

SECRETARY'S BOARD

Minutes: 7 October 2014

In the Chair:	Ms Ann Marie Dalton, Secretary of the University		
Present also:	Mr Mark Adderley, Director of Human Resource Development	Ms Morag Heggie, Director of Administration (EBS)	
	Mr Mike Bates, Director of Student Recruitment	Mr Andrew Menzies, Director of Finance & Interim Director of Research & Enterprise Services	
	Ms Caroline Brown, Director of Administration (IPE)	Mrs Kathy Patterson, Academic Registrar & Deputy Secretary	
	Ms Philippa Burrell, Director of Administration (SBE)	Mr Derek Penman, Director of Administration (EPS)	
	Ms Sue Collier, Director of Governance & Legal Services	Mr Campbell Powrie, Director of Administration (SML)	
	Mr Malcolm Deans, Director of Campus Services	Mr Mike Roch, Director of Information Services	
	Ms Maggie Dunn, Director of Administration (SLS)	Ms Sheelagh Wallace, Director of Administration & Registrar (Dubai)	
	Ms Linsey Fender, Assistant to the Secretary	Ms Vivienne White, Director of Administration (TEX)	
	In Attendance:	Ms Lisa Herlihy, Assistant to the Secretariat (Clerk)	
	Apologies:	Ms Janice Yew, Chief Operating Officer (Malaysia)	

MINUTE

REF

M14/146

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 2 SEPTEMBER 2014

The Board received and approved the minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2014 subject to the following amendments:

M14/139.4 should be amended to read '*The Board noted that a formal view on opportunities for multiple entry points was being considered by the Learning & Teaching Board and that colleagues within Schools should notify the Academic Registrar of programmes which deviated from alignment with the academic year. This would then be incorporated into a paper regarding the academic year being drafted by the Academic Registrar for the Learning & Teaching Board's consideration. A copy of the paper would go to the new Academic Registrar when he joined the University in November for information.*

M14/139.13 should read '*while exceeding the original Foundation Programme target*' not '*while exceeding the original target*'.

M14/147

MATTERS ARISING REPORT FROM THE MEETING OF 2 SEPTEMBER 2014

M14/137 – Regarding the HWU West London College contingency plan, the Director of Administration (EBS) highlighted that, if it was necessary to relocate students, they could be accommodated at the Edinburgh, Dubai or Malaysia campuses. Alternatively students would be able to continue their studies at an Approved Learning Partner (ALP) or as an Independent Distance Learner (IDL).

M14/138 – The Board noted that an action for this item had been attributed to the Director of Finance in error and that this would be corrected.

M14/144 – The Board noted that an invitation to join the ISS Working Group had been extended to the Directors of Administration and that they would nominate a representative from amongst them to attend.

M14/129.10 – The Board noted that, following consultation with the Vice-Principal (Dubai) and the Deputy Principal (Research & Knowledge Transfer), it had been agreed that there would be one administrative process in place for all Postgraduate Research students in Dubai. A draft proposal would be submitted to the Research Student Coordinators Group for discussion and then to RKEB for approval. The approved proposal would be submitted to the Dubai Campus Executive Committee for information in early 2015.

M14/108.7– The Board noted that any attendance policy developed for Dubai would need to be aligned with the University's Attendance & Withdrawal Policy once finalised. The Director of Administration & Registrar (Dubai) would ensure that this was completed.

M14/148 POLICIES UNDER DEVELOPMENT REPORT

The Board received and noted the Policies under Development Report up to 7 October 2014.

M14/149 PROJECTS REGISTER (SB/14/179)

The Board received and noted the Strategic Projects Register as at 23 September 2014.

The Board noted that Phase 1 of the iHR project was now green on the Projects Register, as this had recently been completed. Phase 2 was amber.

The Board agreed that the Projects Register would be published on the University's SharePoint site in the future so that it could be easily accessible.

M14/150 BUSINESS REPORTED BY THE CHAIR

There was no business reported by the Chair.

