

UCP HE Shadow Council Minutes of Board Meeting

Date	Thursday 14 th November 2019
Time	4.30pm
Location	Boardroom, Peterborough Regional College, PE1 4DZ
Present	Professor Sir Les Ebdon CBE DL (Chair), Claire Bowes (Staff), Richard Greensmith (HE Student Officer), OBE Dr Mary Kiernan, Rachel Nicholls (Acting Principal PRC), Matthew Bradbury, Dr Anne Devlin
In attendance	Liz Knight (Interim Chief Operating Officer and Academic Director – UCP) James Larnar (Deputy Director – UCP) Roy Bird (Finance Director) Peter Walker (Deputy Principal, PRC) Sherrill Duberry (Minutes)
Apologies	Steven Illingsworth, Mark Woods, Joanne Rotondo.

Decisions taken at the Board meeting held on 14th November 2019

Ref	Decisions
3	The minutes of the last meeting were approved.
8	UCP to have its own Prevent risk assessment in place.
11	To look at Citizens UK as part of our investment plan.

Actions arising from the Board meeting held on 14th November 2019

Ref	Actions
8	LK to update Prevent risk assessment to be reviewed at the next meeting. LK to circulate the link to the Prevent online training.
9	JL to update the recruitment action plan and circulate to the Council.
14	LK to update and circulate the risk register.
16	RN to look at the feasibility of using Board IQ for Shadow Council papers.

1. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies noted as above. It was noted that the Council would be quorate on the arrival Matthew Bradbury who joined the meeting at item 4.

2. Declarations of Interest

Professor Sir Les Ebdon; Governor, PRC Corporation Board.
Dr Mary Kiernan; Governor, PRC Corporation Board.
Rachel Nicholls; PRC Acting Principal and Director of UCP.
Peter Walker; Director of UCP and PRC Deputy Principal.
Mark Woods – Trustee of Peterborough United Foundation Trust

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the last meeting on 18/09/19 were circulated, reviewed and approved as accurate.

Actions from the Previous Meeting

- Ref 3. New Council members are still required.
- Ref 4. PRC agreed the use of Case Studies for the UoP submission.
- Ref 6. This was discussed and evidence presented in item 10.
- Ref 10. LK discussed this within item 11 and was 0.2 of the HE Academic Lead salary.
- Ref 11. This was complete as stated in item 6.
- Ref 14. This was undertaken and discussed in item 14.

Matters Arising

The correct figure for student numbers presented at the last meeting for 2018/19 was 478 not 408 and the documents have been updated to reflect this.

4. Chair's Welcome and Update

Joint Venture

ARU confirmed on 13/11/19 that they wish to dissolve the Joint Venture (JV) and surrender the UCP building, hopefully within the next 4 weeks. Following completion of the documentation, UCP will become a wholly owned subsidiary of PRC. Thanks were noted to PRC solicitors, Eversheds for their input into resolving this.

It was noted that we will continue as a Shadow Council until the JV is dissolved and then a full council will be required which will involve appointing new members. The Chair offered thanks to RN & PW for their work around the JV.

University of Peterborough Project

PRC were told by the CPCA that they were not eligible to bid for the UoP project and that they had "mis-represented" themselves. PRC's solicitors, Eversheds, have drafted a letter (which is subject to approval), challenging this and the wording on the portal as they feel they were wrongfully excluded from the bidding process.

Office for Students (OfS)

As a new provider, UCP are under enhanced monitoring. We have informed the OfS about PRC's forthcoming merger with NCS. We also submitted the self-evaluation of governance (paper 6) on 17/10/19. We confirmed that UCP would adopt PRC's Quality Improvement Plan for recruiting new HND students; we have not agreed to accept any conditions pertaining to this. This means that UCP and PRC will not be submitting two separate registrations for 2020/21. A review is being undertaken by Price Waterhouse (PWC), however we have no timeframe or cost for this. The OfS and PWC request was issued on 08/11/19.

LK attended OfS training on 12/11/19 and noted that communication with the OfS goes to a generic email box, not to an individual. The deadline to upload information to the OfS for PRC and UCP is 22/11/19 and a meeting took place today to discuss how to articulate how we are governing PRC and UCP as the JV is still in place. It was noted that we can only notify the OfS of changes when they happen and that the position paper for the OfS will report on the situation at that point. We must be mindful to comply with OfS deadlines and be transparent about our changing scenario. It was recommended that this should be reflected in the risk register. It was felt that the student experience must remain the same throughout the changes and that UCP should have a clear strategy for this.

Merger

The OfS have been informed of the forthcoming merger. A HE workstream is in place addressing a number of areas. It was confirmed that UCP students will have input into this via the public consultation which is planned for January 2020. A plan is also in place to involve students and staff via internal communications. It was recognised that student input is important.

5. Terms of Reference and UCP Status

The Terms of Reference were agreed by the PRC Board on 17/10/19 as we expected to remain in the JV in Shadow Council form for longer. The ToRs are to be uploaded to OfS and the Council agreed they are happy to accept them as they are and anticipate that they will be updated when the JV is dissolved.

