

## SECRETARY'S BOARD

Minutes: 3 November 2015

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In the Chair:	Ms Ann Marie Dalton, Secretary of the University (from 10.30am onwards)	Ms Sue Collier, Director of Governance and Legal Services (from 10.15am until 10.30am)
Present also:	Mr Mark Adderley, Director of Human Resource Development (until 11.50am) Mr Mike Bates, Director of Student Recruitment Ms Philippa Burrell, Director of Administration (EGIS) Mr Darren Cunningham, Director of Administration (MACS) Mr Malcolm Deans, Director of Campus Services (until 11.50am) Ms Morag Heggie, Director of Administration (EBS) Mr Andrew Menzies, Director of Finance (until 12pm) Mr Derek Penman, Director of Administration (EPS)	Mr Campbell Powrie, Director of Administration (SML) Mr Mike Roch, Director of Information Services Mr Martyn Spence, Director of Marketing and Communications Mr Paul Travill, Academic Registrar  Ms Sheelagh Wallace, Director of Administration and Registrar (Dubai) Ms Vivienne White, Director of Administration (TEX) (until 11.50am) Dr Tony Weir, Director of Research and Enterprise Services (Interim) Ms Janice Yew, Chief Operating Officer (Malaysia)
In Attendance:	Ms Lisa Herlihy, Clerk	
Apologies:	Ms Maggie Dunn, Director of Administration (SLS) Ms Linsey Fender, Assistant to the Secretary	Ms Hannah Frances, Student Union President

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### **M15/125 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 7 OCTOBER 2015**

The Board received and approved the minutes of the meeting of 7 October 2015.

### **M15/126 MATTERS ARISING REPORT FROM THE MEETING OF 7 OCTOBER 2015**

**M15/96** – The Board noted that the University Prevent Group would meet for the first time on 5 November 2015 and would have a demonstration of an online training programme at that meeting. A decision would then be made on whether the training was appropriate for the University's needs and, if so, how this could be rolled out to relevant colleagues.

**M15/92** – The Director of Finance advised that new cash handling procedures were now in place, following the closure of the bank on campus. Any colleagues who were unclear on the new procedures should contact the Treasury Manager for assistance.

**M15/117** – The Director of Marketing and Communications confirmed that feedback on the draft boilerplate for the Heriot-Watt brand had been received.

**M15/122** – The Academic Registrar confirmed that the Complaints Report had been updated and would be presented to the University Executive at its November 2015 meeting and the Court at its December 2015 meeting.

### **M15/127 POLICIES UNDER DEVELOPMENT REPORT (SB/15/185)**

The Board received and noted the Policies Under Development Report up to 3 November 2015.

### **M15/128 PROJECTS REGISTER (SB/15/186)**

The Board received and noted the Projects Register, as at 27 October 2015.

**M15/129 BUSINESS REPORTED BY THE CHAIR**

**Global Student Liaison Committee**

The Chair advised the Board that the Court had established a Global Student Liaison Committee, which would consider the student experience at Heriot-Watt. The Board agreed that the Clerk would circulate the Global Student Liaison Committee's draft Terms of Reference to the Board and that members would contact the Chair if they wished to put themselves forward for membership.

**Universities Superannuation Scheme**

The Board noted that the changes to the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) would come into force from April 2016 and that the contributions from both employers and employees would increase at that point. The Board highlighted that the USS was only one of the pension schemes in place for University staff and so not all colleagues would be affected by these changes.

**Communications**

The Chair highlighted that the Principal would be reviewing how business considered by the University Executive, the Senate and the Court could best be communicated to colleagues. The Secretary's Board currently reported key items through the Secretary's Board Bulletin, which was available to all colleagues on a monthly basis.

**M15/130 STUDENT BAROMETER SURVEY COMPOSITE ACTION PLAN (SB/15/187)**

The Board received and noted the Student Barometer Survey Composite Action Plan. This provided updates on progress against actions at the Dubai Campus, presented by the Director of Administration and Registrar (Dubai).