M14/151 STUDENT BAROMETER SURVEY ACTION PLANS

The Board received and noted Action Plans presented by the Schools and by those Directorates which had received feedback from the Student Barometer Survey.

The Board agreed that the Action Plans were very helpful in tracking how the University was responding to student feedback and that these could be further developed by the inclusion of timescales for the implementation of the actions mentioned. These would then be communicated to students to provide them with a timeline for delivery of the improvements.

The Board noted that the Student Union would be responsible for relaying the Action Plans to students, through the format of a summary report which the Student Union would develop in conjunction with Academic Registry. Currently a number of issues raised by students were dealt with by the Staff/Student Committees within Schools. This enabled Schools to resolve issues more immediately. Schools would report actions regarding Student Barometer feedback to the Board, which had oversight of survey results.

The Board noted that in future the Student Barometer would need to include information regarding the discipline students were studying, in order to help Schools to respond to specific issues raised.

M14/151.1 STUDENT BAROMETER ACTION PLAN - BORDERS CAMPUS / SCHOOL OF TEXTILES & DESIGN (ORAL UPDATE)

The Board received and noted an oral update on the Borders Campus / School of Textiles &

Design Action Plan, presented by the Director of Administration (TEX).

The Board agreed that the Director of Administration (TEX) would provide a written report to the Board in due course.

The Board noted that much of the feedback for the Borders Campus and TEX centred on dissatisfaction with aspects of the student experience. The Board noted that colleagues at the Borders Campus, in collaboration with the Student Union, were in consultation with students from all year groups regarding the social space available. This would inform all actions taken to rectify the issues.

The Director of Administration (TEX) highlighted that a number of improvements had been made in recent months and that these would be reported to students via notice boards around the Campus. The Board noted that other actions currently being taken included:

- ensuring that key staff were on campus during exam time to support students;
- mapping Student Services provision at the Borders Campus so that any lack could be addressed;
- developing a Postgraduate induction process and working to build a Postgraduate community in TEX; and
- using Library staff to organise visits and other activities for International students, which would improve their experience of HWU.

M14/151.2 STUDENT BAROMETER ACTION PLAN - CAMPUS SERVICES (SB/14/181)

The Board received and noted an Action Plan from Campus Services, presented by the Director.

The Board noted that the main issues raised by the Student Barometer related to the buildings on the Edinburgh Campus. This reflected feedback previously gained from students, in which dissatisfaction with the Learning & Teaching spaces and the Library were recurrent themes. The Board noted that following completion of the Space Optimisation survey in March 2015 Campus Services would be better able to respond to these issues. The Director of Campus Services highlighted that there was also a desire for new research spaces among students and that any plans would, by necessity, have to be prioritised.

The Board noted that a short-term plan had been put into place to deal with immediate issues in the Library. These included an overhaul of the environmental systems. A decision was to be made regarding the preferable location of study space and this would inform medium and long-term plans for the Library.

The Director of Campus Services highlighted that the development of the new residences in 2016 would resolve the under-provision of onsite accommodation. This would be communicated to students as the project developed. It was expected that current students would still raise the issue of accommodation in the period before the new residences were complete.

The Board noted that the Student Barometer had also highlighted some dissatisfaction with the welcome students received on arrival at the Edinburgh Campus. This was understood to relate mostly to students arriving out-of-hours. This could be improved by having more accurate arrival times for students. The Board agreed that the Head of Student Support & Accommodation and the Head of Hospitality would investigate and resolve this matter.

M14/151.3 STUDENT BAROMETER ACTION PLAN - DUBAI CAMPUS (SB/14/182)

The Board received and noted an Action Plan from the Dubai Campus, presented by the Director of Administration & Registrar (Dubai).

