



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Office
Of
The President &
Vice-Chancellor.

UEB/2020/2804/02

Minutes

University Executive Board

Date: 3 March 2020

Present: Professor K Lamberts (KL) (in the Chair)

Professor J Derrick (JD), Professor S Fitzmaurice (SF), Professor S Hartley (SH), Professor M J Hounslow (MJH), Ms J Jones (JJ), Professor W Morgan (WM), Professor C Newman (CN), Professor D Petley (DP), Mr R Sykes (RS), Professor G Valentine (GV), Professor C Watkins (CW)

In attendance: Dr T Strike (TS), Mr A Carlile (AC) (item 3), Dr C Conway (CC) (item 4), Mr B Coleman (BC) (item 4), Miss H Morgan (HM) (item 5)

Apologies:

Secretary: Mr N Button (NB)

1. Minutes of UEB held on 4 February

1.1 The minutes of the meeting were approved as an accurate record subject to some amendments of accuracy and clarity.

2. Minutes of UEB held on 11 February

2.1 The minutes of the meeting were approved as an accurate record.

2.2 UEB were updated on the work establishing a UEB Sub-Group that would consider the size and shape of the student cohort at the University. The Group would consider the external environment and its impact on student recruitment from a longer-term strategic perspective. UEB voiced its support for the work of the Group, noting the interdependencies between the recruitment of different student cohorts and the broader questions regarding alignment of University strategy to forthcoming government policy.

3. Project Portfolio Management

(Mr A Carlile in attendance for this item)

3.1 UEB considered a paper that outlined a proposal for introducing project portfolio management at the University. Project portfolio management would involve the selection, prioritisation and coordination of the University's strategic projects and would not involve change of ownership or control of projects.

3.2 During discussion, UEB noted the following:

- It was unclear what the threshold would be for a strategic project to fall under portfolio management as determined by cost or change impact.

- The interdependence of strategic projects and the management of projects running simultaneously and their impacts on the University was the responsibility of the Executive Board.
 - There were other significant projects, e.g. involving the AMRC, which would necessarily sit outside of this portfolio management.
 - Greater additional layers of governance would potentially be unnecessarily burdensome for limited benefit.
- 3.3 UEB agreed that it did not support the project portfolio management approach proposed in the paper, but that it would look for alternative means of achieving the same outcomes using existing resources within the Strategic Change Office and the Executive Board. This issue could potentially be considered again after the implementation of the new Strategic Plan.

4. Santander University Employ Autism HE Network

(Dr C Conway & Mr B Coleman in attendance for this item)

- 4.1 UEB considered a paper proposing a new partnership with Santander and Ambitious About Autism and were asked to approve £25,000 in match funding to support work experience for students on the autistic spectrum.
- 4.2 UEB approved the proposal and the match funding, noting the potential benefit to students as part of the University's work on employability.

5. Gender Pay Gap

(Miss H Morgan in attendance for this item)

- 5.1 UEB were updated on the University's Gender Pay Gap reporting requirements, with a proposed timeframe for reporting the 2019 and 2020 figures and were asked to agree an updated action plan to accelerate progress in this area. Attention was drawn to the fact that progress had been made in recent times, but that it had not been as significant as the University would like.
- 5.2 During discussion, UEB noted the following:
- This issue was particularly topical in the context of recent industrial action. The University had had constructive discussions with Trades Unions about this issue and was seen as a leading institution on this issue, despite the need for further progress.
 - There was a need for UEB to consider data on a Departmental level to aid the development of an action plan, accepting that there would be statistical quirks and anomalies in smaller Departments.
 - There were structural issues that contributed to the Gender Pay Gap including allocation of roles and caring responsibilities. Men were also more likely to put themselves forward for promotion and negotiate for higher salaries during contract negotiations.
 - There were examples of good practice throughout the University, for example, not allowing all-male candidate shortlists.
- 5.3 UEB approved the recommended actions contained in the paper and agreed that a measured and systematic approach to closing the Gender Pay Gap should be pursued, with clear measurement of progress and evaluation of interventions.

6. Report of the UEB Strategic Advisory Group – Student Numbers and Fees

- 6.1 UEB approved the report of the UEB Strategic Advisory Group – Student Numbers and Fees meeting of 6 February 2020 and noted the work outlined in Section 3 of the report on student number targets and forecast, student recruitment and admissions, PhD duration, and ad-hoc fees.

7. Round Table

- (a) Industrial action: KL updated UEB on the situation regarding recent industrial action as part of the pay and pensions dispute, following meetings with the University and College Union (UCU) and the Students' Union.
- (b) Coronavirus: KL updated UEB on the situation regarding coronavirus. The University had set up an Incident Group chaired by the Director of Student Support Services. There was a discussion about the recruitment and retention of international students, potential financial impacts, and the need to consider the Business Continuity Plan for UEB itself.