HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY Item 02
Board of Governors

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Governors held o n 28 November 2023 in-person at Telford & Wrekin, Southwater One, and by MS Teams.

Present:	Mr Peter Nixon	Chair			
	Professor Ken Sloan	Vice-Chancellor			
	Mr Dominic Wong	57	Td[(P)2.4	(es)-8.1-2.9	(hd)-2.9

23/03 Matters Arising /Action Log

Received: a matters-arising/action log report from the University Secretary.

Noted:

i. that action taken in relation to developing the institutional Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) would follow as a substantive item within the Vice-Chancellor's report.

ii. that work between the University and the Students Union in relation to embedding the Respect Agenda and promoting Freedom of Speech was ongoing.

iii. that the Board's attention was drawn to the Chair's actions subsequent to the July 2023 meeting, noting in particular approved changes:
   a. to the Fees & Charges booklet to reflect a new staged fee structure for international students;
   b. to endorse the decision to appoint TJ to the Board for a term of two years;
   c. to endorse the decision to appoint CE to the Academic Board; and
   d. to note that an independent review had been commissioned in relation to a student complaint, under Stage 3 of the Student Complaint Process.

23/04 Vice-Chancellor's Report

Received:

i. a report from the Vice-Chancellor on recent developments of note, including the V-C's meeting log between July-November 2023

ii. the draft Key Performance Indicators to support the University Strategy, Harper 2030

Noted:

i. that changes to the way that data was collated and utilised by the Office for Students (OfS) and the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) had created complications for the University's statutory Data Futures submission, with a knock-on impact on other submissions including the return of the annual accounts, affecting the whole sector. Consequently, the University had secured an extension to December 2023. Members noted that the delay to submission of the statutory return was not due to any human failure within the University, and that it should be a one-off due to the new system and the re-coding of the data categories. It was very likely that OfS would be conducting a review of the process and the impact of the changes on Universities.

ii. that in-cycle changes to the student profile had made the Admissions landscape uncertain. Changes included demographic shifts, with fewer female students applying for courses nationally (with a disproportionate impact therefore on our majority female courses such as veterinary nursing), a greater number of students applying to study closer to home, and a general trend of applicants waiting for clearing before choosing their courses and/or institutions. This landscape had created a requirement to build more of a footprint locally, as well as to capitalise on the improvements to the recruitment process that had been realised in clearing 2023, and enhancing our reputation nationally and internationally. From February 2024, it was agreed that it would be helpful to circulate a monthly snapshot of student recruitment activity to all members.

v. that the Harper Commission had been established, with the first topic centring on the increase in use of foodbanks in the UK. Members discussed the risk management approach. The Commission had been tasked with investigating the issue and making recommendations. The Commission was not intended to be ideologically aligned with party politics and the life-cycle of the Commission would extend beyond the current election cycle. Members noted that the recommendations of the Commission may not necessarily align with the University's strategic objectives, as the intention was for it to be independent. However, it was an opportunity for the University to speak openly about contentions issues, backed by evidence.

vi. that an additional day's discretionary annual leave was proposed for all staff on 2 January 2024. This was, in part, in recognition for the significant efforts of all teams over the last 12-months which had resulted in the TEF Gold rating, the University's league table ratings, and the inaugural small & specialist award from the Times and Sunday Times. Members noted that the additional day was intended to be a one-off discretionary award and considered whether there was a risk that awarding it this year could create a precedent. On balance, members agreed that it was low risk to assess the question year-to-year, and the rationale of2t1.1 6.3 9 (o

ii.

23/12 Modern Slavery

Received: a briefing note on the University's continuing plans to address the Modern Slavery legislation.

Approved: the University's updated statement on the Modern Slavery Act for publication in January 2024. AP

23/13 Meeting Arrangements and Dates

Received:

i. arrangements for Board meetings in February, April, and July 2024.

ii. Proposed 2024/25 meeting dates for the Board of Governors and the Sub-Committees of the Board.

Noted:

i. that there was a preference to maintain a rough 50/50 split between in-person and remote meetings of the Board, and that for those meetings which did take place in-person, members of the Board expressed a preference to combine the meeting with a briefing, tour, or other relevant activity in order to make best use of the time.

Agreed:

i. that the meeting scheduled for July 2024 would be taking place in-person, and that a Board of Governors "away day" was being planned to comprise a full day's activities. Further details would follow. AP

ii. that the November meeting annually should take place in-

e.

iii. that the Chair had been extremely supportive of the University leadership during the recent period of change and that members of the Board commended him for his resilience, his energy, and his level of challenge and enquiry applied to problem solving.

iv. that feedback from members' 1:1 meetings with the Chair had been shared with the V-C, and that active consideration was being given to addressing and implementing members' thoughts, ideas, and suggestions (including e.g. making use of full-day meetings, reducing paperwork where possible, and streamlining processes where appropriate).

v. that the V-C would be inviting members of the Board to engage with 1:1 discussions with him during the Spring Term 2024. AP

vi. that the meeting of the Honorary Awards Committee would be convening on 29 February 2024 and that members of the Board were encouraged to pass nominations to the Governance Manager at their earliest convenience. AP

vii. that a progress report on the review of the Collaboration Agreement for the Harper Keele Joint Vet School would follow by circulation. KB/AP

viii. that the Degree Outcomes Statement had been reviewed by the Academic Board which had recommended it to the Board for endorsing.

ï Agreed: the Degree Outcome Statement. I *f*