The Board noted that the Student Barometer had highlighted student dissatisfaction around communications from the University. The Director of Administration & Registrar (Dubai) was

investigating a software package which would allow students to choose which messages they wished to receive from the University. The Board agreed that the Director of Administration & Registrar (Dubai) would discuss the possibility with the new Director of Marketing & Communications and the new Academic Registrar once they had taken up post.

The Board noted that other comments from students related to the attitude of some Dubai colleagues. Dubai were organising customer service training for colleagues to resolve this issue. The Board noted that Dubai colleagues were also developing a mechanism for reporting complaints to ensure that they were dealt with in a timely manner.

The Board agreed that full, coherent feedback should be brought to the next Dubai Campus Executive Committee (DCEC) for discussion with StudyWorld (previously Eikon). The Director of Administration & Registrar (Dubai) and the Director of Governance & Legal Services would collate this feedback for the next DCEC meeting. The Director of Administration & Registrar (Dubai) would provide an updated Action Plan, taking into account the statistical data provided by the Student Barometer, to the Secretary's Board in due course.

M14/151.4 STUDENT BAROMETER ACTION PLAN - INSTITUTE OF PETROLEUM ENGINEERING (SB/14/183)

The Board received and noted an Action Plan from the Institute of Petroleum Engineering, presented by the Director of Administration (IPE).

The Board noted that feedback from the Student Barometer was overwhelmingly related to Learning & Teaching spaces. During Semester 1 of the 2013/14 academic year some students had been in adjacent rooms to lecturers due to lack of space and had been taught via video link. Solutions had been put in place and these would be presented to the Board in a later update.

M14/151.5 STUDENT BAROMETER ACTION PLAN - SCHOOL OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT (SB/14/185)

The Board received and noted an Action Plan from the School of the Built Environment, presented by the Director of Administration (SBE).

The Board noted that SBE had been working to develop an induction programme for Postgraduate students and that these had been well-received. Much of the negative feedback from the Student Barometer had related to Postgraduate Research students being required to 'hotdesk' due to a lack of office space. SBE had been aware of this dissatisfaction prior to the Student Barometer and had been in discussions with students regarding how to improve the organisation of hotdesking. Bringing an end to the hotdesking arrangement was not feasible due to the current lack of space.

The Board also noted the following issues raised:

- requests for Postgraduate students to have more teaching time. SBE had been considering the financial implications of increasing Postgraduate teaching time and would have a decision by the end of the November, which could then be communicated to students;
- increased English language support for students whose first language was not English, particularly in regards to group work. This would be discussed at the School Learning & Teaching Committee; and
- the suitability of buildings in SBE, which would be discussed with the Director of Campus Services.

M14/151.6 STUDENT BAROMETER ACTION PLAN - SCHOOL OF LIFE SCIENCES (SB/14/186)

The Board received and noted an Action Plan from the School of Life Sciences, presented by the Director of Administration (SLS).

The Board noted that the Student Barometer feedback had highlighted student dissatisfaction regarding the Information & Communication Skills module which all first year students studied. A new post-holder was now in place to teach the course and feedback was expected to improve. The Director of Information Services and the Academic Registrar & Deputy Secretary offered their assistance with elements of the course if required.

The Board also noted that coursework feedback had been targeted as an area for improvement. SLS's policy had been revised to ensure that thorough and timely feedback was provided to students.

M14/151.7 STUDENT BAROMETER ACTION PLAN - SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT & LANGUAGES (SB/14/187)

The Board received and noted an Action Plan from the School of Management & Languages, presented by the Director of Administration (SML).

The Board noted that SML had introduced a number of new programmes for 2014/15 and expected that this would resolve a number of the issues raised in the Student Barometer.

The Director of Administration (SML) highlighted a number of programmes in place to improve student experience in SML, including:

- a social programme for Postgraduate Taught students;
- student societies and events for Undergraduate students;
- a pre-sessional English social programme;
- internships and non-credit work experience for students; and
- programme-related extra-curricular activities for each 'family' of taught postgraduate degrees.

