

CONFIRMED

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors held at 9.00 am on Friday 17th May 2024, 1887 Room, Wrexham University

Present: Dr Leigh Griffin (Chair)
Paul Barlow
Richard Campbell
Professor Martin Chambers
Dr Sarah Dubberley
Maisie Head
Professor Maria Hinfelaar
Professor Sandra Jowett
Sally Lambah
Diane McCarthy
David Subacchi
Will Naylor
Richard Thomas
Fabrizio Trifiro
Maureen Wain
Liam Wynne

Officers: David Clarke (*Clerk to the Board*)
Professor Richard Day (*PVC for Research*)
David Elcock (*Executive Director of Finance*)
Professor Ieuan Ellis (*Interim PVC Strategic Change Projects*)
Pete Gibbs (*Executive Director of HR*)
Lynda Powell (*Executive Director of Operations*)
Dr Simon Stewart (*Dean of FSLs*)

In attendance: Nina Ruddle (*Head of Public Policy and Engagement*) for item BG23.92
Joy Morton (*University Secretary and General Counsel*) for items BG23.95 and BG23.102
Dr Ian Barwick (*Head of OptIC Business and Services*) for item BG23.94
James Dawson (*Director of SPSA*) for items BG23.97 and BG23.98

Apologies: Dr Karen Heald
Claire Homard
Jayne Owen

BG23.84	Welcome and apologies	
	The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting and apologies were noted.	
BG23.85	Declarations of conflict of interest	

	<p>Reported: Richard Thomas declared an interest in relation to the item on Academic Partnerships (Minute BG23.99 refers). Richard reported that he was currently undertaking paid consultancy work with one prospective academic partner that had engaged with the University. No discussion or decision on the partnership was being taken at this meeting; it was reported that the prospective partnership with Oxford Business College had not yet progressed to the due diligence stage, and the paid consultancy was due to end within six weeks. Members therefore agreed to note the conflict and no further action was taken.</p> <p>Resolved: To NOTE the declaration of conflict of interest</p>	
BG23.86	Minutes of the last meeting	
	<p>Received: Minutes of the meeting held on 8th March 2024</p> <p>Reported: The Board considered the draft minutes of the previous meeting. In relation to Academic Partnerships (Minute BG23.67) it was reported by the Chair of Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC) that the Academic Partnerships Procedure had been approved subject to some clarifications regarding the Board’s role in approving all academic partnerships, as well as definitions of risk and the inclusion of financial information when presenting proposals for prospective new partnerships. These clarifications had been discussed with the Quality Team and an updated procedure would be received at the upcoming meeting of AQSC.</p> <p>Resolved: To APPROVE the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting.</p>	
BG23.87	Action log	
	<p>Received: Board of Governors action log</p> <p>Reported: The Board received the log of actions arising from previous meetings and noted that all matters were now considered closed. In relation to an action regarding the measurement of ‘learning gain’ to inform reporting on attainment and completion (Minute BG23.37 refers) it was noted that James Dawson (Director of SPSA) would contact Will Naylor outside of the meeting to discuss possible ways of capturing.</p> <p>Resolved: To NOTE the action log</p>	
BG23.88	Chair’s report	