6. Self-Evaluation

The Shadow Council self-evaluation has been uploaded to the OfS and updated to include clearer formatting and a clear Chair's Foreword with a comprehensive overview of our current status to ensure that the OfS are aware of the governance and management oversight.

Individual self-assessments developed by the Leadership Foundation have been undertaken by Council members. This has highlighted areas for further training and engagement and an action plan including further training and plans to meet with UCP student and staff has been put into place to address these.

A previous criticism was that the Shadow Council meeting dates were frequently changed due to other commitments; a clear schedule of meetings is now in place and is being adhered to. In addition a HE Glossary has been developed and the OfS weekly roundup was signposted.

The self-evaluation process is ongoing and will need to be revisited. The Chair thanked LK for her work on this.

7. Intervention and Monitoring Requirements

The OfS have been clear that they will not regulate in the same way as HEFCE. A condition of registration is that providers must meet deadlines, provide information and pay fees on time. Penalties are incurred when deadlines are not met therefore we must be mindful of OfS regulatory advice and guidance. It was noted that we don't have a clear payment schedule from the OfS and this was raised at the training attended by LK on 12/11/19. The Council were made aware of the communication issued to all HE providers on 21/10/19 by the OfS.

Reportable events must be submitted to the OfS on the extranet and are :-

- A change on the register
- Change of Accountable Officer or Chair
- Inaccuracy on the register
- Financial viability
- Redundancy programme
- Audit failure, closure of course / subject area or campus
- Changes in partnership relationships (sub-contractual or validated)
- Modes of study
- Loss of accreditation by a PSRB
- Merger
- Change of ownership or control
- Any other material event or circumstance

8. Prevent

The Prevent evidence log was circulated and reviewed. Ongoing monitoring takes place around Prevent and LK spoke with the OfS today regarding how we are meeting the requirements.

The Council members all confirmed they are aware of and understand the Prevent agenda and a risk assessment has been undertaken. In order to ensure that the Council remains current with Prevent advice, mandatory training is provided and LK is to circulate the link for the training to the Council members.

The Council recommended that UCP have their own Prevent risk assessment and action plan separate to PRC as the guidance for HE and FE is different. This will use the template of the PRC ones but will reflect HE guidance and wording. LK is to action this and bring for recommendation by the Council at the next meeting.

9. Student Numbers

Student numbers were circulated. We currently have 441.50 FTE plus 7.75FTE January starts. These numbers are less than the figure presented to the OfS (450) and less than for budget (442). Reasons for this include that we did not meet recruitment numbers; partly due to ARU closing a number of streams and us losing students who did not progress to the next year. We also did not have our Framework pathways approved which meant that some students who intermitted were not able to move to Framework Awards. All students have been met with and options have been discussed.

Year end forecast based on historical retention is 403 although we are hopeful this will be higher due to the interventions being put into place. We have 41 applications for 20/21 which is up on this time in the previous 3 years. It was noted that to meet the end of year numbers for 2019/20 submitted to the OfS we would need 100% retention which is unlikely.

Retention is key and intervention meetings are taking place to highlight at risk students and to put action plans in place to support them. We are also monitoring retention by course. The Student Support team are tracking student attendance closely and it was noted that they have been pro-active in working to retain students.

Recruitment and attendance monitoring also takes place at the Admissions and Widening Access Subcommittee meetings. A recruitment action plan was circulated and recommended by the Council with the amendment of changing the risk for points 3, 4 & 5 from red to amber. JL is to update and re-circulate to the Council, it will then go to the Finance and General Purposes Committee (FGP) for approval. It was recommended for us to upload the action plan to OfS with the caveat that it is subject to approval by the FGP.

A “Keep in Touch” strategy for students on intermission has been approved by Student Council and put into place. Targets have been set for student progression from PRC to UCP and we are working with Heads of Faculty to improve from 50 PRC students last year to 103 this year. Our Marketing team have been going into tutorials at PRC, running taster sessions for PRC students and giving parent talks at PRC Open Days. Marketing strategies to increase January recruitment are in place, which include social media, website updates, Open Days and outreach events. The Council recommended that we may need to look at course provision where numbers are low and are historically low.

The HESA return deadline is 10/12/19 and the MIS team are working through this now. The Council agreed that approval of this once complete could be by Chair’s Action.

10. Financial Implications and Accounts

Whilst current student numbers expressed as FTEs are 39 less than budget, the finance forecast shows that a significant proportion of the loss of income (£331k) will be offset by savings that can be made across most areas of expenditure (£311k). The majority of savings come from a reduction in payroll (£71k) and a reduction in non pay costs (£167k). The remaining savings are a direct result of reduced student numbers (£73k). This results in a reduced contribution to PRC of £20k and every effort will be made to ensure the same level of contribution. There may be opportunity to offset this to a neutral position based on current risks and opportunities. ARU agreeing the franchise fee and confirmation from the OfS of the registration fee are examples of this. These will be assessed as part of the forecast to be prepared in January 2020. It was noted that the contingency for withdrawals is built into the income.

