

# MINUTES

## BOARD OF GOVERNORS, BG-125

**Date:** Wednesday 29 June 2022

**Time:** 1500

**Location:** CA105/6, Catalyst, Leek Rd

1. Items marked with an asterisk (starred items) were for information only or regarded as noncontentious.
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.



<b>Members</b>		
Peter Baines	External Member	P(T)
Hannah Blackburn	Student Governor (President, Students' Union)	P
Jonathan Chapman	External Member	P
Tony Evans	External Member	L(T)
Hannah Gibbard	Staff Governor (professional support staff)	A
Kevin Gould	External Member	P(T)
Colin Hughes (Chair)	External Member	P
Professor Martin Jones	Vice Chancellor	P
Baljinder Kuller	External Member	A
Juliet Oosthuysen	External Member	A
Vikki Sylvester	External Member	L
Dr Simon Smith	Staff Governor (academic staff)	A
Jonathan Vardon	External Member	A
Anthony Wallace	Student Governor (Vice President, Students' Union)	P
Sara Williams	External Member	A
<b>In attendance</b>		
Ian Blachford	Chief Operating Officer and Clerk to the Board of Governors	IA
Dr Annabel Kiernan	Pro Vice Chancellor - Education	IA
Dr Kevin Hetherington	Deputy Vice Chancellor	IA
Sally McGill	Chief Financial Officer	IA
Lauren Rooke	Assistant Clerk to the Board of Governors ( <i>minutes</i> )	A
Hayden Tsang	Vice-President, Students' Union, & incoming Student Governor 2022-23	IA

*P = Present; A = Apologies; Ab = Absent; L = Late; IA = In Attendance; T = via Teams*

<b>1 MEETING MANAGEMENT</b>	
2832	<b>Apologies for Absence</b> were received from Hannah Gibbard, Baljinder Kuller, Juliet Oosthuysen, Jonathan Vardon, Simon Smith, and Sara Williams. Vikki Sylvester and Tony Evans joined from item 2837.
2833	There were no new <b>Declarations of Interest</b> .

