

SECRETARY'S BOARD

Minutes: 7 October 2015

In the Chair:	Ms Ann Marie Dalton, Secretary of the University	
Present also:	Mr Mark Adderley, Director of Human Resource Development	Mr Derek Penman, Director of Administration (EPS)
	Mr Mike Bates, Director of Student Recruitment	Mr Campbell Powrie, Director of Administration (SML)
	Ms Sue Collier, Director of Governance and Legal Services	Mr Mike Roch, Director of Information Services
	Mr Darren Cunningham, Director of Administration (MACS)	Mr Martyn Spence, Director of Marketing and Communications
	Mr Malcolm Deans, Director of Campus Services	Mr Paul Travill, Academic Registrar
	Ms Maggie Dunn, Director of Administration (SLS)	Ms Vivienne White, Director of Administration (TEX)
	Ms Morag Heggie, Director of Administration (EBS)	Dr Tony Weir, Director of Research and Enterprise Services (Interim)
In Attendance:	Mr Andrew Menzies, Director of Finance (<i>from item 2.2 onwards</i>)	Ms Janice Yew, Chief Operating Officer (Malaysia)
	Mr Les Allan, Head of Health and Safety Services (<i>for item 2.2</i>)	Professor Richard A. Williams, Principal (<i>for item 2.1</i>)
Apologies:	Ms Lisa Herlihy, Clerk	
	Ms Philippa Burrell, Director of Administration (EGIS)	Ms Sheelagh Wallace, Director of Administration and Registrar (Dubai)
	Ms Linsey Fender, Assistant to the Secretary	

M15/108 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 1 SEPTEMBER 2015

The Board received and approved the minutes of the meeting of 1 September 2015.

M15/109 MATTERS ARISING REPORT FROM THE MEETING OF 1 SEPTEMBER 2015

The Board received and noted the matters arising report following the meeting of 1 September 2015.

M15/72 – The Board noted that the Director of Campus Services and the Director of Marketing and Communications were considering how the Edinburgh Campus Strategic Plan would be communicated to colleagues. This communication would be progressed as soon as possible.

M15/96 – The Board discussed the Prevent training which would be required for some colleagues and noted that the Director of Governance and Legal Services was developing a plan for rolling training out.

M15/92 – The Board noted that a banking fair had been held for students and this had been a successful event. **Reserved section (Ref: Sections 30, 33 FOI(S) A 2002)** The Academic Registrar highlighted that cash handling was being implemented through the Student Service Centre in anticipation of the bank's closure. The Chair advised that every effort should be made to create a cash-free environment on campus.

M15/97 – The Board queried the progress made following the results of the Staff Survey, in particular the individual information packs which were to be distributed to Heads of teams. The Director of HRD confirmed that these had been delayed and would be sent out shortly.

M15/101 – The Board noted that the Email Guidance which had been discussed at the September 2015 meeting would be presented to the University Executive in November 2015. The Chair advised the Board that a number of the recommendations in the Email Guidance should be implemented by members and their teams in emails, prior to formal approval by the University Executive.

M15/60 – The Board discussed the possibility that the University would sign up to the Scottish Business Pledge, which would include a commitment to provide the living wage for all colleagues. The University would also choose a further two pledges out of the nine options available and the Board agreed that the Director of HRD would consider which of these options would be best and would present a report at the November 2015 meeting of the Board.

M14/129 – The Board noted that the Financial Regulations would be presented to the Audit and Risk Committee at their meeting on 23 November 2015. The Regulations would also be presented to the Secretary's Board and the University Executive in November 2015.

M15/110 POLICIES UNDER DEVELOPMENT REPORT (SB/15/161)

The Board received and noted the Policies Under Development Report up to 7 October 2015.

M15/111 PROJECTS REGISTER (SB/15/162)

The Board received and noted the Projects Register, as at 17 September 2015.

M15/112 BUSINESS REPORTED BY THE CHAIR

Community Engagement

The Chair highlighted that the University had been working with the Muslim Society and the imam from the Blackhall Mosque in order to develop the University's links with the local community. Events would be organised on campus with religious leaders from the Mosque invited to participate, and it was hoped that the University Chaplaincy would also take part.

SANE Black Dog Campaign

The Board noted that members of the University had walked up Ben Nevis to raise money for the SANE Black Dog campaign and had successfully raised £4,650. The University now had its own Black Dog, which had been name Watt Woof and would be on display in main reception shortly.