The Board noted that students had highlighted a lack of space in SML as an issue and this had been resolved by opening up the seminar rooms for longer hours, including 24/7 opening during exam periods.

M14/151.8 STUDENT BAROMETER ACTION PLAN - SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING & PHYSICAL SCIENCES (SB/14/188)

The Board received and noted an Action Plan from the School of Engineering & Physical Sciences, presented by the Director of Administration (EPS).

The Board noted that the Student Barometer had highlighted the teaching and study spaces as areas for improvement. To address this issue EPS had invested £1.1 million in upgrading the teaching spaces in the Nasmyth and Brewster Buildings. The Board also noted that funding from the Estates Furniture Budget had been used to upgrade four centrally bookable rooms in the Perkin Building and one in the Brewster Building.

The Director of Administration (EPS) highlighted that EPS had plans to continue upgrading the teaching spaces in coming years and that colleagues from EPS had joined the Learning Environment Committee, which would focus on a strategy for upgrading centrally bookable spaces.

M14/151.9 STUDENT BAROMETER ACTION PLAN - SCHOOL OF MATHEMATICAL & COMPUTER SCIENCES (ORAL UPDATE)

The Board received and noted an oral update on the Action Plan for the School of Mathematical & Computer Sciences, presented by the Director of Administration (MACS).

The Board noted that a detailed report would be provided to the Board post-meeting. MACS had received feedback from students regarding a lack of work experience opportunities and had

introduced a work experience element to one course, the BSc Actuarial Science with Diploma in Industrial Training.

M14/151.9 STUDENT BAROMETER ACTION PLAN - INFORMATION SERVICES (SB/14/193)

The Board received and noted an Action Plan from Information Services (IS), presented by the Director.

The Board noted that IS had upgraded areas of the Edinburgh Campus Library over the summer, in response to Student Barometer feedback, to provide more study space. An overall space issue remained which could not be addressed in the short-term. Medium and long-term plans were being developed by IS to improve the Library going forward. The Board also noted that the Library was trialling 24/7 opening during the year and this had been well received by students. The Director of IS highlighted the creation of a Learning Spaces Management Group which would focus on assuring the quality of study spaces on campus.

The Board noted that the Dubai Library facilities would also require review in coming years, as the number of students looked to exceed the space available.

M14/151.10 STUDENT BAROMETER ACTION PLAN - REGISTRY SERVICES (SB/14/195)

The Board received and noted an Action Plan from Registry Services, presented by the Academic Registrar & Deputy Secretary.

The Board noted that the Academic Registrar & Deputy Secretary had been in discussion with the Royal Bank of Scotland following negative feedback regarding banking services on campus. A further meeting was to be held in the near future, as the service had not improved as much as expected.

The Board noted that:

- feedback about waiting times for the counselling service in Semester 1 of 2013 had led to an increase in staffing. Since then counselling survey feedback had been excellent;
- the issues raised regarding the Postgraduate Centre were ongoing. The Board agreed that there should be a timeline of changes to be made in order to solve student issues;
- work was ongoing to increase the number of work experience opportunities for students. A number of options were being considered, including the establishment of a placement office; and
- the Chaplaincy was working to advertise its host scheme more widely.

M14/151.11 STUDENT BAROMETER ACTION PLAN - STUDENT RECRUITMENT (SB/14/197)

The Board received and noted an Action Plan from Student Recruitment, presented by the Director of Student Recruitment.

The Board noted five key areas for Student Recruitment following the Student Barometer. These included:

1. increased use of alumni at recruitment events, as this was an important factor in student decision-making;
2. emphasising that the earning potential for HWU graduates was above average;
3. improved support for Scholarship provision. A paper would be taken to the next University Executive meeting;
4. improving application turnaround time for Postgraduate Research students, in liaison with the new Academic Registrar; and
5. publicising options for setting up bank accounts more widely, though most of the negative feedback regarded service in the bank itself.