11. Academic Director's Report

OfS

A report by the OfS evidencing that students who receive unconditional offers do less well than those who have conditional offers was circulated. It was noted that UCP have never used unconditional offers for those who had not completed their qualifications. The analysis reports have been shared with PRC so that their Careers Adviser and other staff offer the correct advice to students.

Outreach Events and Impacts

The success of our outreach events are continually monitored as part of our Access and Participation Plan (APP) and our Admissions and Access Widening Sub-committee. Our HE Academic Lead is evaluating the impact of our APP and has been included within our APP investment. UCP are seeing more and more school leavers starting a degree with us and this is a key target market area to achieve student growth. We are working with 39 different secondary schools and colleges, offering outreach events such as HE days, Careers Fairs, school visits, taster days, HE talks, Student Finance talks, mature student talks and transferable skills sessions etc.

We are also running "inreach" events at PRC, including taster sessions, Student Finance talks, going into tutorials and offering parent talks at PRC Open Days and evening events.

Peterborough United Football Club

Peterborough United are keen to commence a formal partnership with UCP that will result in the recruitment of between 15 and 20 degree students each year. Students would infill into the BSc (Hons) Sport and Exercise Science degree. Eventually more degrees may be requested, however, the football timetable dictates when classes would need to be scheduled. The one day that needs to be left for playing is Wednesday if the students are to participate in leagues such as BUCs. It is hoped that the first intake will be in September 2020. LK is formulating a business plan and noted that these students would require a bespoke learning agreement. It was also recommended that low income bursaries would not be available to these students as they would have their kit / transport paid for and would also have enhanced work experience opportunities as part of the fee. The Council were supportive of this new partnership.

Quality Assurance

Teaching Reviews have taken place over the last 2 weeks and LK and RG have also been meeting with students for feedback. Feedback from students has been positive. It was noted by the Council that feedback from Criminology students was positive and they praised the Criminology team for turning the course around.

Module Evaluation Surveys (MES) are taking place for ARU students from 11/11/19 and our own versions for validated students will commence on 18/11/19. It is hoped that we can be more pro-active now that we are running our own MES.

Professional Statutory Regulatory Bodies

The Chartered Management Institute (CMI) visited UCP today and it went well with the only action being for us to start using the Hub (we currently don't have access.)

Community Engagements

The Integrated Research Communities project is still underway and the final area of research will focus on 10 employers and their perceptions of workforce integration and the challenges they face to achieve this. Positive feedback is being received from a government level and we are ensuring that the original focus and parameters of the research bid is maintained. This work has already offered excellent engagement with schools and their social science A Level students.

UCP is a key partner in Citizens UK. Following a successful launch event training has taken place for both staff and students. A variety of organisations are involved and the Council recommended that we should look at this as part of our investment plan.

OfS Challenge Fund

The progress on the OfS Challenge Fund will be reported on at the January meeting as the first few months have focussed on staff recruitment and the recruitment of student employer ambassadors.

12. Validation Agreement

This has been signed and is valid for 6 years. Moving forward we are looking at possible validated partners or possible NDAP. We will also have a franchised agreement with ARU to allow “teach out.”

13. Academic Board

Minutes from the HE Academic Board were circulated and reviewed. RG shared with the Council how welcoming LK made the meeting for the students which meant that they engaged with it and also other meetings such as SELT. Key points to note are:-

- Additional student and staff support for CANVAS and use of the new IT systems was requested. The VLE Manager has visited sessions, supported individual students and was available on a drop-in basis for the first 4 weeks of the semester. Staff training and support is also being coordinated between the HE Quality Learning and Teaching Lead and the VLE Manager. Extensive training was offered prior to the start of the semester when systems went live.
- The NSS Criminology action plan submitted to ARU was revised to become a ‘Plan on a Page’ to ensure it was memorable, understandable for students and captured in a way that ensured enhancement for all students. This is being monitored via the course AMR process, staff appraisal process and HE Academic Board oversight.
- Library issues were discussed which included compliance with copyright requirements and also the on-going support of the designated librarian to ensure effective access and support for validated programmes. Semester 2 uploads and development of reading lists will need to commence soon.

14. Risk Register

The risk register was reviewed and it was recommended by the Council that the merger and third party reputational damage be added. It was recommended to leave in point 12 whilst the JV is still in place. Retention and recruitment risk are to be assessed separately and that the UCP risk register should focus on student protection not financial risk as financial risk is carried by PRC. LK is to action and circulate to the Council for recommendation to the PRC Board.

15. Date and time of the next meetings

16/01/20 at 4.30pm

02/04/20 at 4.30pm

24/06/20 at 4.30pm

Strategy day to be arranged.

16. AOB

RN to look into the feasibility of using Board IQ software for Shadow Council meetings.

DRAFT