

HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY

Board of Governors

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Governors held on 26 January 2021 via MS teams

Present:	Mr Peter Nixon	Chair
	Dr David Llewellyn	Vice-Chancellor
	Mr Colin Bailey	

£6M over the five- year period, thus reducing the overall cash position accordingly;

- ii) that the forecast for the current year included an allowance for the accommodation refund for the period to 20 February 2021 as previously agreed

- xi) that the Deputy Vice-Chancellor was in discussion with a major retailer about developing a School of Sustainable Agriculture. An opportunity to join the Global Farm Platform alongside leading specialist HEIs was also being taken forward;
- xii) that plans to ensure sustainability is demonstrated on the University's farm were now being led by Professor Lee who had taken over line management of the farm. It was hoped that this focus would support research and teaching and ensure the University's reputation for being able to demonstrate practical solutions that were applicable to the agri-food chain was maintained. In due course opportunities to secure a higher priced milk contract would be explored. In the meantime, Professor Lee would continue to keep Mr Bailey updated and engage with Mr Roach (former Board member with relevant knowledge and experience) as necessary; ML
- xiii) that capital investments would need to continue to be considered in light of curriculum changes and changes to delivery models which were already arising out of lessons learned during COVID;
- xiv) that the confidential proposal for merging two academic departments had also been discussed in detail by Finance and General Purposes Committee at its meeting earlier in the day;
- xv) that the above proposal sought to ensure the University's strategic aims were achieved and that its curriculum remained attractive to a wider range of students as well as being educationally sound. The proposal sought in particular to ensure that the programmes offered could meet the requirements of the National Food Strategy, Agriculture Bill and other key policy drivers that aimed to deliver a sustainable food chain for the future. The two Heads of Departments involved were already engaged in the discussion and would be able to support next steps. Having considered the proposal carefully, F&GP had agreed to recommend the proposal to the Board to be agreed in principle and that the Board should agree that three independent members may act on behalf of the Board to agree next steps. DW, MT and YH had agreed to assist and it was also suggested that the

team to oversee the implementation and agree next steps. The Chair also had a fourth member in mind who he planned to ask to assist if possible. In the meantime, members were asked to agree the appointment of MT, DW and YH to this role;

- Approved:
- i) the draft five-year forecast and commentary (annex 2) for submission to OfS subject to inclusion of the revised capital allocation; LF
 - ii) that the proposed departmental changes be agreed in principle, subject to final agreement by MT, DW, YJH acting on behalf of the Board in due course;
MT, DW, YH,
ML/SC/KB

20/42 Update on COVID -19 Planning and other key matters of note

Received:

- i) a report by the Vice-Chancellor

- Noted:
- i) that as reported in the Newsletter, the regular and often rapid changes in government policy relating to COVID restrictions for HEIs continued to be very challenging for all Universities, their staff and students. In line with current government restrictions, only students on certain courses such as veterinary related programmes could return to the campus to complete practical work where this was required for professional body reasons and where such sessions could not be re-arranged. Research students were also able to undertake practical work where this could not be re-arranged;
 - ii) that in light of the current guidance, a phased approach was being taken, with some year groups still studying online, while others were returning. The Vet students had asked that their practicals be postponed so they could continue to study on-line and this request had been met. It was hoped that the DfE may recognise that other subjects also required practical work to be completed according to the seasons such as agriculture projects. A decision on whether such courses might return was awaited. In the meantime, students on any course who were able to demonstrate a need to return due to having study problems at home or well-being issues could make a case to return to live in their term time accommodation and the DfE had also agreed an exemption for students to attend placement interviews on site where these could not be effectively managed remotely;
 - iii) that there had been some COVID-related concerns raised by some staff and appropriate measures to enhance and review risk assessments were in place;
 - iv) that as members were aware, a decision had been made to refund campus accommodation fees for the period to 20 February 2021. This would be reviewed should the situation change. The need (or otherwise) for an extension to the academic year to enable students to catch up with practical or other work was also being explored, considering issues that may arise if students living in private landlord rented accommodation were to be charged extra rent or were unable to stay in their accommodation after the end of the academic year;
 - v) that testing arrangements were in place through the local Health Protection Hub (HPH) to ensure students and staff could be tested on

arrival at campus at the walk-in test centre. The centre may be changed into a mobile unit in the future and it was also possible that lateral flow testing would start to be offered in the local community. Mrs Kate Baker, Deputy University Secretary was meeting with the HPH weekly to ensure that good liaison and working relationships continued;