M15/113 VISIT FROM PROFESSOR WILLIAMS

The Board welcomed Professor Richard A. Williams, Principal and Vice-Chancellor, to the meeting. Professor Williams thanked the Board for the invitation to attend and highlighted upcoming challenges which would require academic and Professional Services colleagues to work closely together for the success of the University. Professor Williams invited the Board to discuss their views on issues facing the University with him outwith the meeting, and noted that he would continue to hold 'Meet the Principal' events in the coming weeks.

M15/114 UNIVERSITY HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2015 (SB/15/163)

The Board received and endorsed the University Health & Safety Committee Annual Report 2015, presented by the Head of Health & Safety Services.

The Board noted that the University was fully compliant with its statutory obligations at all campuses. The Malaysia Campus Safety and Health Committee had recently been established to support the implementation of the University health and safety framework at the Malaysia Campus. This framework was already fully implemented at the Scottish and Dubai campuses.

The Head of Health & Safety Services drew the Board's attention to the annual benchmarking exercise in which the University participated. 53 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) took part in this exercise, which compared accident statistics for injuries to both students and colleagues, and the University was below average for the sector for the second year running. This was aided by an increase in the number of hazards which were reported and so could be dealt with before any incident occurred.

The Board discussed the introduction of the Shield online reporting system, which had replaced the previous Safeguard system. Shield allowed full analysis of reports and incidents and had potentially also contributed to the University's future low incident rates. The Chair advised the Board that the Health & Safety Services team would, in future, be taking responsibility for emergency planning and business continuity, which would include practice events to ensure that the University's systems and processes were fit for purpose.

The Board offered congratulations to the Head of Health & Safety Services and his team for the progress the University had made.

M15/115 HIGHER EDUCATION IN MALAYSIA (PRESENTATION)

The Board received and noted a presentation by the Chief Operating Officer and Registrar (Malaysia) on Higher Education in Malaysia.

The Chief Operating Officer and Registrar (Malaysia) provided the Board with a summary of the history of Higher Education in Malaysia, highlighting that Heriot-Watt University Malaysia (HWUM) was one of 8 international campuses operating in the country. The Malaysian Government had set a target of having 200,000 international students studying in Malaysia by 2020 and HWUM was seen as key to achieving this target. Intense competition existed within Malaysia and a number of education systems were available, including Canadian, British, Australian, American, Indian and Chinese systems.

The Board noted several challenges which faced HWUM, including:

1. very high student expectations, including a demand for the availability of inter-campus transfers. It was highlighted that this demand might reduce slightly due to the impact of financial difficulties in Malaysia;
2. staff retention, particularly in the Professional Services where turnover was 25%;
3. Professional Services staff ratio, which was 1:0.66;
4. a demand to decrease the number of manual solutions in use by colleagues;
5. student number projections;
6. the difficulty of resolving some issues given the time difference between the UK and Malaysia;
7. the expectation that UK staff would be teaching at HWUM, which currently was not the case;
8. meeting student expectations with limited resources; and
9. a cap on the number of inter-campus transfers available.

In response to a question from a member of the Board, it was confirmed that international rankings were important to Malaysian students and their parents. Parents often provided the funding for their child's education and so had high expectations of the return they would receive on their investment. While competition in some of the University's specialist subjects was low, close attention was still paid to rankings and league tables.

The Board discussed the issue of meeting student targets at HWUM and agreed that the University would have to consider this closely during the planning round to understand why targets were not currently being met. In order to improve student recruitment it would be important to ensure that both fees and University recruitment targets were set correctly and to protect the University's reputation as a leading HEI in Malaysia.

The issue of staff development was also raised and it was agreed that the University would need to manage expectations and ensure colleagues were aware that their roles would change as time progressed. The Board queried whether the current portfolio of subjects offered in Malaysia was comprehensive and the Chief Operating Officer and Registrar (Malaysia) confirmed that it was and that the University would need to focus on undergraduate study, which was more popular, and on subjects which were in high demand.

The Board discussed the increasing demand for more modern teaching methods and technology, which was particularly high in Malaysia, and the ways in which the Professional Services could support plans to improve pedagogy across the University. The Chief Operating Officer and Registrar (Malaysia) offered HWUM's help in piloting any new initiatives.