The Board also noted that a review of International Recruitment Agents was being undertaken, including consideration of how agents described the University to students. This was discussed in more detail in minute M14/154.

M14/152 REPORTS FROM THE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES (SB/14/198 – SB/14/210)

The Board received and noted the usual update reports from the Professional Services.

The Director of Governance & Legal Services brought the following issue to the Board's attention:

- that the Tier 4 Mock Audit was to take place in the week beginning 10 November 2014. Directors of Administration were to contact the Quality Assurance & Compliance Officer regarding any events which would need to be taken into account when the final schedule was created.

M14/153 GROUP FINANCIAL DASHBOARD (SB/14/211)

The Board received and noted the Group Financial Dashboard, presented by the Director of Finance.

The Board noted that Schools should have accrued Tuition Fees in line with the budget and currently there was some variation. The Director of Student Recruitment highlighted that recruitment was approaching the Tuition Fee target and that the final overview was not yet available.

The Board also noted that liquidity, as measured by the ratio of cash to total income expressed as a number of days, had now improved and that the University had nearly 90 days of cash available.

M14/154 INTERNATIONAL RECRUITMENT AGENTS REVIEW

The Board received and noted a presentation on the review of International Recruitment Agents, given by the Director of Governance & Legal Services and the Director of Student Recruitment.

The Board noted that the Internal Audit had included a recommendation that the University's International Recruitment Agents be reviewed to comply with the Bribery Policy. A review had therefore been undertaken, with the scope extended to include due diligence processes, a review of the contract and performance monitoring.

The Board noted that a due diligence questionnaire had been created for International Recruitment Agents to complete before entering into a contract with HWU. Where an agent had worked with the University for three years this would fulfil the due diligence requirement and the contract would be renewed subject to the requirements below.

The Board also noted that the University now undertook financial reports on potential partners, as well as referencing these against the Global Corruption Barometer and the United Kingdom Visa & Immigration (UKVI) visa refusal data. Collectively this information would form the basis of any decision to enter into a contract with an agent.

The Board noted that the International Strategy Board, whose remit had recently been reviewed, would have a role in providing formal approval for new International Recruitment Agents.

The Board noted that the University would continue to work with 162 agents, who would be rolled onto the new contract which had been developed. The Board noted that in future agents would be reviewed against the number of students they had recruited for the University. Those who had not recruited students in the last two years would not be renewed. Visa refusals,

students who did not arrive on campus and withdrawal rates would also be factored into the review.

The Board noted that the contract now covered a wider range of areas, including compliance with key codes and guidance. The contract mandated that any issue raised by a potential student regarding an agent must be reported to the University. The contract also required agents to be cognisant of developments within the University so that they were giving an accurate portrayal. Media Monitoring would be included in the review following discussions with the new Director of Marketing & Communications.

The Director of Governance & Legal Services highlighted that West London College (WLC) worked with 86 International Recruitment Agents, whom the Home Office would regard as agents of HWU. 14 of these agents were in common with HWU. The Director of Governance & Legal Services would discuss International Recruitment Agents with WLC and provide the University's contract as an exemplar of good practice.

The Board also discussed the following topics:

- the need to have oversight of agents for the International campuses whilst allowing them the ability to work within local markets;
- StudyWorld's collaboration with Edinburgh colleagues in recruiting International Recruitment Agents;
- the methods by which the University paid for Dubai agents;
- the formation of the Strategic Marketing Committee to have oversight of the International Recruitment Agent strategy.
- the revised guidance booklet which provided full support for the work of agents; and
- benchmarking of commission rates against other universities as part of a review of these rates;

The Board agreed that the presentation should be taken to the forthcoming University Executive and Court Away Days for their consideration. Further work would be carried out regarding the threshold for continuing partnerships with recruiters, based on the number of students an agent was recruiting annually. The Board also agreed that the review should compare agents with the performance of the students that they recruited and how long the student remained at the University once recruited.