	<p>Reported: The Chair presented a verbal report on matters including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Migratory Advisory Committee (MAC) had published the report of its review into the Graduate Route. After much concern about the possible outcomes from the review within the sector, the recommendation was to keep the Graduate Route in place in its current form. While this was viewed as positive news for HEI’s and international student recruitment, UK Government was yet to respond and concern remained that the recommendation may not be accepted. • Sector discourse continued to be dominated by concern at the financial position of many HEIs, with a number of Universities recently announcing compulsory redundancies. It was suggested that if and when a University faced bankruptcy, Wrexham may be wise to consider how it would choose to respond and position itself within the media narrative and fallout. Members also highlighted analysis by PricewaterHouseCoopers that predicted a 20% reduction in international student recruitment would push 80% of UK HEIs into deficit. While Wrexham currently found itself in a relatively favourable financial position, the importance of being able to look ahead and make difficult decisions when in a strong position was noted. • Graduation Ceremonies would be held at the University on 29th, 30th, and 31st May 2024. A number of Governors would be attending ceremonies as well as the Honorary Fellows Dinner on 30th. • The Chair had attended a recent CUC event in London, focused on the student experience. The Chair highlighted the change in pressures faced by students in recent years driven by increases to the cost of living, with the vast majority of students now needing to undertake paid work alongside studies which resulted in conflicting time pressures on University study. A recent WonkHE article was cited which had highlighted increasing numbers of students in full-time work, alongside University courses. Members noted that the recent WU social prescribing project had asked students “What matters?”, and the body of internal evidence confirmed that finance was the main concern for Wrexham students too. <p>Resolved: To NOTE the report</p>	
BG23.89	Students’ Union report	
	<p>Received: Students’ Union Report</p> <p>Reported: The new SU President presented a report on recent SU activity, highlighting the following key points:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marc Caldecott had been appointed Interim Chief Executive Officer until summer 2025. • Freya Groom would begin her term as SU Vice President in June 2024 • Maisie Head would begin her term as President early, following the early departure of Amy Anglesea who had recently taken a new job. Maisie’s manifesto for the 2024/25 was noted. • Members were pleased to note the success of the netball and hockey teams who had achieved promotion in their respective leagues. The importance of the “My Body, My Choice” campaign was noted, as well as the SU’s active presence on NUS Cymru. • The 2023/24 SU Awards had been a huge success, with over 130 attendees. Members were pleased to note the great year for societies at Wrexham, with healthy increases in numbers and the amount of student engagement. <p>The Board thanked the SU President and colleagues for the report, and wished to put on record its congratulations and best wishes to Marc, Freya and Amy as they all began their respective new roles. Members noted the wide breadth of activity from the SU, and highlighted the healthy mix of ‘fun’ and social activity alongside more serious campaigns and representation matters.</p> <p>Resolved: To NOTE the report</p>	
BG23.90	Vice Chancellor’s report	
	<p>Received: Vice Chancellor’s report</p> <p>Reported: The Committee received a report from the Vice Chancellor which highlighted the following matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A recent meeting of Universities Wales had provided opportunity to meet with new Welsh Ministers following the election of Vaughn Gething as First Minister and the subsequent cabinet reshuffle. It was reported that Lynn Neagle, the new Minister for Education had shown an impressive knowledge of the sector and its challenges. • Further to the previous discussion on the MAC review report (Minute BG23.88 refers) it was noted that in addition to the recommendation to retain the Graduate Route, the report also made recommendations on better collection of data on employment destinations of international graduates, and the strengthening of work around the Agent Quality Framework. • It was reported that the University had written to HEFCW regarding the Institutional Risk Review (IRR), a bi-annual process to risk-assess Welsh HEIs and monitor governance, management, strategic direction and sustainability in the 	

