

REASEHEATH COLLEGE BOARD
HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2021 at 2.00pm
Via MS Teams

Present: Prof Chris Gaskell (independent, Chair) CG
 Marcus Clinton (principal) MC
 Gary Crowe (independent) GC
 Kalliopi Angelakopoulos (student) KA

Attending: Liz Watts (head of marketing) LW
 Kendra Rogers (psLondon) KR *(item 4 only)*
 Scott Mcnamee (psLondon) SM *(item 4 only)*
 Stefan Kaminski (psLondon) SK *(item 4 only)*
 Keith Swift (brand and design lead) KS *(item 4 only)*
 Yvette Foulds-Davis (HE academic registrar) YFD
 Sarah Hopkinson (assistant dean) SH
 Debra Swift (HE curriculum development manager) DS
 Peter Greenall (assistant principal and dean) PG
 Jackie Schillinger (company secretary) JS

Part A unless stated

Item	Content
1.	APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR
1.1	RESOLVED: Chris Gaskell is appointed as Chair of the committee for the 2021-22 academic year.
1.2	RESOLVED: Gary Crowe is appointed as Vice Chair of the committee for the 2021-22 academic year.
2.	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
2.1	The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Ian Britton. The meeting was declared quorate.
2.2	The Chair expressed thanks on behalf of the committee to Anne McKay, who had stepped down from her role as staff governor and as a member of the committee.
3.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
3.1	The Chair and Vice Chair took no part in the decision on appointment of Chair and Vice Chair respectively. There were no interests declared as giving rise to a conflict of interest in relation to the agenda items for the meeting.
4.	UCR REBRANDING PRESENTATION
4.1	KR and SM presented the outcome of the UCR branding project. Members thanked psLondon for the presentation and welcomed the development of the concept, brand, strapline, and creative visuals. The meeting noted that the presentation being recorded will enable other governors to see it, following the meeting.
5.	TERMS OF REFERENCE/FORWARD PLAN OF BUSINESS 2021-22
5.1	The Terms of Reference were received for information
5.2	The Forward Plan of Committee Business was received for information. It was agreed that UCR strategy progress monitoring be included more specifically, either via the Dean's report or as a separate report.

6.	MINUTES
6.1	The minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2021 were approved as a correct record. There were no matters arising not covered on the agenda. It was noted that the Board of Studies referenced in the previous meeting is now up and running.
7.	STUDENT EXPERIENCE FOCUS
7.1	Student governor update: Due to connectivity issues KA was not able to present her update to the meeting.
7.2	National Student Survey (NSS) report 2020-21: YFD presented the NSS report for 2020-21, which indicated an improved score whilst other providers have experienced a drop. Members welcomed the improvement which means UCR is now more in line with the sector but GC emphasised that there is still work to do and so it is important that UCR continues to drive improvements in the student experience across the provision. PG acknowledged this and gave assurance that the same proactive approach is being taken this year and the team will continue to drive improvement.
7.3	Student Voice Approach 2021-22: YFD presented the approach being taken to enhancing the effectiveness of the student voice in UCR in 2020-21. She explained the focus on ensuring the communication is looped back to the students so that they can see the impact of student voice more effectively, as well as giving more responsibility to the students to lead discussion and having more themed discussions in student voice meetings. Members welcomed the approach and GC noted the importance of presentation in all interactions with the students and others to build the brand and recommended that resource be thought about in this area so that UCR can start to build on the branding work.
8.	STRATEGIC UPDATE
8.1	Dean's Report: PG presented his Dean's Report providing an overview of internal and external strategic drivers and key risk areas for UCR. Discussion followed. On HE Funding, the meeting noted that there is nothing definite yet but a response to the Augar report is expected imminently, with the risk of reduced fees looking more likely in relation to foundation course fee levels. On staffing recruitment and retention, the situation is a concern, but PG gave assurance that UCR is managing the risk and minimising impact on student experience. He acknowledged though that the inevitable disruption caused by staff turnover may impact on the student survey results at the end of this year. MC provided assurance on the level of support available to staff including the wellbeing team, and actions taken to support staff wellbeing during this challenging time, such as the full two-week shutdown at Christmas and that UCR has made some headway with new appointments but that there is still some way to go.
8.2	Office for Students statement of expectations on preventing sexual misconduct/harassment: PG presented the expectations for information and gave assurance that UCR is currently assessing its compliance with the expectations in line with the current internal audit service internal audit in this area and that the report will be presented as part of the Annual Safeguarding Report to the Board meeting on 9 December 2021.
8.3	Curriculum Development Update: DS provided a very positive report on progress on curriculum development and the positive impact of the Board of Studies, proving a much more agile and responsive way of curriculum development. She highlighted the key areas and developments. CG noted that progression work in equine is very important as those numbers are struggling. MC agree that equine needed a stand out feature at higher education and so this work is key and he noted the positive developments of the partnership with the local rehabilitation centre and the T level capital opportunity. PG acknowledged that UCR need to develop its approach to degree level apprenticeships and learn from its strategic partnership with the University of Chester. MC noted that a development in Zoology if this can be achieved would be very beneficial. All welcomed the good pace and content of developments reported. GC queried which areas were the priority and wondered also if UCR would look to revamp or cut any underperforming current areas. DS confirmed that areas such as canine, rural business management, and more longer term, agriculture and related programmes should be strong performers.