M15/116 FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS AUDIT (SB/15/171)

The Board received and discussed a report on flexible working arrangements, presented by the Director of HRD.

The Director of HRD clarified that flexible working referred to a number of different arrangements in place, including part-time working, job shares, homeworking, flexitime and shift-working. The audit of arrangements at Heriot-Watt had focused on Professional Services colleagues and had identified that 35% of colleagues worked flexibly overall. 17% of these worked part-time, with the remaining 18% including a high number of compressed hours contracts or informal arrangements. Flexible working arrangements were particularly concentrated in Hospitality (all compressed hours), EPS, Textiles, SML and administrative roles.

The Board considered the initial feedback which had been provided, which had included requests for more clarity in some areas of the University's Flexible Working Policy. The main areas of concern at present were focused around the ability of the manager to take proper cognisance of the business need, the impact of changes in business need, and how often the arrangements should be reviewed once in place.

The Board agreed that once formal changes to contracts were made, it should be made clear if and how further reviews could be held (for example, every 12 months). A review of informal arrangements may also be required and provision for this would be clearly identified in the Flexible Working Policy, which would be presented to the Secretary's Board at a future meeting.

The Board suggested that contracts might be more flexible if the number of hours a colleague worked was noted and the pattern of work was 'as agreed with the manager'. The Secretary of the University confirmed that the contract templates used by the University would be reviewed and that this would include taking legal advice on any proposed changes.

The Board agreed that the Director of HRD would keep the Board updated on the progress made.

M15/117 REFINING THE HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY BRAND (SB/15/165)

The Board received and discussed a presentation by the Director of Marketing and Communications on refining the Heriot-Watt University brand.

The Board noted that a review of the brand had been completed by The Roundhouse, who had then drafted a 'boilerplate' as a basis for the refinement of the University's brand. During the course of the presentation a number of key points were highlighted, including:

- that The Roundhouse had done a walkthrough of the University and had noted that a number of materials displayed were old and needed updating;
- that the University focused on student recruitment when producing promotional materials and communication when other stakeholders should be further considered; and
- that the University underused certain key points, such as international achievements and the position of University campuses next to major cities.

The Board noted that the boilerplate reflected four key messages – that the University was global, credible, applied, and responsible. These messages had then been used to build the boilerplate presented. The Board discussed the statements in the boilerplate and highlighted that certain subject areas were not included in the summary of the University's areas of focus. The Board considered the nature of a boilerplate and acknowledged that this should be succinct and could easily become too detailed if individual subject areas were considered. The Director of Marketing and Communications emphasised that the boilerplate was not intended for external use and its purpose was to provide a foundation on which the University's brand could be built. Additional detail could be used as necessary in promotional materials.

The Board noted that next steps included sharing the presentation with chosen audiences to receive feedback on whether the boilerplate statement described the University accurately and how this could be improved. The Director of Marketing and Communications highlighted that the issue of identifying the spirit of community at Heriot-Watt had been raised through discussions with the Student Union. A revised boilerplate would be developed by The Roundhouse after considering the feedback received and that this would be presented to the University Executive in October 2015.

The Director of Marketing and Communications highlighted that all comments could be fed back to The Roundhouse via email and requested that colleagues do so prior to 30 October 2015.

M15/118 REPORTS FROM THE SCHOOLS AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES (SB/15/166 – SB/15/177)

The Board received and noted the reports from the Schools and Professional Services, presented by the Directors of Administration and Directors of Professional Services.

M15/119 AGENDA FOR THE GLOBAL RECRUITMENT AND MARKETING CONFERENCE: 19 AND 20 JANUARY 2015 (SB/15/179)

The Board received and noted the agenda for the Global Recruitment and Marketing Conference, presented by the Director of Student Recruitment and the Director of Marketing and Communications.

The Director of Student Recruitment highlighted that the aim of the Conference was to move recruitment forward by working as one global team throughout the recruitment process. Feedback on agenda items was invited from all members outwith the meeting, and particularly from the Schools in order to develop their involvement with the Conference.

Members of the Board suggested that it would be helpful if the Conference focused on a joined-up marketing strategy for all campuses, as well as creating a list of short-term actions which could be progressed in order to resolve existing issues quickly.

M15/120 GLOBAL STUDENT PROGRAMME UPDATE (ORAL UPDATE)

The Board received and noted an update on the Global Student Programme, presented by the Academic Registrar.

