

# MINUTES

## STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE, SP-08

**Date:** Tues 25 February 2020

**Time:** 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.

<b>Members</b>		
Professor Liz Barnes	Vice Chancellor	P
Connor Bayliss	Student Governor (President, Students' Union)	P
Glenn Earlam (Deputy Chair)	External Member	P
Tony Evans	External Member	T
Colin Hughes (in the Chair)	External Member	P
Doug Rouxel	Academic Staff Representative	P
<b>In attendance</b>		
Ian Blachford	Chief Operating Officer and Clerk to the Board of Governors	IA
Dr Simone Clarke	Director of Academic and Strategic Planning	IA
Professor Ieuan Ellis	Pro Vice Chancellor – Place and Engagement	IA
Professor Martin Jones	Deputy Vice Chancellor	IA
Andrew Proctor	Pro Vice Chancellor - Digital	IA
Lauren Rooke	Assistant Clerk to the Board of Governors (minutes)	IA

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

<b>1 MEETING MANAGEMENT</b>	
126	There were no <b>Apologies for Absence</b> .
127	There were no new <b>Declarations of Interest</b> .
128	The <b>Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee</b> , 22 October 2019 SP/08/01, were signed as a true and accurate record.
129	<p><b>Matters arising</b> – the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. <b>Membership</b> – During this academic year the Committee did not have a chair and that the Chair of the Board of Governors would chair the meeting in the interim.</li> <li>ii. <b>Minute 2549 (BofG)</b> – The review of target student numbers was on the Committee agenda for this meeting, as previously agreed.</li> <li>iii. <b>Minute 111</b> – The terms of reference for the committee were approved at the November 2019 Board of Governors meeting.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>iv. Minute 113</b> – The Delivery of the Strategic Plan (Innovative and Applied learning) had been referred to the November 2019 Board of Governors meeting for noting.</p> <p><b>v. Minute 114</b> – The KPI report had been referred to the November 2019 Board of Governors meeting for noting.</p> <p><b>vi. Minute 115</b> – International Recruitment (previously requested as an agenda item at a future meeting of Strategy and Performance Committee) appeared on the agenda for this meeting.</p> <p><b>vii. Minute 177</b> – Apprenticeship provision had been considered further at the November 2019 Board of Governors meeting and at the extraordinary meeting of the Board in January 2020.</p> <p><b>viii. Minute 118</b> – A summary of the changes to academic regulations had been referred to the November 2019 Board of Governors meeting for noting.</p> <p><b>ix. Minute 199</b> – The League Table Performance report had been referred to the November 2019 Board of Governors meeting.</p>
130	The <b>*Schedule of Annual Committee Business for 2019-20*</b> SP/08/02 was noted.
<b>2 FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR APPROVAL (marked below accordingly)</b>	
131	<p>A paper (and accompanying slides) on <b>University Priorities for 2019-20 Academic Year</b> SP/08/03 was received from the Vice Chancellor. The following main points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the conclusion of the Board of Governors Strategic Weekend, a request had been made for clarity about current priorities and actions emerging.</li> <li>• The attached slides showed the priorities agreed with the University leadership team prior to the start of the academic year, which sought to support progression in achieving the 2021 targets, including an overview of planning, short- and longer-term priorities, ways of working and behaviours, and key risks.</li> <li>• Further follow-up around the 2030 plan and actions would be brought to the April 2020 Board of Governors meeting.</li> </ul> <p>Members commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colin Hughes commended the slides and highlighted that a discussion item arising from the Strategic Weekend would feature on the April Board of Governors agenda.</li> <li>• Glenn Earlam asked about the results of the Employee Engagement Survey in terms of perceptions of leadership. Liz Barnes confirmed that there were areas for improvement and some definite “quick wins” to be had. Other areas would require much more thought and longer-term planning.</li> <li>• Tony Evans raised the issue of communications to staff regarding the University’s journey and its current position. Glenn Earlam noted the importance of highlighting where SLT and management actions and improvements were in direct response to employee concerns and Ieuan Ellis echoed this. Liz Barnes agreed that Executive needed to be mindful of the distance travelled in terms of achievement.</li> <li>• Doug Rouxel raised a point regarding the practicalities and logistics of the dashboards available to staff. Liz Barnes proposed that Doug discussed further with the Director of Academic and Strategic Planning.</li> </ul>