	<p>Welsh HE sector. HEFCW had indicated that IRR positions of all Welsh HEIs would be reviewed prior to the launch of CTER later in 2024.</p> <p>Resolved: To NOTE the report</p>	
BG23.91	Vice Chancellor and Deputy Vice Chancellor appointment	
	<p>Reported: The Chair presented a verbal report on the appointment to senior posts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor Joe Yates would join the University officially as Vice Chancellor in August 2024. Professor Yates was already engaging positively with the Chair, Vice Chancellor, and members of the Executive and demonstrating significant enthusiasm and intent for the role. • Final interviews for the position of Deputy Vice Chancellor were held on 10th May 2024, the conclusion of a lengthy process supported by Perrett Laver. From an exceptionally strong field, the panel’s recommended candidate was Dr Paul Davies. Dr Davies was currently Dean of Faculty at the University of South Wales and the panel had been particularly impressed by his strengths, including in academic quality and widening participation background. In line with the process for appointment of senior postholders, the Board was required to formally approve the appointment of Dr Davies. <p>Members thanked the Chair and all involved in the recruitment to both posts, noting the strength of the processes and the quality of support provided by Perrett Laver. There was a confidence in both appointments which members felt would position Wrexham strongly going forwards.</p> <p>Resolved: To APPROVE the appointment of Dr Paul Davies as Deputy Vice Chancellor. To NOTE the report</p>	
BG23.92	Spotlight: Civic agenda and Partnership Strategy	
	<p><i>Nina Ruddle (Head of Public Policy Engagement) attended for this item</i></p> <p>Reported: The Head of Public Policy Engagement delivered a presentation which showcased work in creation and delivery of the University’s Civic Mission. The presentation highlighted a huge amount of work and breadth of activity with key points summarised here:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Civic Mission and Partnership Strategy had been co-created following extensive engagement with partners and communities, using a breadth of evidence, data and insights, demonstrating a commitment to help bring the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 to life. Ultimately, the University’s Civic Mission aimed to tackle social inequality across North Wales. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to being central to Wrexham University’s mission and values, civic engagement was a key focus of Welsh Government and the new HE regulator CTER. The University was focused on how it could truly serve its communities and connect with people and place, through being agile and responsive to the needs of the region, and close partnership working to deliver outcomes. • Priority themes identified within the Strategy were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Leadership, governance and whole-system working (across the public, private, and third sectors) ○ Building community resilience ○ Keeping well • With regards to leadership and the whole-system working approach, it was noted that the University was heavily involved as a key stakeholder in a range of strategic boards, networks and forums across the region. The University was well placed to take a lead role as CTER looked to focus on a regional approach to civic engagement and partnerships, helping to maximise resource and impact on communities in North Wales. • Some key successes were highlighted, including the growth and impact of the Children’s University and work in partnership with the ACE Hub Wales for Wrexham to become the first TrACE (Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences) informed University in the UK. <p>The Board thanked the Head of Public Policy and Engagement for highlighting the range of activity which was of huge importance to the University. Members noted that the work in this area was crucial to Wrexham’s position as an anchor institution within North Wales and being a truly civic, nationally-leading University on this agenda. During the discussion, members noted a number of points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantifying and evidencing the impact of work in this area was critical. Strong KPIs were needed to enable progress to be judged and demonstrate impact to stakeholders externally. Qualitative evidential pieces such as video footage and case studies were important, alongside more quantitative measures of outcomes. • Work in this area, including initiatives such as the Children’s University, was helping to future-proof the University by rooting it within communities, engaging with partners and future generations. <p>Resolved: To NOTE the report</p>	
BG23.93	Towards 2030: University Vision and Strategy	
	<p>Received: Update on the University Vision and Strategy to 2030</p> <p>Reported: The PVC Strategic Change Projects presented a report on progress regarding development of the new University Vision and Strategy to 2030. It was reported that</p>	