**M15/131 REPORTS FROM THE SCHOOLS AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES (SB/15/188 – SB/15/199)**

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

During the course of this item the Board discussed the following key points:

**Borders Campus**

- that TEX were now implementing processes for the Programme Approval Management System (PAMS) and the CRM system;

**Campus Services**

- **Reserved section (Ref: Sections 30, 33 FOI(S) A 2002)**

**Dubai Campus**

- that there had been no recent problems with the payment of salaries for Dubai colleagues. The Academic Registrar highlighted that discussions were taking place with the Finance team to migrate responsibility for salaries away from the Student Service Centre. The Director of Finance advised that contingencies were in place to ensure that colleagues in Dubai were not affected by delays in pay. As part of this contingency, the University was now banking with Barclays and would discuss how future problems could be prevented;

**Edinburgh Schools**

- that the new EGIS Professional Services structure had been implemented from 1

September 2015 and the process of filling roles was coming to an end. The Board noted that IPE's exams would be aligned to those across the University from 2016/17 onwards;

#### **Information Services**

- the Board agreed that the Director of Information Services would update the Board on the information security issues being presented to the Audit and Risk Committee and how the work involved was being progressed;

#### **Malaysia Campus**

- that the Scholarships Manager would be reviewing available scholarships in the coming weeks, and assessing which of these could be used internationally and which were restricted by their terms to the Scottish campuses. A proposal was being drafted regarding scholarships which could be used to assist students undertaking an inter-campus transfer. The Board agreed that the Scholarships Manager would present a report on scholarship arrangements to the Board in early 2016;

#### **Registry Services**

- **Reserved section (Ref: Sections 30, 33 FOI(S) A 2002)**
- one of the first priorities was the introduction of new recruitment and admissions systems. Given the particular needs of the Malaysia campus it was planned to roll the new system out to Malaysia first, then Dubai and then Scotland; and
- changes required had been considered by the University Executive and next steps included reviewing how many admissions models the University currently had in place and how many colleagues were involved in the admissions process.

**M15/132**

#### **UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 2015/16 AND FUTURE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AND PLANNING (SB/15/200)**

The Board received and noted the University Communications Plan 2015/16, presented by the Director of Marketing and Communications.

The Board discussed internal and external communications and noted that the University Communications Plan aimed to provide a stronger link between the two. The Plan included key activities across the University and incorporated upcoming activity in the Schools where this was known. This was intended as a resource for colleagues' reference, and would be underpinned by action plans for specific projects, such as the Lyell Centre.

The Board agreed that, as part of the drive to improve internal communication, which had been a key area for improvement in the recent Staff Survey, team briefings would be immediately introduced across the University.

The Board also agreed that the Director of Marketing and Communications would use focus groups of colleagues from across the Schools and Services to investigate what colleagues wanted from communication and how messages could best be relayed. The Board highlighted that colleagues also had a responsibility to access the communications available.

The Board discussed a number of options for furthering internal communication and highlighted that the whole-School meetings held for colleagues would provide a good forum for receiving wider staff feedback. The Board noted that the Employee Engagement Forum was one of the vehicles currently used to receive feedback and agreed that a proposal for a further refresh of the Employee Engagement Forum would be presented to the Board at the December 2015 meeting.

**M15/133**

#### **GROUP FINANCIAL DASHBOARD**

The Board agreed that the Group Financial Dashboard would be circulated to members once updates to the data had been received from the Schools.

**M15/134 ORACLE FINANCIALS – CONTINUAL SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME (SB/15/202)**

The Board received and noted a report on service improvement for Oracle Financials, presented by the Director of Finance.

The Board noted that potential improvements had been identified and a plan would be finalised in the coming months. This plan would provide an overview of the improvements needed and would identify how the highest priorities would be addressed.

The Chair advised that future plans for information systems would include linking Oracle's financial functionality with that of the iHR system. The Director of Information Services confirmed that Information Services were planning on this basis. The Director of Finance highlighted that all Directors of Administration and Directors of Professional Services would be included in discussions regarding improvements to the Oracle Financials system.

**M15/135 STAFF INDUCTION PLUS (SB/15/203)**

The Board received and approved a report on Staff Induction Plus, presented by the Director of Human Resource Development (HRD).

The Director of HRD emphasised that the current staff induction process was fragmented and that poor induction was a key factor in some colleagues' decision to leave the University within a year of commencing work. HRD proposed to create a Working Group which would review the induction process and recommend improvements. The Board approved this proposal and agreed that members would contact the Director of HRD outwith the meeting to nominate colleagues for membership of the Working Group.

**M15/136 REWARD AT HWU 2015 (SB/15/204)**

The Board received and discussed a report on reward at Heriot-Watt University in 2015, presented by the Director of HRD.

The Board considered the possibility that the University should publish a list of colleagues who had received bonuses, without including details of the value of the rewards involved, in order to recognise those who had performed exceptionally and provide colleagues with an idea of the types of achievements which merited an award (*addendum: The Board will revisit this proposal at the December 2015 meeting*). The Board also discussed other types of reward which could be used by the University and the Director of HRD invited suggestions from members outwith the meeting.

