

UNIVERSITY CENTRE WEST ANGLIA

Minutes of a meeting of the Directors of University Centre West Anglia held on 1 November 2017 in Milton.

PRESENT: Mr P Bogle (PB)
Ms A Clark (AC)
Mr D Pomfret (DP) (Chair)

IN ATTENDANCE: Miss L Andrews (minutes)
Mr C Challenger
Mr S Hindle

Action

317. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

317.1 There were no declarations of interest.

318. APOLOGIES

318.1 Apologies were received from Dr Trevor Bolton.

319. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

319.1 The minutes of the meeting held on the 7 June 2017 were **APPROVED** as an accurate record subject to the following amendments:

Amend 'Challenger' to 'Challender' on the attendance list.

Minute 302.4: The college has pulled their sponsorship, not the CWA Academy Trust.

320. MATTERS ARISING

320.1 It was noted that a 10-year university strategy launch has taken place outlining plans and objectives.

320.2 Medical School – it was reported that the Medical School was progressing well and was now at stage 6 of the GMC process. ARU could now call itself a Medical School even though there are no students as yet. Completion was expected by September 2018 and bids for numbers for a September 2018 intake would be going in shortly, hopefully resulting in an allocation by March 2018.

320.3 Recruitment – it was noted that ARU have landed close to its target including 260 Degree Apprenticeships but had seen a drop in UG numbers. Postgraduate and part-time numbers were holding and international was up. It was noted that in response to a question that Medical School students must be home students. It was considered that there would be no shortage of potential students in the Cambridge and Essex areas.

320.4 It was reported that the last Ofsted inspection 'requires improvement' and it was anticipated that CWA would be inspected in the autumn term next year. Teaching and learning would be the focal point. Learning practice capacity had been stepped up and additional posts have been recruited to. Senior staff including Ms Clark had been undertaking learning walks on a number of occasions as part of CWAs leadership commitment to focus on quality.

320.5 It was noted that the percentage of students overall achieving their qualifications had gone up to just short of 80%, up from 75% last year, across all programmes. This was an important step in respect of the next inspection.

320.6 World skills engagement – it was noted that CWA was the leading regional college in these competitions amongst colleges and training providers across all vocational areas. These were live competitions where colleges compete for gold, silver and bronze medals. CWA have medalled at the last few finals and will be competing again in a few weeks' time. This was important for the reputation of the College and for student satisfaction.

320.7 It was noted that the financial outlook for CWA was to achieve a modest surplus. Moving forward, the 16-19 demographics were in decline unless the College's market share dramatically changed. There has been a 50% dip in adult funding, with many opting not to take on loans to fund their studies. It was noted that the demographic changes were also affecting ARU which expected to see flatline student numbers for the next 3 years.

320.8 It was noted that CWAs two main priorities were the quality improvement agenda which required investment and the declining student number base which will require cost cutting measures: two priorities which did not sit comfortably together.

321. RETIREMENT OF DIRECTOR

321.1 The retirement of Professor Iain Martin from the Board effective from 13 October 2017 was noted.

322. ARU VALIDATED OUTCOMES 2016/17

322.1 The degree outcomes for 2016/17 were noted.

322.2 It was noted that the 2016/17 cohort comprised 109 graduates, 65 on honours and 44 on foundation degrees. Overall the honours degree profile total was 81% for the 2016/17 cohort compared to 65% last year. Dr Simon Pratt-Adams had provided guidance on how to get students to fully achieve their potential. A strategic plan target this year was to better this target. There were various pending courses which were still in process. These were expected to be favourable. Mr Challenger would speak to Dr Bolton regarding the ARU benchmark figure in this area.

CC/TB

323. UCWA 2017/18 ENROLMENT

323.1 The student enrolments for 2017/18 were considered and noted. There were around 138 FTE in year one this year. Total FTE enrolments were 355 for 2017/18.

323.2 Clearing performance was strong and CWA has improved its conversion rate this year: 13 last year, 23 confirmed this year. This had now improved with a better staffed call centre including Ms Clark and Mr Challenger who were on hand to make quick decisions. CWA has reflected and learnt from the ARU model.

323.3 It was noted that CWA was above its budget target with ARU this year and felt more assured of the calibre of new students due to more team engagement with clearing. Conversations between CWA and ARU suggest that CWA had done better than other local partners.

324. ARU INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW 2017

324.1 UCWAs response on conditions in relation to the Institutional Review 2017 was considered.

324.2 The deadline to respond to conditions and recommendations was mid-August and these had been agreed with Academic Registry at ARU. The Chair of the Institutional Review panel approved CWAs approach and many actions were now being implemented.