The following points were highlighted during the course of discussion:

- that the University was preparing to launch the GoGlobal initiative in November 2015 and that, as part of this, colleagues who dealt with the various study abroad schemes had been formed into a Global Opportunities team. This would allow students to find all the information they needed in one place;
- that information sessions for students would take place on all campuses following the launch of GoGlobal;
- that a revised policy on global mobility had been developed to clarify certain definitions and this had been approved by the Student Learning Experience Committee; and
- that the deadlines for all initiative applications would be coordinated to make applying easier for students.

Next Steps

The Board discussed next steps for GoGlobal and the Academic Registrar highlighted that colleagues in Finance, the Schools, Academic Registry, Dubai and Malaysia would be debriefing to decide what had worked well for the 2014-15 inter-campus transfers and what lessons could be learned for 2015-16. This would be completed by Christmas 2015 so that the University was prepared for the 2015-16 applications process. The Global Opportunities team would also be working to build scholarships into the process.

The Board agreed that the Academic Registrar would present a paper to the November 2015 meeting of the Board to clarify the new processes in place. The Scholarships Manager would also be invited to a future meeting to discuss scholarships and how these were linked to the GoGlobal programme. The Board highlighted that students would need a clear idea of the costs, problems and academic barriers involved in transfers. While there were no academic barriers for students in terms of attainment, not all subjects and programmes were taught on all campuses and this would have to be borne in mind when a student applied. The Global Opportunities team would be able to help students by suggesting other opportunities available to them if an inter-campus transfer was not the right option.

M15/121 DUBAI STUDENT SURVEY FEEDBACK (SB/15/182)

The Board agreed that the report on Dubai's Student Survey feedback would be deferred to the November 2015 meeting, when the Director of Administration and Registrar (Dubai) would be available to present.

M15/122 COMPLAINTS ANNUAL SUMMARY REPORT (SB/15/183)

The Board received and noted the Complaints Annual Summary Report and the Quarterly Complaints Report, presented by the Academic Registrar.

The Board discussed the processes currently in place for reporting complaints, which were now in their second year, and noted that the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) were considering the implementation of KPIs for complaint measuring in Higher Education. Discussions were currently ongoing between HEIs and the SPSO regarding this possibility.

The Chair advised that when the current complaints process had originally been mooted, a major concern of HEIs had been the potential to create league tables based on KPIs. The SPSO had, at the time, confirmed that they would not be taking this approach. The recent suggestions were, therefore, an approach that HEIs had not originally agreed to. The

Academic Registrar confirmed that this point had been made to the SPSO by a number of HEIs.

The Academic Registrar also highlighted that the definitions of Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints were being reconsidered. The SPSO had proposed that Stage 1 complaints would be those which were easily resolved by an individual and Stage 2 would cover complaints which required interviews and other investigation by University colleagues. The Academic Registrar was working with the SPSO to obtain further guidance on this matter.

With regard to the Complaints Annual Summary Report, the Board discussed general trends identified. Two complaints had been referred to the SPSO following the University's investigation and neither of these had been upheld. The Board highlighted that the data in Table 6, representing the percentage of complaints received in proportion to the number of Heriot-Watt students per School/Campus, was surprising. The Academic Registrar clarified that the data was affected by students' status as both members of a School and members of one of the international campuses. The Board agreed that this data would be clarified before the report was transmitted onwards to the University Executive and the Court.

M15/123 SECRETARY'S BOARD FORWARD AGENDA PLAN (SB/15/184)

The Board received and noted the Secretary's Board Forward Agenda Plan, presented by the Chair.

The Chair advised that input into the agenda was welcome and any suggestions for agenda items could be passed on to the Clerk outwith the meeting.

M15/124 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Preparing for REF and Research Data

During the course of the meeting the Board discussed preparations for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2020 submission, which had already begun within the University. The Chair advised that concerns had been raised regarding progress with preparations and that members of the Professional Services would assist with preparations fully, as had been the case for REF 2014. A paper on REF preparedness would be presented to the Research and Knowledge Exchange Board and the University Executive at a future meeting.

The Board also discussed the new guidance regarding research data security, which the University was required to adhere to by the Research Councils. The Board noted that the Research Data Management Policy had been presented to the Senate at their May 2015 meeting to raise awareness of the requirements and aid researchers in accessing the facilities available to secure their research data.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 3 November 2015