	<p>elements of the Vision and Strategy would be external-facing through the University website, including high-level statements on mission, vision, core values and themes, high-level goals and academic portfolio strengths. Alongside those external-facing elements more detailed internal documentation would be produced to provide basis for annual business plans, KPI targets, and refreshed strategies for operational delivery of the strategic plan. It was reported that work was underway to take existing corporate KPIs and map them against the new strategic aims and themes, with high-level target-setting for 2024/25. The intention was to continue this work with a Vice Chancellor's Executive Team (VCET) away-day planned later in May 2024.</p> <p>The Board thanked the PVC Strategic Change Projects and colleagues in the Executive for work in leading the strategy development to date. It was noted that the new Vice Chancellor would take post from August 2024, and members viewed it as essential that he was able to provide leadership in shaping the strategy and operational plan that underpinned it. The Board's previously agreed roadmap was to consider and approve the final strategy at its July 2024 meeting. However with the timeline for appointment of new Vice Chancellor now clear, members agreed it would be wise to revisit that original roadmap. It was suggested that, while previous commitments to stakeholders had been made regarding the strategy development and launch, external partners would be supportive of the rationale to delay slightly to allow the incoming Vice Chancellor's input. The Board agreed to consider the next iteration of the strategic framework at its July meeting, with a view to further development and formal approval of the Vision and Strategy and operational planning processes at its meeting in October 2024.</p> <p>Resolved: To NOTE the report To AGREE to the revised timescale for approval</p>	
BG23.98	Fee and Access Plan 2025-2027	
	<p><i>James Dawson, Director of SPSA attended for this item</i></p> <p>Received: Fee and Access Plan 2025-2027</p> <p>Reported: The Director of SPSA presented the University's fee and access plan for 2025-27 which had previously been updated in line with HEFCW guidance and approved by the University's Widening Access Committee and Academic Board. It was reported that the University's objectives, targets, and associated levels of investment in actions being taken to deliver against them would remain as for previous years. It was noted that in authorising the Fee and Access Plan, the Board were being asked to confirm that they agreed to 21 points set out within the document by HEFCW around the levels of assurance received with regards to the plan.</p> <p>Resolved: To APPROVE the Fee and Access Plan 2025-2027</p>	
BG23.99	Academic Partnerships	

	<p>Received: Update report on Academic Partnerships</p> <p>Reported: The Dean of FSLs presented a report on academic partnerships, as the current member of the Executive with oversight of this area. In presenting the report, the following key points were highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships and International teams had undertaken to develop a joint Partnerships and International Strategy in draft form by the end of June 2024, with the core aim of ensuring partnerships offer mutual benefits closely aligned to the strategic priorities of the University. • A review of existing academic partnerships was underway which would review academic quality as well as the financial position of each partner, including any debt owed to the University. It was noted that VCET would monitor risk levels of partnerships and performance against criteria in close work with the Partnerships and Finance teams, which would likely lead to termination of certain partners. • It was reported that early discussion had taken place with three new prospective partners. One institution, Beacon (China), had been identified as high risk at the outset and would not progress further. Two institutions, Oxford Business College and Eastwood Park Training, would progress to a due diligence assessment before next steps were considered in line with the Academic Partnerships Procedure. • Discussions were taking place with regards to a joint degree apprenticeship bid with Coleg Cambria, and curriculum development with Grwp Llandrillo Menai. Both were existing partners and developments were viewed as positive, mutual collaboration with regional partners. <p>Resolved: To NOTE the report</p>	
BG23.100	QAA Action Plan	
	<p>Received: Quality Assurance Agency Review Action Plan</p> <p>Reported: The PVC Strategic Change Projects presented the updated QAA Action Plan, reporting that a significant number of actions within the plan were now fully completed and all remaining actions were on track. Since the last update to Board two actions had been completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External review of the effectiveness of Academic Board (final report considered by Academic Board at its meeting on 15th May 2024) 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External review and report on analysis of factors which contributed to the QAA Review outcomes (received and noted by the Board of Governors at its meeting on 8th March 2024). <p>It was noted that this action plan was used as the focus for discussion in termly monitoring meetings with HEFCW, which had been positive. In relation to action 12.2 regarding academic partnerships as a standing item at Board, it was noted that while this action was complete, officers and governors continued to work together to develop and refine a consistent format of reporting to both Board and AQSC.</p> <p>Resolved: To NOTE the report</p>	
BG23.101	Campus 2025	
	<p>Received: Campus 2025 update</p> <p>Reported: The Executive Director of Operations and Executive Director of Finance presented a progress report on Campus 2025 developments. It was reported that great progress was being made on projects across campus. A Student Accommodation Procurement Strategy Workshop had taken place with a view to developing a strategy and scope options for the build and funding of new student accommodation. Previous Board approval had been given for the first stage of the project which included the design and planning application, funded by Wrexham Gateway Partnership. A tender process was underway with a view to being awarded in September 2024. The second stage of the process would be the design and build of a new building, which would require further consideration and approval at a later date. During the discussion members noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £28.1m had been invested into the campus to date under the Campus 2025 project. Next stages of work including the EEOC, CIA, HEIQ Phase 2b, and the local area network replacement; it was noted that funding had already been secured for all projects, and all were considered affordable, fully costed and included on the University’s balance sheet. There was a confidence that all would be delivered on time and to budget. With regards to the second stage of the Student Accommodation project which would include the design and build of a new building, it was reported that the University did not have the required funding and there was no appetite to build using existing or borrowed University funds. It was reported that the University was exploring the market and potential partners that would fund the development, an approach which the Board supported. <p>The Board thanked the Executive Director of Operations and the Executive Director of Finance for the report. Members noted the huge amount and breadth of activity, and highlighted the excellent leadership of the delivery of the Campus 2025 plan.</p>	

