

Minutes

Title:	Board of Directors EXTRA meeting
Date:	17 December 2020
Time:	15.30
Place:	Zoom

Present:	Prof Janusz Jankowski	Chair of the Board
	Alex Bols	Vice-Chair of the Board
	Sean Bonnington	Special Advisor
	Raffaella Bush	Board Member
	Gael Dundas	Board Member (from about 15.35)
	Laura Forrest	Board Member
	Charles Hindson	Board Member (from about 16.00)
	Charles Hunt	Board Member – Vice-Chancellor
	Raymond Lee	Board Member
	David Leppard	Board Member
	Rob McCoy	Board Member
	Jayne Morley	Board Member
	Isabel Nisbet	Vice-Chair of the Board
	Jeremy Olsen	Board Member
	Carol Reid	Special Advisor
	Richard Salter	Board Member (arrived 16.45)
	Jackie Westaway	Board Member
In Attendance:	Allan Scott	Clerk to the Board & Company Secretary (Secretary)
	Anthony Albertini	Full-Time Year 3 M ^O st Student (from about 16.15)
	Patrick Gautier	M ^O st Deputy Course Leader
	Julie Greenwood	Part-Time Year 5 M ^O st Student (from about 16.15)
	Sharon Potter	Deputy Vice Chancellor (Education)
	Joanna Smith	Finance Director
	Jas Verdi	Head of Student Services
	Steve Vogel	Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research)
	Mark Waters	M ^O st Course Leader

1. Welcome & Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Noted: That due to the covid situation, this meeting took place purely by electronic video conferencing.
1.2 Noted: That there were no apologies received for this meeting.

2. Declarations of Conflicts of Interest

- 2.1 Noted: That further to the entries in the Register of Interests and Loyalties, there were no declarations of interest specifically referencing anything within the agenda of this meeting.

3. Celebrating Successes

- 3.1 Noted: That the Vice-Chancellor discussed setting up the clinic in Borough High Street (BHS) with the aid of pictures on the screen. There has been huge effort on the part of UCO staff and patients are now being successfully treated by tutors and students. UCO have received an interim payment from the insurers and there had been an excellent response to the clinic fundraising appeal. Many thanks to those, including several Board Members, who gave money towards the appeal.

4. Financial Review and Forecasts

a) Financial Summary for 3 months ended 31 October 2020

b) Overview of OFS Financial Return and financial forecasts to 31 July 2025

- 4.1 Noted: That neither capital nor Hallsville Quarter calculations are included, these figures are operating costs only. The Return has not been considered yet by Finance & Estates Committee (FEC) and this will be undertaken at their extra meeting on 12 January 2021. The special Board in January 2021 will include the full figures for Board approval.
- 4.2 Noted: That clinic fire calculations are also not included in the figures as it has been assumed these costs will be covered by insurance.
- 4.3 Noted: That there is little contingency in the 2020-21 budget in case of unexpected events.
- 4.4 Noted: That the figures have assumed that home students would replace any European Union (EU) students lost following the UK exiting the EU.

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- 4.5 Noted: That although moving out of Southwark will cause clinic figures to drop, it is hoped that this would not be an issue beyond the first few months.
- 4.6 Noted: That the drop in research spending is due to there having been one-off donations and grants for specific projects in 2019-20. Because UCO are not aware of any pledges for 2020-21 or beyond, assumptions within the figures are cautious.
- 4.7 Noted: That budgetary targets are distinct from recruitment targets, and franchised students will also be considered, in order to prevent the situation that a sudden numbers cap imposition would cause UCO to be capped at recruiting too low a number.

5. National Student Survey (NSS)

a) NSS Analysis Report

b) NSS Action Plan

- 5.1 Noted: That the M0st Course Leader did a PowerPoint presentation.
- 5.2 Noted: That the two student guests outlined their experiences to the Board with some additional comments from the Student Board Member.
- 5.3 Noted: That the culture of teaching, especially in clinic, needs to change at UCO, possibly beginning with communication training.
- 5.4 Noted: That measures outlined by Change Management and elsewhere include:
- Unit Leaders having part of their time in clinic to ensure better consistencies with clinic and academic teaching.
 - All staff working a minimum of one day a week to ensure they have time to properly understand the curriculum and culture of the institution.
 - Creating different groups via coordination of Student Services allowing more places to voice feedback.
- 5.5 Noted: That suggestions from the Board included:
- A Freedom of Speech Guardian or Champion as an informal way of gathering feedback.
 - Monthly data collection from students via Microsoft Forms, although with the warning that too many surveys could also lead to survey blindness.
 - Senior Management Coffee Mornings with students.
 - Lecturers querying curriculum by approaching Course Leader and not students.
 - Pro-active management from senior managers towards offending tutors including immediate challenge of inappropriate behaviour.
 - Empowerment of tutors and students to challenge inappropriate behaviour including training in how to do that most effectively.
- 5.6 Noted: That it was useful to have students attend the meeting to give their point of view and consideration should be given to inviting students to future Board meetings. It was also noted that student representation system should ensure that all students are engaged with and not only those who are leaving, as is the case with the NSS.
- 5.7 Action: Clerk to the Board to contact students and find out what they would like to see happen as a result of this meeting, in particular around organisation and management which wasn't covered in too much detail.
- Action: Clerk to the Board**
- 5.8 Noted: That it should be borne in mind that it takes a long time to fix a culture and that instant results are not necessarily going to be apparent. The Board commented that they felt reassured that the Action Plan matched the Change Management Plan and would be taken seriously. They also commented that they were reassured that Senior Management are committed to fixing the problem of students having bad experiences.

6. Any Other Business

- 6.1 Action: That the issue of Board oversight of the important areas of cybersecurity and other IT issues was raised. It was agreed that it was necessary for there to be some form of regular report on this issue, with Jeremy Olsen becoming a member of ARC, it was agreed that Jeremy would attend his first ARC meeting and review if he thinks that is enough Board oversight, since the ARC minutes go to the Board as standard, or if anything else might be needed in terms of IT reporting to the Board after that.
- Action: Jeremy Olsen**
- 6.2 Action: IT Director to produce a report to ARC for them to review IT issues on a regular basis.
- Action: IT Director**
- 6.3 Noted: That the Board wished to put their thanks to the Executive, IT Department and UCO staff for their hard work during the lockdown, the aftermath of the clinic fire and during 2020 generally.

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- 6.4 Noted: That the Chair of the Board wished to put on record that the Board were very impressed by the quality and quantity of exceptional work achieved by the Vice-Chancellor and the Executive Team and their wish to match student expectations. The Board were assured of the feasibility of the forward planning for 2021 and want everyone at UCO to take their full Christmas and New Year break without attending to business.
- 6.5 Noted: That the Board made clear that they hoped the Executive and UCO staff would take time off over the Christmas and New Year holidays and take a proper break without looking at emails or doing any form of work.
- 6.6 Noted: That the meeting ended at 18.15.

AGREED