M14/155 LEARNING & TEACHING SUMMARIES AND ENHANCEMENT PLANS (SB/14/212)

The Board received and noted the report on Learning & Teaching Summaries and Enhancement Plans, presented by the Deputy Principal (Learning & Teaching) and the Head of Academic Quality.

The Board noted that the Learning & Teaching Board had considered the Learning & Teaching Strategic Summaries and Enhancement Plans for the Professional Services at its meeting on 17 September 2014 and had identified items to be retained and those to be excluded. These revised plans were now presented to the Secretary's Board for information.

The Deputy Principal (Learning & Teaching) highlighted that the Learning & Teaching Strategy Operational Plan and Timeline would be presented to a forthcoming meeting of the Secretary's Board for information. Schools and Professional Services would then update their own Learning & Teaching Strategies and Enhancement Plans to reflect the new documentation.

The Board discussed a number of topics, including:

- the opportunity for the Strategic Summaries and Enhancement Plans to help steer the planning round in 2014/15;
- the importance of the Vision platform for Learning & Teaching and the fact that further training was needed so that teaching colleagues would be able to use Vision to its full

potential; and

- the potential to develop provision of learning technologists by considering vacancies arising and the skillsets required.

The Board agreed that the Director of Information Services and the Directors of Administration would work with the Deputy Principal (Learning & Teaching) to consider how resources could be engaged to develop learning and teaching.

M14/156 HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT (SB/14/213)

The Board received and approved the annual report from the Health & Safety Committee, presented by the Director of Governance & Legal Services and the Head of Health & Safety.

The Board noted that the Safety & Health Committee in Malaysia would be included for the first time in next year's report. This Committee would have a dual reporting line.

The Board also noted that:

- Health & Safety data had been compared for the first time with other universities and HWU's 2013 data was below the sector averages;
- Health & Safety were working collaboratively with other universities;
- only three incidents over the year were reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013. All had been investigated and appropriate action taken;
- the International campuses were being supported by the Edinburgh Health & Safety team, who were also working with StudyWorld to ensure all campuses operated under the HWU Framework;
- fire safety was now greatly improved, with fewer false alarms because Health & Safety now had a chance to check the area before evacuating students; and
- the Health & Safety Framework had been rated as green by Ernst & Young (the University's auditors) and had been approved by the Audit & Risk Committee.

The Board agreed that further assurance mapping was needed in collaboration with the Schools and that this would be presented to the University Executive, the Audit & Risk Committee and the Court when completed.

The Board also agreed that the report would be presented the Health & Safety Committee's Working Groups for their information and that the CJNCC would receive the report for information in due course.

The Board noted that wardens reported all incidents through Safeguard and thus a complete record was kept. The high level of reporting and the inclusion of medical incidents would account for the relatively high number of incidents.

M14/157 UNIVERSITY HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY (SB/14/214)

The Board received and approved the University Health & Safety Policy, presented by the Director of Governance & Legal Services and the Head of Health & Safety.

The Board agreed that members would ensure officers mentioned in the Health & Safety Policy had a copy of the Policy. The Board noted that the Policy now separated out the operational responsibilities for Dubai and Malaysia and that it no longer mentioned Institutes, due to the merger of IPE and SBE into EGIS.

M14/158 COMPLAINTS ANNUAL SUMMARY REPORT (SB/14/215)

The Board received and noted the Complaints Annual Summary Report, presented by the Academic Registrar & Deputy Secretary. The Board recommended the report for onward

transmission to the University Executive and the Court.

The Board noted that the University had hosted a complaints forum in recent weeks and a number of universities had shown interest in HWU's system.

The Board also noted that:

- the process of reporting of complaints at the Dubai Campus would need to be reconsidered;
- the University would need to improve the timelines for completion of complaints in order to comply with Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) legislation;
- a refresher course on the complaints process would be given to colleagues who required this;
- Border Campus complaints were coming through TEX at present and so were included in the TEX figure in the report.

M14/159 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 4 November 2014