MINUTES

STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

Date:	Tues 11 June 2019	Time:	1530 (refreshments from 1500)
Location:	Boardroom, University House, Leek Road Campus		

Notes:

1. Items marked with an asterisk (starred items) were for information only or regarded as noncontentious. Starred items will not be discussed and will be assumed to have been noted or approved unless a request to unstar a named item is received from a Board member in advance, or at the commencement, of the meeting.
2. Items classified as Confidential, and their subsequent minutes (highlighted here in blue), will be redacted before publication of the agenda and minutes on the University's public website.

Members		
Professor Liz Barnes	Vice Chancellor	A
Richard Cotterell	External Member	A
Tash Crump	Student Representative (President, Students' Union)	P
David Gage	External Member	P
Glenn Earlam	External Member	P
Doug Rouxel	Academic Staff Representative	P
In attendance		
Ian Blachford	Chief Operating Officer and Clerk to the Board of Governors	IA
Dr Simone Clarke	Director of Strategic Planning	IA
Professor Ieuan Ellis	Pro Vice Chancellor – Partnerships	A
Professor Martin Jones	Deputy Vice Chancellor	IA
Sue Reece	Pro Vice Chancellor – Student Experience	IA
Lauren Rooke	Assistant Clerk to the Board of Governors (minutes)	IA

P = Present; T = via telephone; A = Apologies; IA = In Attendance

1 MEETING MANAGEMENT	
86	**Apologies for Absence** were received from Professor Liz Barnes and Professor Ieuan Ellis.
87	There were no new **Declarations of Interest**.
88	The **Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee**, 26 February 2019 SP/06/01, were signed as a true and accurate record.
89	**Matters arising:** • **Membership of the committee** – the Chair of the Board informed the committee that Richard Cotterell had requested to stand down as a member with immediate effect, rather than from 31 July 2019. • **Minute 70 (arising from minute 55 – Distance-Learning Provision)** – it was noted that a review of this area was scheduled for the coming months and that a report on this would therefore come to the first meeting of the academic year.

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- **Minute 77 – Enterprise Spaces** – a verbal update was noted from the Deputy Vice Chancellor, who clarified that progress was being made on this.

2 FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR APPROVAL (marked below accordingly)	
90	The committee received an overview of the recently published **Augar Review** in the form of a presentation, SP/06/02, introduced by the Deputy Vice Chancellor. The following areas were included: • Principles behind the review • Lifetime learning allowance • Funding • Loans • Apprenticeships • Further Education Members commented as follows: • Sue Reece noted the concern that in the short term, headline proposed fee reductions may lead to students (and parents) deferring decisions until uncertainty cleared; secondly, that funding rationale would become so complex that students were unable to work out how to get help with this and could turn away from HE altogether; and that thirdly, the potential removal of foundation year courses would have a significant potential impact on universities such as Staffordshire, which regarded these as an important part of the widening participation strategy. • Martin Jones noted that even without knowing categorically which recommendations would eventually be implemented by the government, it was possible to discern the direction of travel of the government's attitude to the sector, which amounted to a preference for higher volume provision within the subject areas perceived more commercially viable. It was likely that some courses would disappear entirely, if the SLC refused to fund courses that fell outside the category of "STEM plus". (Humanities and more traditional creative arts were likely to feel the brunt of this.) • Glenn Earlam asked about funding for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Simone Clarke clarified that the review proposed that maintenance loans would be replaced by grants for the poorest students, but that maintenance loans would still be made available for students from more affluent backgrounds. Members discussed in detail potential funding implications. • Glenn Earlam enquired about likely timelines and it was agreed that this would be dependent on several factors including likely leadership or government changes, and current parliamentary priorities. • Ian Blachford noted that the Five-Year Financial Plan paper coming to the June 2019 Board of Governors meeting would cover scenario planning for what was a very uncertain time.
91	The committee received a report entitled **Evaluating the Delivery of the University's Strategic Plan – Talented People (DISCUSSION)** SP/06/03, introduced by the Chief Operating Officer, Pro Vice Chancellor – Student Experience and the Director of Strategic Planning. The following main points were noted: • In November 2018, the Board of Governors, on the recommendation of this Committee, had accepted a proposal for the introduction of two new complementary reports intended to provide insights and assurance on the progress that was being made in the delivery of the current Strategic Plan and the achievement of the Key Performance Indicators. • At each meeting of the committee a report was to be provided on one of the three strategic pillars in the Strategic Plan. This report, which focused on the Talented People pillar, was intended to be read alongside the KPI report.