324.3 It was reported that the successor body to HEFCE, the OfS, would be much more interested in the transparency of published information, the fees charged and the information provided by institutions to students.

325. NSS 2018-2021 STRATEGY

325.1 The Core Action Plan was considered.

325.2 The 2017 NSS was hugely disappointing with just a 6.5% satisfaction mark for final year students on the Veterinary Nursing course. It was noted that there must be more engagement with students from day one. Mr Pomfret, Professor Martin and Professor Watkins have discussed this and there was a clear commitment at the top from both organisations in relation to the action plan to improve student satisfaction on the course.

325.3 The course team had met in the summer and were ensuring that staff from both organisations attended course team meetings. Differences in expectations regarding the help given by both institutions in terms of degrees had been highlighted and students were being asked for feedback. Timing was crucial but unfortunately the veterinary nursing students had been away on an extended placement period just before completing the survey.

325.4

325.5 A Student Evaluation Document was tabled including a RAG rating. The incentive to enter a draw to win a £100 Amazon voucher was being given to encourage people to undertake the survey.

Ms Clark reported that she and Professor Watkins had spoken and agreed that communication between ARU and CWA needed to be strengthened, particularly since the link with Marion Bond had fallen away. Mr Bogle noted that ARUs usual approach in these circumstances would be able to support an action plan and if improvements did not materialise in the subsequent year to consider whether in quality terms the programme could continue to be validated. Mr Pomfret emphasised the importance of the Veterinary Nursing course within the College's portfolio and the high priority that was being placed on achieving improvements.

326.

326.1 **ARU STUDENT UNION SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT**

326.2 It was noted that the agreement modifying the terms of the joint venture agreement had been signed and was in place for this academic year.

Students were unhappy regarding unequal services provided in terms of support for CWA students. An agreement was now in place with the SU at ARU for students at CWA in Cambridge to be supported by them in order to enhance their experience.

327. UCWA JVCO AGREEMENT

327.1 An oral update from Mr Bogle was received.

327.2 It was noted that the QAA considered that institutions should be more in charge of their own governance. It was considered that rather than a joint venture arrangement, validation agreements, which were in place with a number of other partners, might be the preferred option going forward. This would mean there was no need for a joint venture company Board, however, a joint steering group would still be required.

327.3 The Chair was happy to consider a draft arrangement when one was available and asked for this to be a more substantive agenda item for the next meeting highlighting significant implications of this change (advantages and disadvantages) with a view to taking recommendations to the CWA Board before the end of the academic year. A meeting between Mr Pomfret and Mr Bogle to discuss this in the New Year would be arranged.

PB/LA

LA

328. INSTITUTES OF TECHNOLOGY – CONFIDENTIAL

328.1 *Please see confidential minute.*

329. DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS

- 329.1 It was noted that CWA was working with a number of employers around management, digital solutions and nursing degree apprenticeships. An Assistant Practitioner course would also be run and then topped up. In terms of nursing it was important to get this area right at ARU first before launching at CWA. It was agreed that there should not be any competition between ARU and CWA offerings. CWA had around 1,200 apprenticeships in place and were talking to employers who saw HE offering as important to their staff. Employers would want to engage with the college and a model was being looked at with the ARU team to make this work.
- 329.2 There was also an opportunity for CWA to pass leads over to ARU in areas where they do not wish to deliver.

330. RISK REGISTER

- 330.1 The risk register was reviewed, updated and approved.
- 330.2 Accommodation for teaching at the Cambridge campus was still identified as a real risk and conversations were required with the LEP. This risk was more acute now so the likelihood needed to be raised. CWA had some real capacity issues.
- 330.3 The issue of whether staff turnover and retention risk was just in relation to Veterinary Nursing or in general was discussed. It was requested that this be split onto two lines on the register. Ms Clark would adjust this and send it back. It was also noted that Ms Clark's title had changed to Vice Principal and that risk 3 sat with Mr Pomfret and not Ms Clark.

AC

331. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2017

- 331.1 The accounts were **APPROVED** for 2016-17 and it was **AGREED** that they be signed by Mr Bogle and Dr Bolton.
- 331.2 The Letter of Representation for the year ended 31 July 2017 was **APPROVED**.
- 331.3 It was **AGREED** that the auditors Scrutton Bland be re-appointed for the year ending July 2018.

332. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 332.1 It was noted that new Data Protection legislation was coming into place next year so an updated Data Sharing Agreement with the college would be required. It will be useful to have this in place in time for May 2018.

PB

333. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 333.1 The next meeting will take place at 2pm on 7 March 2018 in **King's Lynn**.