- iv) that the OfS has instructed HEIs to undertake a review of their compliance with Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) requirements. An annual review has already been planned as usual for the spring/early summer period and a report would be presented to the Board in due course;
- v) that the OfS had also issued a range of initiatives and consultations which the University would respond to, and

- viii) that a useful discussion had taken place with the Chair of the All Parliamentary Group on Universities. He had expressed a wish to visit when this was possible;
- ix) that the Harper Adams Club had marked its 100th Anniversary with a successful on-line event. A larger event was to be arranged in due course when restrictions permitted;
- x) that a useful discussion with the Worshipful Company of Farmers had led to an opportunity to bid for their flagship leadership and management course. This was being explored. Professor Lee had also been in dialogue with a major retailer about a School of Sustainable Farming and had also opened up an opportunity for Harper Adams to join the Global Farm Platform which allows world leading institutions to collaborate;
- xi) that NMilTE had announced a further delay to starting their main recruitment cycle from January 2021 to September 2021, but hoped to grow their intake. Hartpury and the RAU had reported growth in student numbers; and Anglia Ruskin University were supporting a project to create an initiative in Peterborough focusing on food and farming;
- xii) that subject level TEF was now looking unlikely, but some form of TEF was still under discussion and arrangements for current TEF awards were not yet known but likely to be clarified in summer 2021;
- xiii) that b2021

vision. The Board hoped that there would be a suitable opportunity to recognise Dr Llewellyn's contribution during his tenure as Vice-Chancellor and in his previous role at the University.

The Chair thanked Dr Llewellyn and members for their comments. He reported that Dr Llewellyn had made him aware of his decision earlier in the month and this had enabled the Chair to start work with the University Secretary to take the necessary actions forward. The Chair reminded members that the Board had reviewed the process for appointing a Vice-Chancellor in 2018 when the Illustrative Practice Note (IPN) published by the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) was considered and a process was agreed by the Board that drew on the CUC IPN and on the process that was followed in 2008/19.

The Chair then briefed members on the progress made to take forward the agreed process to date. The following points were noted:

- Noted:
- i) that announcements had been drafted and agreed by the Vice-Chancellor and the Chair which would be sent to staff following the Board meeting. A message would also be sent to students the following day. A public announcement would also be made later on the following day together with letters to the Chancellor and other key contacts;
 - ii) that to ensure the process was able to start promptly where the policy note set out the Search Committee would "normally" meet and take immediate actions forward, as it had not been possible to convene the Search Committee ahead of the announcement to the Board, the Governance Review Group had met to start the process and subject to Board agreement, would hand over to the Search Committee once it was appointed by the Board. Members ENDORSED the decision of the Chair to ask the GRG to take steps to start the process as set out;
 - iii) that the Chair and University Secretary had sought proposals and interviewed four executive search agencies having agreed criteria with members of GRG and advice from Mrs Hawkins in recognition of her senior HE leadership expertise and experience. GatenbySanderson had scored highest and had shown particular creativity and energy in managing the process effectively during the current restrictions. Their fees were also the second least costly, although quality

- vi) that it had been suggested that the appointment process might lead to final interviews during April 2021, although final dates were to be discussed with the S(dur)8 (ed w)-2.9 (i)3.1 (t)-13 dure

Committee with advice from the HR Department;

PN

- iv) that housing should not be offered, but rental at market rates of a University property could be offered if required;

PN

20/45 Terms of Reference for University Executive

Received: a proposal to update the ToR for University Executive to reflect changes in its membership and the creation of the Access and Participation Group and the Academic Strategy and Management Group which would report to University Executive on their work. University Executive would be reviewing the draft changes at its meeting the following week.

Agreed: that members would send the University Secretary any comments on the draft ToR by Monday 1 February at 12 noon. Subject to inclusion of any comments and to agreement by University Executive, the new ToR were approved. ALL

20/46 Annual Report of the Trustees of Harper Adams Students' Union and audited Financial Statements

Received: the annual report and financial statements for HAUSU.

Agreed: that thanks were due to all of the SU team for a very well managed year in extremely difficult circumstances. The auditor's report was positive and no major issues had been raised. Mr Oatey was asked to pass on the Board's congratulations to all member of the team. TO

20/47 Nominations Committee

Received:

Board at its March meeting with a view to making final recommendations by circulation and approval of nominations at the Board meeting in July.