	• The report aimed to bring together key actions being taken to deliver the Strategic Pillar, drawing together some information that board members may have received previously in more detail and/or in different contexts. The information provided was deliberately high-level, highlighting flagship projects and initiatives, the majority of which had regional and/or national significance. Outcomes (other than delivery of the University KPIs covered in the accompanying report), where known, were provided, as well as risks and risk management work, related to individual initiatives or the delivery of the overarching strategic pillar. Members commented as follows: • Glenn Earlam enquired about the current position with regard to the achievement of KPIs. Ian Blachford cited the example of the KPI relating to 50% of academic staff having a doctoral-level qualification, confirming that the current rate was 33%. This would continue to increase now that newly recruited academic staff were required to have a doctoral-level qualification (with some exemptions where necessary, for example within very new subject areas where research was not always a priority). • Doug Rouxel highlighted the slightly lower position on the KPI relating to the number of academic staff with HEA Fellowship. Sue Reece clarified this appeared to dip given the recent departure of several HEA Fellowship staff but that this would be a priority for the new Director of Learning and Teaching, who would start on 1 September 2019. It was agreed that the report on the Delivery of the Strategic Plan (Talented People) be referred to the Board for noting.
92	The committee received and discussed a **KPI Report (DISCUSSION)** SP/06/04, introduced by the Director of Strategic Planning. The following main points were noted: • This was the second report of this type prepared for Strategy and Performance Committee, which documented current performance in relation to the Key Performance Indicators to be achieved during the life-cycle of the current Strategic Plan, which ends in 2021. • Progress was good in relation to the principal KPIs. A RAG (Red/Amber/Green) rating had been assigned to each of the KPIs to indicate progress to date. • Since the previous report had been received by the committee, the following changes had been made to the RAG rating of KPIs: o League table performance in top 50% - CUG had moved from amber to green, in light of the results recently published. See paper elsewhere on the agenda for more information. • This paper complemented other papers on the agenda for Strategy and Performance Committee, in particular item 2.8, the progress report evaluating the delivery of the Strategic Plan (Talented People). • At the previous meeting, the Committee requested that a summary of student numbers be provided as a context to this report, in particular the KPIs related to financial sustainability. These data were provided at **Annex A** and were drawn from a report shared with Sustainability and Resources when it met on 21 May 2019. **Annex B** provided dates when the data relating to each KPI is updated, as requested by the Committee. Members commented as follows: • Tash Crump asked whether, in the drafting of the University's KPIs, the percentage of students completing level 6 had been considered as a metric (rather than the timely completion KPI). Simone Clarke clarified that it had been felt more important to track a cohort throughout its progression through the University. • Glenn Earlam asked for the completion rate across the whole undergraduate population and Simone Clarke clarified that this was around 69% (with the average sector rate being around 85-90%). A University-wide focus on academic progression was essential to enable students to remain within the University community and to complete their studies – that cultural change was now well underway, with much work being done within the schools on this, and on embedding resilience. Tash Crump echoed this, noting her belief that this work would yield significant results within the next few years. • Doug Rouxel highlighted the importance of analysing the root causes of academic failure. It was agreed that this was often a symptom of a set of very complex problems, and that whilst clearer, more detailed data was a help, the key was what was then done with that data. • Glenn Earlam asked about monitoring of high-risk students. Simone Clarke replied that various measures were underway, including work into attendance capture and learner analytics, to improve and centralise this, but that the University recognised that it was not yet at the required point. In the School of Life Sciences and Education, a newly recruited staff member from an FE background had implemented a very effective monitoring and tracking system. (It was highlighted that a brief case study on this intervention work with the School of LSE had been included within the February committee papers.) • It was noted that although data on apprenticeships was provided within the report, the committee would prefer to receive more detail on this in the future. • Simone Clarke reminded the committee that the OfS Action Plan (approved by email by the Board in January 2019) had contained a new KPI for postgraduate student timely completion: "Every postgraduate Masters Course will achieve 90% timely completion and every PGCE course will achieve 93% timely completion."

	It was agreed that the KPI Report be referred to the Board of Governors for noting.

93	The committee received and discussed a paper on **International Strategy** SP/06/05, as a precursor to a strategic discussion (including a presentation from the Pro Vice Chancellor – Student Experience).
	
	• The University was currently performing below benchmark competitors in recruiting international students and had agreed a target of 1000 international students on campus by 2021. The current figure was 800 students.
	• The paper proposed key principles and components of the International Strategy to:
	   o Deliver growth of on-, and where appropriate, off-campus international student numbers
	   o Provide International opportunities for University students and staff
	   o Provide an enhanced international student experience to support retention and reputational marketing
	   o Embrace new digital technologies to create connections between on-campus and transnational students & staff
	   o Assist in the growth of knowledge transfer and research opportunities in line with the University's Connected University Strategy
	• The paper included 1) the International Strategy (updated draft); and 2) supporting presentation, including the Phase 1 implementation timeline, Workstream Action, 2018 End of Cycle Performance and 2019 Application data.
	• Following feedback from SLT and Strategy & Performance Committee, the Strategy and associated Workstreams would be presented for approval by Academic Board in June.
	