2834	The <b>Minutes of the last meeting of the Board of Governors</b> , 6 April 2022 BG/125/01 and <b>Notes from the BofG/UEB Strategic Event</b> , 28 April 2022 BG/125/0 were signed as true and accurate records.
2835	<p><b>Matters arising:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Minute 2815 (Matters Arising) - Strategic Event (Spring 2022)</b> – it was noted that this had been held on Thurs 28 April 2022 in the Catalyst, Leek Road, and notes from the event had been included on today’s agenda.</li> <li>• <b>Minute 2818 - Strategic Plan</b> – it was noted that following the Strategic Event on 28 April 2022, it had been agreed that a further event would be held on 11 July 2022 at Staffordshire University London.</li> <li>• <b>Minute 2823 - MSc Entrepreneurship/postgraduate programme</b> – a verbal update on this was noted from the Vice Chancellor and the Chief Financial Officer, who both noted that the launch event had been very well-attended and seen excellent levels of engagement and publicity.</li> <li>• <b>Minute 2824 - First Star programme</b> – a verbal update on this was noted.</li> <li>• <b>Prevent Annual Report and Return 2020-21</b> – it was noted that following submission in December 2021, OfS had confirmed on 4 May 2022 that the University’s Prevent assessment for 2020-21 had been concluded.</li> <li>• <b>Development Board</b> – it was noted that the Development Board update was now planned for the September 2022 Board of Governors meeting, once the new Chair had been inducted and strategy had been agreed.</li> </ul>
<b>2 STRATEGIC OVERVIEW</b>	
2836	<p>The Board received for consideration the <b>Strategic developments and organisational performance</b> BG/125/03, introduced by the Vice Chancellor. The report covered the external context, University performance, University business, and senior staff appointments and departures.</p> <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kevin Gould asked about recent league table ranking changes and Kevin Hetherington provided clarification on this. Martin Jones reminded the Board of the remit of the League Tables Group chaired by Kevin, which would be looking at these changes in far more detail.</li> <li>• Jonathan Chapman asked whether international recruitment was significantly influenced by league table rankings. Martin Jones clarified that the various tables had different foci and that some were considered more influential in different markets. Annabel Kiernan underlined that the CUG changed its metrics every year, making consistently high performance in this table more challenging. (Place-based work on the University’s estate and student experience, and continued work on employability, would help drive recruitment within the 18-yr old demographic, and the associated metrics.)</li> <li>• Martin Jones highlighted that the University had scored higher than Keele on the Applied Research metric (which captured the impact of our research on a wider range of stakeholders).</li> </ul>
2837	<p>The Board received a paper on the <b>Relationship between FE and HE</b> BG/125/04, presented by the Vice Chancellor, who noted the following main points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This paper set out different options for how the University could proceed with the development of its partnership strategy. Defining the identity of Staffordshire University and its location in the local and national education market would determine how its positioning in the FH-HE landscape, as the University sought to define and develop an integrated education system for the region.</li> <li>• A decline in mature student numbers was predicted, with a simultaneous increase in the number of 18-year-old applicants. Sector pressures meant a refocusing of our engagement with FE and, potentially, also HE providers, locally in particular.</li> <li>• The paper set out the range of new and emerging qualifications and opportunities for learning, all of which presented competing calls on our resources requiring a decision on how to articulate and balance the resource of a research-inspired, teaching-led university in the region.</li> <li>• The paper presented a series of recommendations. These supported a University approach which would embrace research-led curriculum specialisms overlapping with portfolio areas where we wanted to achieve a significant recruitment pivot, as well as a place-based applied curriculum driven by stakeholder engagement and articulated through new qualifications and post-LLE modular offers.</li> <li>• There was much in this as an approach, but delivery was achievable given the distribution of leadership and resources across the senior team.</li> </ul> <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vikki Sylvester asked for clarification on the University’s approach to careers and employability guidance, given the imminent developments within the sector. Martin Jones clarified that the realignment of DfE advice around careers guidance had been considered during the development of this work, with Annabel Kiernan highlighting that some of the key work “on the ground” on this would be done through our schools and colleges liaison team, which was being strengthened by several appointments currently underway.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Colin Hughes asked about the rationale behind micro-credentials and Annabel Kiernan clarified that the University was currently piloting various version of this scheme, including in conjunction with SMEs (funded externally). standalone via Business, within Allied Health, and via SCoLLP (CPD schemes). Plans in this area would be considered further with Res Publica.</li> <li>Colin Hughes highlighted the importance of having the right partnerships in place with appropriate high schools and Martin Jones clarified that SUAT was shortly expected to be able to accept applications from further high schools, subject to Ofsted reinspection.</li> <li>Members discussed potential branding and positioning if the approach set out in the paper was taken, considering likely sector direction and the external landscape.</li> <li>Kevin Gould asked about allocation of resources. It was highlighted that the resourcing for this approach would not be exclusively internal, e.g., the University would also look to make the most of local council funding (to improve educational outcomes for local populations) and Executive team connections on relevant local project boards and working groups.</li> <li>Hannah Blackburn commended the ambition of the plans but raised concerns that the University's resources could become over-stretched. Annabel Kiernan agreed that these plans would not be in every subject and decisions would need to be made.</li> <li>Colin Hughes asked about the alignment of the proposed approach with the new Strategic Plan and the overall direction of the University, and members discussed the emphasis on local enterprise and place-based identity that was emerging within the external landscape, considering how this approach might be encapsulated within a new approach to branding.</li> </ul>
2838	<p>The Board considered an update on the position with <b>Town Deals (Shared Prosperity Funding) - Burton &amp; Telford</b> BG/125/05, introduced by the Vice Chancellor, who noted that this paper had been circulated to Members by email on 28 June 2022. The following main points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>[REDACTED]</li> <li>[REDACTED]</li> <li>[REDACTED]</li> </ul>
<b>3 SUB-COMMITTEE BRIEFING SHEETS AND REFERRED ITEMS</b>	
2839	The <b>BRIEFING SHEET – Remuneration Committee, 10 May 2022</b> BG/125/07 was received for consideration.
2840	<p>The <b>BRIEFING SHEET - Nominations &amp; Governance Committee, 10 May 2022</b> BG/125/08 was received for consideration.</p> <p><b>Approval</b></p> <p>a. <b>Minute 640 - Renewals of Governor Terms of Office</b> BG/125/09 The recommendations around renewals of Governor Terms of Office were approved.</p> <p>b. <b>Minute 641 - Independent Governor vacancies</b> BG/125/10 The recommendation to appoint Nurole for the current Independent Governor Vacancies was approved.</p> <p>c. <b>Minute 643 - Proposed membership of the Board and sub-committees 2022-23</b> BG/125/11 The proposed membership of the sub-committees for 2022-23 was approved.</p> <p>d. <b>Minute 647 – Staff Governor appointment</b> BG/125/12 The recommendation to appoint Saima Hussain as the Governor from the academic staff was approved.</p> <p><b>Information</b></p> <p>e. <b>Minute 644 - Chancellor</b> BG/125/13 The update on the tenure and role of the Chancellor was noted.</p>
2841	The <b>BRIEFING SHEET - Strategy and Performance Committee, 17 May 2022</b> BG/125/14 was received for consideration.

