommended to the Board for approval, which included pension strain.

RESOLVED: to approve the amendments to the Financial Regulations.

BG/23/42/4 **Nominations & Governance Committee Minutes - 26 September 2023**
The Chair noted that the N&G Committee met on 26 September 2023 and noted that the unfilled Board vacancy was seeking candidates with expertise within the creative industries and knowledge exchange. A new recruitment drive would take place in November/December using advertising and networking.
Noted.

BG/23/42/5 **Confidential Minutes**
The Minutes of the Audit Committee held on 19 September 2023 and the Confidential Minutes of the Finance & Estates Committee held on 3 October 2023 were received.

BG/23/43 RESTRICTED CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES
BG/23/43/1 **Restricted Confidential Minutes of the Previous Meeting**
The restricted confidential Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 4 July 2023 were considered to be a true and accurate record of proceedings.
RESOLVED: that the minutes be approved for signature by the Chair.

BG/23/43/2 **RESTRICTED COMMITTEE MINUTES**
The restricted confidential Minutes of the Finance & Estates Committee held on 3 October 2023 were received.

BG/23/44 DATE OF NEXT MEETING
Next Board of Governors meeting was scheduled at 10.00 am on Tuesday 28 November 2023. There being no further business, the meeting closed at 1.05pm.

Approved Date
Chair

Distribution: Board of Governors including Vice Chancellor, Registrar & Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Chief Operating Officer, Director of External Relations, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Clerk & Deputy Clerk.