As part of the discussion, the Board highlighted that further clarity was needed around the Professional Services promotions process. The Board agreed that it would be helpful for colleagues to receive roadshows, as had been done for academic promotions, which would allow the Professional Services processes to be clearly identified and the differences between academic and Professional Services processes to be highlighted. The Board also agreed that a document would be drawn up by the Director of HRD which would explain how colleagues could achieve promotion, and alternatives to promotion within a colleague's current role. It was agreed that the Director of HRD would bring forward a proposal of how secondment opportunities could be made available, including at the international campuses, which would help colleagues to develop for the next phase of their career.

The Chair advised that consistency of role descriptions was required now that job titles had been standardised and it was agreed that HRD would work on providing common role descriptions where possible. The Chair also highlighted the need for a communication to colleagues, including via the CJNCC, which would clarify current arrangements and manage

expectations. The Chair confirmed that this subject would be included in the podcast produced for the Secretary's Board Bulletin in November 2015.

The Board agreed that the Director of HRD would produce an action plan for progressing the work on Professional Services promotions processes and would present the action plan to the December 2015 meeting of the Board.

**M15/136 SCOTTISH BUSINESS PLEDGE (SB/15/205)**

The Board received and noted a report on the Scottish Business Pledge, presented by the Director of HRD.

During the course of discussion the following points were raised:

- that institutions were currently required to sign up to 3 of the 9 pledges which formed the Scottish Business Pledge, and that one must be the promise to pay the living wage. Institutions were now expected to work towards fulfilling all 9 pledges;
- that the University Executive would be making a decision on when the University would sign up and to which pledges;
- that 'supporting Invest in Youth' would have multiple facets within the University, including apprenticeships, employment of new graduates, graduate internships and employment of current students. The Board agreed that the Director of HRD would present a paper on youth employment to the Board at a future meeting and would consider the options available and how these could be developed; and
- that any commitment to the Scottish Business Pledge would need to include consideration of how this fit with the University's international activities.

**M15/137 DUBAI STUDENT SURVEY FEEDBACK (SB/15/206)**

The Board received and noted the Dubai Student Survey Feedback, presented by the Director of Administration and Registrar (Dubai).

The Board noted that the Survey used the same questions as the National Student Survey (NSS) so that results could be directly compared. The response rate in 2015 was only 10% and this would need work in future years.

Two main areas of concern were raised:

1. the quality and timeliness of feedback for coursework and mid-term exams. An academic review of the Feedback Policy had taken place and methods of providing feedback had been discussed by academic colleagues. A new Academic Development Co-ordinator had now been appointed and more academic colleagues had been taken on full-time, which was expected to improve the quality of feedback; and
2. dissatisfaction with the non-academic services/facilities provided by the University. The University would be opening a Student Service Centre in Dubai to improve provision for students and was working closely with the Dubai Student Union President to ensure student feedback was taken into account.

The Board discussed the proposed date for opening the Dubai Student Service Centre and agreed that the Director of Administration and Registrar (Dubai) and the Director of Governance and Legal Services would liaise regarding the issues delaying the opening of the Student Service Centre. The Academic Registrar would also be discussing the current problems with Study World during a forthcoming visit to the Dubai Campus.

**M15/138 EGIS CHANGE PROGRAMME FINAL REPORT (SB/15/207)**

The Board received and noted the final report for the EGIS Change Programme, presented by the Director of Administration (EGIS).

**M15/139      PROFESSIONAL SERVICES SELF-ASSESSMENT TEAM (SAT) AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT FORUM TERMS OF REFERENCE (SB/15/208)**

The Board received and noted the Terms of Reference for the Professional Services SAT and the Employee Engagement Forum.

The Board noted that the Secretary's Board, as the Professional Services SAT, fulfilled the requirement to have equal gender representation. However a good cross-section of colleagues at different grades was also needed and this would be provided through the Employee Engagement Forum. Further consideration of the Employee Engagement Forum was to take place at the Board's December 2015 meeting and the Terms of Reference would be revisited at that meeting.

**M15/140      COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT (SB/15/209)**

The Board received and endorsed the Collections Committee Annual Report, presented by the Director of Governance and Legal Services.

**M15/141      SECRETARY'S BOARD FORWARD AGENDA PLAN (SB/15/210)**

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

**Date of next meeting: Tuesday 1 December 2015**