UNIVERSITY OF FORWARD THINKING WESTMINSTER⌗

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE BOARD HELD ON TUESDAY 10 DECEMBER 2024 IN ROOM RS109 REGENT STREET AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

PRESENT:	Professor P Bonfield (Chair)	Professor C Kalantaridis
	Professor D Anand	Professor A Linn
	Professor C Dormor	I Wilmot (Deputy Chair)
	Dr S Jarvis	
IN ATTENDANCE:	O Adetona (Minute 24.79)	T Delaitre (Minute 24.84)
	D Airan, UWSU (Minute 24.80)	I Griffiths (Minute 24.82)
	V Barton, UWSU (Minute 24.80)	A Musani, UWSU (Minute 24.80)
	Dr L Bond	S Sethi, UWSU (Minute 24.80)
APOLOGIES:	C Dhapatkar, UWSU (attendee)	K Patel
	J Lamarque (Secretary)	G Saunders (attendee)

24.76 ANNOUNCEMENTS

24.76.1 **Welcome:** The Chair welcomed all members and attendees to the meeting.

24.76.2 **Apologies:** Members noted apologies as recorded above and noted that Dr Lucy Bond, Head of School, Humanities attended on behalf of the Head of College (Liberal Arts and Sciences).

24.76.3 **Declaration of interests:** Members did not declare any conflict of interest for the matters on the agenda.

24.76.4 **Requests to discuss starred items and business not on the agenda:** The Chair confirmed there were no requests to discuss starred items or items of business not on the agenda.

Chair's business

24.76.5 The Chair informed members that he met the previous week with other Vice-Chancellors and discussed ongoing pressures in the sector.

24.76.6 The Chair also noted that as the year comes to an end there are several University events planned and noted that Dr Deborah Husbands spoke the previous evening at a House of Lords event about how the University supports Black academics.

24.76.7 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) for Global Engagement and Employability informed members about positive feedback on the University's work at an event the previous week about challenging antisemitism.

24.76.8 The Chair encouraged members to have a thorough break over the festive period and to encourage colleagues to do the same.

24.76.9 The Chair emphasised the importance of the decision taken by Academic Council the previous week about the academic calendar and commended the DVC (Education), the Academic Registrar and their teams for their preparatory work to ensure the model responds to students' needs without any negative impact on colleagues.

24.77   **STAYING SAFE: BUSINESS CONTINUITY GROUP UPDATE**

24.77.1   The University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer (USCOO)/Co-Chair, Staying Safe: Business Continuity Group informed members that the last meeting of the Group focused on the draft Business continuity policy, which would be considered by UEB later in the meeting (see Minute 24.82).

24.78   **STRATEGIC DISCUSSION ON DIGITAL CAPABILITIES AND THE USE OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES**

24.78.1   Professor Catherine Dormor - Interim Head of College and Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC) for Advanced Learning Technologies and Digital Innovation – presented a plan to progress this strategic area.

24.78.1.1   **ACTION PVC (Advanced Learning Technologies and Digital Innovation)** to circulate the presentation slide pack via the UEB Secretary.

24.78.2   Members heard that the strategy will be activated through six thematic projects and there will be cross-fertilisation between the projects.

24.78.3   Members comments on the presentation included:

- Connecting in person and digital activities is developing as a central part of the University's approach.
- Planning for an unknown future, bringing the strategy to life through projects and the focus on diversity of people engaging with this area are welcome.
- Timetable challenges will need to be addressed pragmatically.
- The Learning Innovation and Digital Engagement group should also be involved.
- Strategically engage with those that need the most upskilling first to establish champions in hard-to-reach areas.
- Engage with the Director of Business Engagement about employability activities taking place in March 2025.

24.78.4   In response to a member's query about why this area is not being built into the curriculum through the usual curriculum development process, the PVC (Advanced Learning Technologies and Digital Innovation) explained that the most effective way to create change around the grand challenges (such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals) is to embrace boundary learning and inter-disciplinary learning.

24.78.5   The Head of School, Humanities reported that the School of Humanities is delivering a new module about using data to power social change.

24.78.6   A member suggested that the PVC (Advanced Learning Technologies and Digital Innovation) may want to discuss this area of work with the Smithsonian.

24.78.7   The Chair asked the PVC (Advanced Learning Technologies and Digital Innovation) to lead the next UEB away day on this strategic area.

24.79   **MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS PACK - OCTOBER 2024 AND QTR 1 FORECAST**

24.79.1   Oyin Adetona, Deputy Director of Finance, joined the meeting and presented key points from the management accounts report (Document UEB 241210A), which included the Quarter 1 forecast.

24.79.2   The Deputy Director of Finance informed members that the Finance team undertook a deeper dive assessment this quarter to address the below-target student recruitment in September 2024.

24.79.3 Members heard that annual income for 2024/25 is forecast to be £201m, which is slightly less than achieved in 2023/24, and that the forecast outturn for the year is a £3.7m deficit compared to the £2.5m surplus in the budget.

24.79.4 The Deputy Director of Finance assured members that the Finance department will continue to work with budget holders and functional heads towards a break-even position or better, that the balance sheet remains strong, there are no planned cuts to the capital expenditure programme and the forecast position is compliant with all loan covenants.

24.79.5 The Deputy Director of Finance confirmed that the five-year forecast approved by the Court of Governors had been submitted to the Office for Students (OfS) and that the University has not yet received feedback from the OfS on the submission.

24.79.6 Members discussed with the Deputy Director of Finance operational approaches to managing staff costs and the importance of effective workforce planning.