	Members commented as follows:
	
	• Glenn Earlam asked about potential for growth and return on investment for International. Sue Reece clarified that there was certainly scope for building further capacity in this area, as the University was currently less advanced many of its comparator institutions in this regard. Sue further reminded the committee that the University had more flexibility around fees for international students than it did for home students.
	• David Gage noted that the University's continued improvement in league tables would have a significant positive effect on its prominence in the international marketplace. Sue Reece echoed this and underlined that the opening of DIL would also be a significant draw for international students.
	• Martin Jones highlighted that this was the first International Strategy drawn up by the University that took a holistic approach, including areas such as research, and recognised the joined-up thinking required.
	• David Gage asked about best practice within the sector. Sue Reece noted that local offices in international marketplaces were commonplace and were usually cheaper to run. Having staff on the ground enabled proactive responses and communications.
	• David Gage asked about responsibility for International following the departure of the previous Director of this area, and Sue Reece confirmed that whilst she had ultimate responsibility for this area, but that operationally it had been placed under the new Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions.
	• Tash Crump highlighting the importance of maximising the experience of current students in order to more effectively promote the University's courses by using them as ambassadors within international marketplaces.

94	The committee received and discussed a **Portfolio Update** SP/06/06, including a presentation, from the Pro Vice Chancellor – Student Experience. The following main points were noted: • The presentation provided an overview of the University's Portfolio Development and underpinning Academic Roadmap, as well as plans around future mapping and the Connected Curriculum: • Academic roadmap – current method and proposed new version • Pathway courses • Roadmap based in UK strategy and industry • Course development process/ideation • Connected curriculum and academic framework (knowledge and competency testing) Members commented as follows: • David Gage, commending the work done so far, noted that the proposed direction of travel provided a significant mitigation against likely changes implemented post-Augar. • Members discussed the proposed changes and their likely implications, with discussion focusing around the added value likely to be provided for students. It was agreed that the League Table Performance Report be referred to the Board via the August 2019 Strategic Event.
95	The committee received and discussed a **League Table Performance Report** SP/06/07, introduced by the Deputy Vice Chancellor. The following main points were noted: • One of the three University KPIs was that by 2021 the University would be "In the top 50% in the UK League Tables". • The results for the Complete University Guide had now been published and the University was ranked 58th out of 131 institutions, meaning that the relevant KPI had now been achieved. Within the three national league tables the University was placed in the top 50%:

	○ Complete University Guide – 58th ○ Guardian University Guide – 44th *(N.B. Since the paper had been drafted, the Guardian University Guide 2019 had been published, in which the University had risen seven places to 37th place)* ○ The Sunday Times Good University Guide – 57th - The paper provided an analysis of the University's performance in the Complete University Guide and proposals for future continuous improvement that would be discussed by the League Table Group. Members commented as follows: - David Gage asked for clarification on the Nursing results and Simone Clarke noted that she and Martin Jones had met with all schools, including the School of Health and Social Care, in order to clarify exactly where focus should now be directed. - It was noted that the University's league table KPI had been achieved two years early and discussions continued on the likely impact of future league table movement and the significant work behind this. It was agreed that the League Table Performance Report be referred to the Board for noting.
96	The committee received and discussed a **Student Retention Report (DISCUSSION)** SP/06/08. The following main points were noted: Members commented as follows: NONE
97	The committee received and discussed a **Student Recruitment Report (Semester 1 Intake) (DISCUSSION)** SP/06/09. The following main points were noted:
98	The committee received and discussed a **Research and Innovation Report (DISCUSSION)** SP/06/10, noting the following main points:

- The paper outlined actions which had been taken in respect of the implementation of the University's Research, Innovation and Impact Strategy.
- The report had a particular focus on improving the research environment, preparing for REF2021, understanding and implementing best practice in research and enterprise support, and growing our research income (including funding and bidding activity).

Members commented as follows:

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3 FOR INFORMATION	
99	The committee received for information the **OfS Registration Action Plan Update** SP/06/11 from the Pro Vice Chancellor – Student Experience, who noted that the document provided assurance that work was well underway to address the actions identified.
100	The committee received for information an update on the current position with Ofsted relating to the **Staffordshire University Academy** SP/06/12.
4 ADDITIONAL MATTERS	
101	**Have we made a positive impact on our students today?** It was agreed that the draft International strategy and portfolio review would potentially have significant and far-reaching impact on both current and prospective students.
102	There were no **additional matters**.
103	**Items to be referred to Board of Governors:** For noting a) **Minute 91** – Evaluating the Delivery of the University's Strategic Plan (Talented People) b) **Minute 92** – KPI Report c) **Minute 94** – Portfolio Update *(for the August 2019 Strategic Event)* d) **Minute 95** – League Table Performance Report
104	**Next meeting:** Tuesday 22 October 2019 (Boardroom, University House)