8.4	LW wondered if the Engineering programme would benefit from a revamp to offer more flexible models and PG agreed that this work is being looked at alongside the Institute of Technology bid, if successful. Access and Participation Plan Update: DS provided an update with strong assurance that work in this area is progressing well, though she noted that the external environment may bring some changes from the Office for Student, which will hopefully be positive in advance of UCR needing to submit its new plan. Members took good assurance from the report, with thanks.
8.5	Scholarly Activity Update: DS provided an update in the meeting on developments and activities. She noted that there is now an annual scholarship symposium event and the second edition of the scholarly activity journal has been published, which governors had received. She highlighted a number of projects had been funded and remission provided, with some good examples of collaboration with industry. Public lectures have re-started online, with a series of lectures planned for Reaseheath 100, and research cafes have been trialled. The BICA research conference is taking place in Warwick this year and students will be encouraged to submit research projects. Assurance was provided that staffing to support scholarly activity has been strengthened recently. Members welcomed the update and requested a more detailed consideration at the next meeting.
9.	PERFORMANCE MONITORING
9.1	Student data report and governor dashboard. YFD presented a summary of the student data report. CG noted that recruitment is a continuing concern and he wondered about the approach to international students. YFD confirmed that the small number of international students are very satisfied with their course and student experience. She noted that UCR considers the American and Canadian overseas market as a good potential opportunity. GC expressed his concern about the impact of the variance to budget target as well as the low numbers on some courses. PG noted that the team are working hard to mitigate the potential financial impact by maximising retention and that the ongoing tight control of non-pay as well as some staffing savings should mean that the overall budget outcome will be much closer to the bottom line. PG acknowledged the concern on student numbers and low number on some courses. He explained that he considers the progress on curriculum development should now start to see progress soon with the refreshed offer. MC also acknowledged the concern and gave assurance that it is not something that will be allowed to drift with no end point but that the expectation is that the refreshed offer will translate into numbers. GL confirmed that the shortfall in numbers can be mitigated and managed this year. GC thanked PG and MC for the assurance that this is a key area of focus.
10.	COLLEGE STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER AND KPIs
10.1	Review HE related risks: MC presented the risk review report. Members received the report for information and assurance.
11.	ITEMS FOR APPROVAL
11.1	RESOLVED: The Fitness to Study/Practice Policy is approved.
12	ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/ASSURANCE
12.1	The HE Academic Board meeting minutes were received for information
12.2	The UCR Board of Studies Meeting minutes were received for information
12.3	The HE Student Complaints Monitoring Report were received for information
12.4	The HESES Return was not yet available and would be circulated by email for assurance once available.
13.	MATTERS TO ESCALATE TO RISK REGISTER/REPORT
13.1	The meeting agreed to report the following key points to the Board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The branding presentation that can be shared with all governors for information • The improved NSS survey results for 2020-21 • The positive enhancements to the student voice approach to support the continued drive to improve student engagement and experience • Recruitment is under budget for 2021-22 and so remains a key risk for UCR, with the positive progress on curriculum development and branding project yet to see an impact on recruitment. • Recruitment and retention of staff also remains a key risk not just for UCR but college-wide. • The outcome of the government response to the Augar review remains a risk on fee levels.

14.	DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS
14.1	It was agreed to hold a Teams Meeting to consider the Self- Evaluation Report and Quality Improvement Plan in mid-January, with the date to be confirmed outside the meeting.
14.2	The date of the next full Committee meeting was confirmed as Thursday 10 March 2022 at 2pm.
15.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
15.1	There was no other business reported to the meeting.

The meeting closed at 4.45pm

Approved as a correct record: 10 March 2022