24.79.7 In response to members' queries, the Deputy Director confirmed that the forecast includes the increase to National Insurance contributions from April 2025 and the second phase of the 2024/25 pay award.

24.80 UPDATE FROM UWSU SABBATICAL OFFICERS

24.80.1 The Chair welcomed members of the UWSU Sabbatical Officer team to the meeting.

24.80.2 The Sabbatical Officers presented updates on progress against their priorities.

24.80.3 Members commented positively on the progress made, the contributions Sabbatical Officers are making in different committees, the focus and clarity of the Sabbatical Officers activities and their engagement outside the University.

24.80.4 The UWSU President highlighted recent awards won by the Students' Union and members of the team.

24.80.5 The Chair noted that the Sabbatical Officer team will return to UEB to provide further progress updates next semester.

24.81 GENERATIVE AI POLICY REVIEW AND AI UPDATE

24.81.1 The USCOO informed members that Co Pilot programme had been successful resulting in learning and improved productivity for the colleagues involved.

24.81.2 Members discussed how to use AI as a creative tool.

24.81.3 **APPROVED** Updated Policy in relation to the safe use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) (Document UEB 241210B) to be implemented with effect from 11 December 2024.

24.82 BUSINESS CONTINUITY POLICY

24.82.1 Ian Griffiths, Risk and Resilience Manager, joined the meeting.

24.82.2 The USCOO informed members that the Staying Safe: Business Continuity Group have considered and recommend the proposed Business continuity policy (Document UEB 241210D).

24.82.3 Members discussed with the Risk and Resilience Manager the role of Heads of School in business continuity, noting that business continuity plans are mandated at College level and optional at School level.

24.82.4 The Risk and Resilience Manager explained plans to support colleagues to understand and implement the policy.

24.82.5 In response to a member's query, the Risk and Resilience Manager explained the nature of the planned desktop exercises to test and validate business continuity plans.

24.82.6 A member suggested a minor amendment to the Background area of the cover sheet prior to submission to the Audit and Risk Committee.

24.82.7 **AGREED** Members recommend the proposed Business continuity policy to the Audit and Risk Committee.

24.83 PERSONAL TUTORS AND STUDENT CONTINUATION UPDATE

24.83.1 The DVC (Education) circulated student continuation data graphs and noted that there have been improvements over the last two years.

24.83.2 The DVC (Education) highlighted student groups where there are still gaps to be closed and identified three student groups where continuation activities will be focused.

24.83.3 The DVC (Education) reported that attrition figures for undergraduate students in 2024/25 align with those for 2023/24; however, are a little higher in 2024/25 for postgraduate students.

24.83.4 The DVC (Education) reported that 73% of Personal Tutors have engaged with the Tutor notes facility, noting that this is an improvement but there is still further work to be done, and that attendance at timetabled Personal Tutor sessions remains low.

24.83.4.1 **ACTION DVC (Education)** to ask the **Executive Director – Performance Improvement and Innovation** to work with the Heads of Colleges to ensure the remaining gap on Personal Tutor engagement is closed.

24.83.5 Members heard that there needs to be further progress on completion and progression and that the work on continuation will aid progress.

24.84 INFORMATION SECURITY POLICY

24.84.1 The Chair welcomed Thierry Delaitre, Head of IT Developments and cyber-security lead to the meeting.

24.84.2 The Head of IT Developments presented the proposed updated Information security policy (Document UEB 241210C).

24.84.3 The Head of IT Developments emphasised that cyber security is everyone's responsibility and that Information Systems and Support need support from UEB and all line managers to keep the University safe from cyber-attack.

24.84.4 On behalf of UEB, the Chair thanked everyone who contributed to reviewing and revising the policy.

24.84.5 **APPROVED** Updated Information security to be implemented with immediate effect.

24.85 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING, ACTIONS AND MATTERS ARISING

24.85.1 **AGREED** Members confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2024 (Document UEB 241210E) as an accurate record of the meeting.

24.85.2 Members noted an update on actions and matters arising from previous meetings (Document UEB 241210F).

24.85.3 **Maintenance policy (Action 24.66.5.1)** The USCOO confirmed that the policy has been finalised.

24.85.4   **UK Autumn 2024 Budget (Action 24.46.5.1)** The USCOO reported on the impact of the National Insurance contributions increase and the Chair closed this action.

24.85.5   Safety, health and wellbeing (Action 24.53.4.1) The USCOO provided an update on procurement of a suitable system.

24.85.5.1   **ACTION USCOO** to update UEB on interim arrangements in February 2025.

24.85.6   Fee increase (Minute 24.86) Members confirmed that the University would retain the option to charge the increased fee for those without existing offers beyond the first year of a student's course.

24.86   ANY OTHER BUSINESS

24.86.1   Members did not raise any other matters for discussion.

24.87   MEETING EVALUATION

24.87.1   A member noted that they enjoyed having a good discussion and were pleased that UEB allocated time to speak with the UWSU Sabbatical Officers.

24.87.2   The Chair outlined the risks discussed during the meeting.

24.88   PARTNERSHIP SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP

24.88.1   Updated terms of reference and membership 2024/25 (Document UEB 241210G) to be implemented with immediate effect.

24.89   DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Regular meetings are 10.30am to 12.30pm (unless alternative time stated below) in Room RS109, Regent Street and via Microsoft Teams.

7 January 2025	13 May 2025
21 January 2025	27 May 2025
11 February 2025	10 June 2025
25 February 2025	24 June 2025
27 February 2025 – away day and dinner	7 July 2025 - evening (UEB dinner)
25 March 2025	8 July 2025 – all day (UEB away day)
8 April 2025	22 July 2025
29 April 2025	5 August 2025