	<p>Resolved: To NOTE the report</p>	
BG23.102	Corporate Risk Management	
	<p><i>Joy Morton, University Secretary and General Counsel attended for this item</i></p> <p>Received: Corporate Risk Management update</p> <p>Reported: The University Secretary and General Counsel provided an update on progress regarding the reporting of corporate risk management at the University. It was reported that Audit and Risk Committee would consider new reporting templates at its meeting in June, and members noted that Risk would now be a standing item on the agenda of all University committees. It was suggested that the reporting would be clearer to all audiences if the likelihood, and impact scoring was included within the template.</p> <p>Resolved: To NOTE the report</p>	
BG23.103	Academic Board	
	<p>Reported: The Vice Chancellor provided a verbal report on matters arising from the meeting of Academic Board held on 15th May 2024. It was reported that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effectiveness review of Academic Board had been completed, with a number of recommendations made which were in the process of being considered and implemented. • Academic Board had approved a revised Assessment Policy, which had involved consultation with both staff and students. <p>Resolved: To NOTE the report</p>	
BG23.104	Research Degree Awarding Powers	
	<p>Received: QAA RDAPs review panel report</p> <p>Reported: The PVC Research reported that the University had received the final report which reflected the findings of the team appointed by the QAA to provide scrutiny to Wrexham University's application for Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAPs). The report and application would be considered by QAA Board and, if approved, Welsh Government would be informed and final approval would be sought from the Privy Council. It was expected that the University would receive an update on progress by the end of June 2024.</p>	

	<p>Members noted that the report was positive, and commented that it was a great credit to the PVC Research and colleagues.</p> <p>Resolved: To NOTE the report</p>	
BG23.105	Strategy and Finance Committee	
	<p>Received: Report of Strategy and Finance Committee</p> <p>Reported: The Board received a report of the meeting of Strategy and Finance Committee held on 26th April 2024, noting that the full minutes of the meeting had been made available separately.</p> <p>Resolved: To NOTE the report</p>	
BG23.106	People and Culture Committee	
	<p>Received: Report of People and Culture Committee</p> <p>Reported: The Board received a report on the meeting of People and Culture Committee held on 25th April 2024, noting that the full minutes had been made available separately. The Committee had considered the following policies and procedures which had undergone their three-yearly review, and recommended their approval to the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grievance Procedure for Senior Postholders • Disciplinary Procedure for Senior Postholders <p>Resolved: To NOTE the report To APPROVE the updated Grievance Procedure for Senior Postholders, and Disciplinary Procedure for Senior Postholders</p>	
BG23.107	Audit and Risk Committee	
	<p>Received: Report of Audit and Risk Committee</p> <p>Reported: The Board received a report on the meeting of Audit and Risk Committee held on 21st March 2024, noting that the full minutes had been made available separately.</p>	

	<p>Resolved: To NOTE the report</p>	
BG23.108	Minutes of Subsidiary Company meetings	
	<p>Resolved: To NOTE the minutes of subsidiary company meetings which had been made available separately.</p>	
BG23.109	Board and Committee meeting dates 2024-25	
	<p>Resolved: To NOTE the scheduled dates and times of Board and Committee meeting dates in 2024/25.</p>	