	<p><b>Approval</b></p> <p>a. <b>Minute 277 - Lichfield portfolio proposal</b> BG/125/15 The recommendation to pause with the sale of the Lichfield coach park site was approved.</p> <p><b>Information</b></p> <p>b. <b>Minute 278 - Town Deals and Shared Prosperity: Burton and Telford</b> BG/125/16 <i>(see items 2.3 and 2.4)</i>  c. <b>Minute 280 - Student retention report</b> BG/125/17  d. <b>Minute 282 - REF update on results</b> BG/125/18  e. <b>Minute 283 - League table performance report</b> BG/125/19  f. <b>Minute 285 – Access &amp; Participation Plan update</b> BG/125/20  g. <b>Minute 286 - Apprenticeships performance and monitoring</b> BG/125/21</p> <p>The above reports were noted by the Board.</p>
2842	<p>The <b>BRIEFING SHEET - Audit and Risk Committee, 7 June 2022</b> BG/125/22 was received for consideration.</p> <p><b>Approval</b></p> <p>a. <b>Minute 1879 - Internal audit plan 2022-23</b> BG/125/23 The Internal Audit Plan 2022-23 was approved by the Board of Governors.</p>
2843	<p>The <b>BRIEFING SHEET - Sustainability and Resources Committee, 14 June 2022</b> BG/125/24 was received for consideration.</p> <p><b>Information</b></p> <p>a. <b>Minute 470 - Recruitment position 2022-23</b> BG/125/25  b. <b>Minute 471 - Management accounts to 30 April 2022</b> BG/125/26 The above reports were noted by the Board.</p> <p><b>Approval</b></p> <p>c. <b>Minute 477 - Pensions and industrial action update</b> BG/125/27  </p>
<b>4 FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR APPROVAL (marked below accordingly)</b>	
2844	

	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>
2845	<p>The Board received for approval the paper on <b>Bad debt write-offs</b> BG/125/29, introduced by the Chief Financial Officer, who noted the following main points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The paper sought to obtain authorisation to write off debtor balances. These had previously been passed to the University’s debt collection agent STA, who had attempted to collect the debts but had advised that they were no longer recoverable or not economical to pursue. The total amounted to £554,072.19 (including a total of £4,466.97 of debts under £100) and a breakdown of the value of debt was given in the report.</li> </ul> <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jonathan Chapman highlighted that Audit &amp; Risk Committee had discussed the issue of self-funding and the levels of due diligence rigor around these students when it received a recent Key Financial Controls internal audit report.</li> </ul> <p>The Board of Governors approved the proposals for Bad debt write-offs.</p>
<b>5 FOR INFORMATION</b>	
2847	<p>The Board received for information the <b>Students’ Union Report</b> BG/124/30, introduced by the President of the Students’ Union, who highlighted several key points and noted that the report covered the following main areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students’ Union Strategic Plan</li> <li>Leadership Race 2022</li> <li>Proud to Be Staffs Awards</li> <li>Student Welfare work</li> <li>Student campaign work</li> <li>Student activities and engagement</li> <li>Union finances</li> </ul> <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sally McGill asked about the “Great Donate” campaign, and it was clarified that any donations from across the University would be welcomed for this campaign.</li> <li>Kevin Hetherington asked about increased reporting of travel/commuting costs concerns from students and Anthony Wallace confirmed that anecdotally, this appeared to be the case, particularly for placement students.</li> </ul>
2848	<p>[REDACTED]</p>
2849	<p>The Board received for information the <b>Degree classification report</b> BG/125/32, introduced by the Pro Vice Chancellor – Education, who noted that the OfS analysis focused on the extent to which degree classification changes could be statistically accounted for by changes in certain characteristics of the graduate population. The paper set out the</p>

	University's response to the B4 Conditions (should it be required) and OfS report on unexplained increases in the proportion of the first and 2:1 degree classifications being awarded to our students.
2850	The Board received for information the <b>*OIA annual statement 2021*</b> BG/125/33.
<b>6 ADDITIONAL MATTERS</b>	
2851	<b>How have we made a positive impact on our students today?</b>  It was agreed that the phrasing of this agenda item would be reviewed in light of the new Strategic Plan to ensure the most effective self-reflection for the Board.
2852	There were no <b>additional matters</b> .
2853	<b>Next meeting:</b> Wednesday 21 September 2022 (Catalyst building, Leek Road)