132	<p>The committee received and discussed a report entitled <b>Evaluating Delivery of the University’s Strategic Plan – Connected Communities</b> SP/08/04, introduced by the Pro Vice Chancellor – Place &amp; Engagement. The following main points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The report related the key aims and objectives of the Connecting Communities theme to examples of key activities and their impact.</li> <li>• In addition to specific projects and initiatives highlighted in this report, a key focus during the last year had been on understanding the full range of work the University was doing with and for the local and regional communities in particular, and the impact being made as a Civic University.</li> <li>• This area had recently been presented and discussed at the Board of Governors Strategic Event (31 January 2020), and feedback from governors at this event indicated that high-level KPIs around the University’s Civic impact should focus on two areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Promotion of Access and Participation in Higher Education</li> <li>○ Graduate employability and graduate retention in our region</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Governors had also commented on the importance of developing the ‘narrative’ of our Connected Communities engagement and our civic impact, drawing on qualitative data such as case studies alongside KPI metrics.</li> <li>• The Committee was asked to discuss the paper and the value of this current format of reporting against the strategic pillar of Connecting Communities.</li> </ul> <p>Members commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colin Hughes noted that whilst it was certainly useful for the committee to receive the sort of information within the report, on a more regular basis it might be preferable to receive a more narrative-focused report that gave headlines and an overarching executive summary of impact.</li> <li>• Simone Clarke noted that much of the information relating to impact that would otherwise have featured in the report was absent due to the position with DLHE/Graduate Outcomes survey information.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tony Evans agreed that it was crucial to highlight the successes of the University. Liz Barnes echoed this, noting that Staffordshire was 9<sup>th</sup> in the country in terms of graduate start-up successes, a statistic that deserved much more focus.</li> </ul>
133	<p>The committee received and discussed a <b>KPI Report</b> SP/08/05, introduced by the Director of Academic and Strategic Planning. The following main points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This report documented current performance in relation to the Key Performance Indicators to be achieved during the lifecycle of the current Strategic Plan, which would end in 2021.</li> <li>Changes in performance on several KPIs since the last report to the committee were highlighted, as well as key actions to enhance future performance of KPIs, including implementation of the Academic Strategy, work around apprenticeships and international recruitment, and development of research culture.</li> <li>The report also proposed the amendment of the KPI relating to apprenticeships completion in line with recommendations from Ofsted.</li> <li>The format continued to be developed based on feedback from the Board and SLT. Planned future development was currently focused on providing 3-year trends for all KPIs (where available) and a University-level summary comprising infographics and student numbers to contextualise performance profiles.</li> <li>Other papers on the committee's agenda would give much greater detail on areas of performance development, including research and student retention.</li> </ul> <p>Members commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Martin Jones noted the distinction around continuation and the definitions of timely completion used by OfS and Ofsted, clarified by Simone Clarke.</li> <li>Discussion focused around the KPIs within the Connected University Strategy, with Glenn Earlam proposing that these be edited down to clarify the institution's direction of travel, enable flexibility and avoid creating confusion, and this was echoed by Colin Hughes.</li> <li>Andrew Proctor noted that a system of OKRs (Objectives and Key Results) was often successful, offering a blend of headline objectives (generally binary) with an underlying direction of travel scale.</li> <li>Further consideration would be given to the presentation of the KPIs.</li> </ul> <p>The committee approved the proposed amend to the KPI on Timely Completion.</p>
134	<p>The committee received and discussed a <b>Student Recruitment: End of Cycle Report - Sept 2019 Enrolment</b> SP/08/06, introduced by the Pro Vice Chancellor – Place &amp; Engagement, who noted the following main points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The report provided governors with a summary of the key findings drawn from the End of Cycle Report for recruitment and admissions for September 2019 entry onto full-time undergraduate and full-time postgraduate courses.</li> <li>It included analysis of the Staffordshire University student intake for 2019/20 with year-on-year comparisons against available UCAS data releases for national and aggregated competitor sets (data from UCAS End of Cycle 2019 and SITS data from October 2019 - Recruitment and Enrolment internal dashboards).</li> <li>The key purpose of the End-of-Cycle Report for 2019 was to review and analyse our student recruitment performance in the context of national and aggregated competitor sets to identify and focus on 'lessons learned' from the last recruitment cycle in order to inform actions for the current recruitment and admissions cycle for 2020.</li> </ul> <p>Members commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liz Barnes noted that the numbers were encouraging, given the current local demographic (Stoke-on-Trent rated as the 14<sup>th</sup> most deprived area in the country; shrinking population numbers; and very low rate of progression of students on to university). It was noted that there were several complex underlying reasons for this, including the appeal of the University to mature and commuter students, improved schools and colleges liaison and more diverse national recruitment reach (including as a result of the launch of DIL).</li> <li>Colin Hughes asked about data capture around applicants' reasons for choosing Staffordshire and it was agreed that this was of growing importance.</li> </ul>
135	<p>The committee received and discussed a <b>Student Recruitment: In-Year Report</b> SP/08/- introduced by the Pro Vice Chancellor – Place &amp; Engagement, who noted the following main points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The report was based on 2020 data from UCAS App Tracker reports dated Monday 3 February 2020 (week 21) and live SITS data from Friday 7 February 2020.</li> <li>It provided governors with the latest position on full-time undergraduate and full-time postgraduate student recruitment for the 2020 intake, including analysis of Home, EU and International applicants and a comparison between the current 2020 and 2019 application data.</li> <li>Recruitment targets for 2020 were currently being finalised through the student number planning process.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The report confirmed that applications for on-campus <u>undergraduate</u> courses were on par with the position at the same time last year and that applications for on-campus <u>postgraduate courses</u> were significantly up from 385 to 626 (+62.6%). It also provided a summary of the key actions that had been implemented in the current cycle to increase international student conversion and recruitment.</li> </ul> <p>Members commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Glenn Earlam asked about recruitment and conversion rates for DIL and it was clarified that the current conversion rate expectation was around 65-80%. Ian Blachford noted that Sustainability and Resources Committee would shortly receive an implementation report for DIL, which would then progress to the April Board of Governors meeting.</li> </ul>
136	<p>The committee received and discussed a brief paper on <b>International Recruitment</b> SP/08/- from the Pro Vice Chancellor – Place &amp; Engagement as a precursor to a strategic discussion. The paper gave details on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>current key target countries/regions for our international student recruitment</li> <li>the three main approaches/routes for international student recruitment (recruitment funnel)</li> <li>the low conversion rates achieved for international applicants in 2019</li> <li>the International Recruitment Roadmap – identifying a range of actions that have already been implemented since October 2019 to improve international recruitment in the 2020 cycle and to advance further actions for improved international student recruitment in the 2021 cycle.</li> </ul> <p>Members commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ieuan Ellis confirmed that the international strategy encompassed both a plan for globalisation and an international recruitment strategy.</li> <li>Liz Barnes highlighted that the situation in China (with relation to Covid-19) posed a small but significant risk, as did recruitment of EU students following Brexit.</li> <li>Glenn Earlam asked about the possibility of achieving greater focus of our international recruitment efforts into fewer geographical areas. Ieuan Ellis agreed that the current map was broad and that once improved data was available on applications and conversions, the target areas/countries would likely reduce. Colin Hughes noted that trends within different areas could fluctuate dramatically and that any reduction of target areas would need to recognise this and provide for a flexible response. Colin further noted that the key next step was deciding how to market the distinctiveness of the Staffordshire brand overseas.</li> <li>Tony Evans highlighted his belief that the University would need to be at the forefront of digital innovation in terms of translation of lectures etc, however Liz Barnes clarified that the University was required to deliver and assess in English (as were the University's overseas partners).</li> <li>Members discussed the monitoring of international students' attainment and it was noted that with such a small number of international students, correlation was difficult to track.</li> <li>Doug Rouxel highlighted that it appeared that conversion of international applicants was the salient issue and Ieuan Ellis confirmed that this had been identified as a key priority and was informing the current immediate actions for improved conversion in the current cycle</li> </ul>
137	<p>The committee received and discussed the <b>Student Numbers (Full-time) and Retention: In-Year Report</b> SP/08/09, introduced by the Deputy Vice Chancellor and Director of Academic and Strategic Planning. The report provided updates on the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The current number of fulltime students (on courses delivered by the University) compared to budgeted numbers, including schools where targets had been missed.</li> <li>Semester 2 actuals were now included, with a snapshot of numbers at 24 January.</li> <li>Student retention rates and patterns for these courses, including further details on specific schools and retention gaps of special student groups over the past four years. (It was noted that a detailed action plan was being developed in order to address differential outcomes for BAME students, who were overrepresented in IMD quintiles 1 and 2 – the most vulnerable group).</li> <li>It was confirmed that work was underway within schools to determine the underlying issues.</li> </ul> <p>Members commented as follows:</p> <p>NONE</p>
138	<p>The committee received and discussed a <b>Multi-Academy Trust Update</b> SP/08/10, presented by the Deputy Vice Chancellor. The following main points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staffordshire University Academies Trust (SUAT), the largest and fastest-growing MAT in Staffordshire, continued to grow and develop its structures and processes, now comprising nineteen academies.</li> <li>These academies were increasingly collaborating with each other in terms of teaching, learning and leadership issues, and SUAT was beginning to realise significant economies of scale across its family of schools.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The report also gave an overview on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Core objectives</li> <li>Governance meetings</li> <li>Growth of the MAT and links to the University as sponsor of SUAT</li> <li>School Improvement and OFSTED monitoring of SUAT Academies</li> <li>Recruiting and retaining staff</li> <li>Financial sustainability and future plans</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Members commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liz Barnes highlighted that SUAT had been in Special Measures when the University had taken it over, and now had an excellent reputation.</li> <li>Colin Hughes asked about future plans for growing the MAT in terms of secondary schools. Martin Jones agreed that it was clear that attracting the right secondary schools into the MAT was crucial, but that many were now in MATs elsewhere. Liz Barnes noted that many of the headteachers within the MAT were seconded to the University once a week, teaching our students.</li> <li>Glenn Earlam asked about the legal implications of sponsoring a school and Martin Jones clarified that the risks were reputational rather than financial.</li> </ul>
139	<p>The committee received and discussed a <b>Research and Innovation Update SP/08/11</b>, presented by the Deputy Vice Chancellor. The following main points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The report outlines actions which had been taken in respect of the implementation of the University's Research, Innovation and Impact Strategy, with a particular focus on improving the research environment, preparing for REF2021, research funding and bidding activity, understanding and implementing best practice in research and enterprise support, and growing the University's research income (which was a crucial area).</li> <li>It also gave an overview of current progress against the research-related KPIs.</li> </ul> <p>Members commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Martin Jones noted that since the writing of the report, the University had been awarded two successful grants.</li> </ul>
<b>3 FOR INFORMATION</b>	
140	<p>The committee received for information the <b>OfS Registration Action Plan Update SP/08/12</b>, introduced by the Director of Academic and Strategic Planning, which gave an overview of the background to, and current progress on, the OfS Action Plan. (A final report on the delivery of the plan was included at Annexe A.)</p>
141	<p>The committee received for information the <b>Access and Participation Plan 2020-25 – Action Plan SP/08/13</b>, introduced by the Pro Vice Chancellor – Place &amp; Engagement.</p>
<b>4 ADDITIONAL MATTERS</b>	
142	<p><b>How have we made a positive impact on our students today?</b></p> <p>It was agreed that refining and improving course-level performance measures; understanding more about retention issues and looking at lessons learnt from the last applicant cycle would all positively impact on the student experience.</p>
143	<p><b>Any additional matters</b></p> <p>a) The committee received a paper on the current <b>Independent Governor Vacancy</b>, introduced by the Chair, including a CV for the proposed candidate.</p> <p>The committee approved the proposal to recommend the candidate to the Board of Governors for approval.</p>
144	<p><b>Items to be referred to the Board of Governors:</b></p> <p><b>For noting</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Minute 131</b> – University Priorities for 2019-20 Academic Year</li> <li><b>Minute 132</b> - Evaluating Delivery of the University's Strategic Plan – Connected Communities</li> <li><b>Minute 133</b> - KPI Report</li> </ol> <p><b>For approval</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Minute 143</b> - Any Additional Matters: Independent Governor Vacancy</li> </ol>
145	<p><b>Next meeting:</b> Tuesday 9 June 2020 (Boardroom, University House)</p>