



UNIVERSITIES
WEST MIDLANDS

Strategic Plan 2011-13

Preserve the core: Stimulate the progress

1. Executive Summary

This strategic plan sets out the mission, strategic goals and objectives that will underpin the work of Universities WM in 2011/13. Universities WM is a not-for-profit membership organisation working in support of the twelve universities and university colleges in the West Midlands. Universities WM fosters strong partnerships and collaborative solutions to deliver the group's strategic goals. The secretariat of Universities WM works closely with the Strategic Board of Vice Chancellors and Principals to identify priorities and the most efficacious means of delivery.

Membership

Aston University	Keele University
University of Birmingham	Newman University College
Birmingham City University	Staffordshire University
University College Birmingham	University of Warwick
Coventry University	University of Wolverhampton
Harper Adams University College	University of Worcester

Our **Mission** is to be a positive force for influence, innovation and investment. This will be evidenced through the recognition of Universities WM as the partner of choice for those seeking collaborative engagement with the universities and university colleges of the West Midlands.

Our **Strategic Goals** are to:

- a. Make the case with key influencers for further investment to enhance the universities' and university colleges' positive impact on economic growth and social cohesion
- b. Empower senior university representatives through the identification, communication and implementation of the board's strategic positions

These goals will be addressed through the prioritisation of the following **Objectives**:

- i. Facilitate and maintain collective and regular engagement on key policy matters through authentic and effective communication, representation and networking
- ii. Gain recognition - from those who influence the higher education environment and through evidence based communication - for the collective impact members have on economic performance and social cohesion
- iii. Develop task and finish forums within which university associates and representatives can share intelligence, commission analysis and progress opportunities
- iv. Identify, evaluate and signpost opportunities which bring benefit to members and their constituencies through collaborative action
- v. Broker significant collaborative solutions with strategic partners and clients in identified and validated areas of comparative advantage

2. Governance and Organisation

- i. The Strategic Board of institutional heads meets approximately every 3 months and hosts at least 4 ambassadorial events a year to work with key influencers, including national leaders, on areas of strategic importance. In addition peer to peer board meetings are held twice a year to facilitate open discussion on strategic issues and developments.
- ii. The Strategic Board has an elected Chair and it is proposed that this office runs for two years from July 2011 to ensure greater continuity. The Chair of the Strategic Board – until 1st July 2013 Professor David Eastwood, University of Birmingham - oversees the work of the secretariat. The 2013/15 chair will be elected in the 1Q2013.
- iii. It is proposed that the chair will be supported by board members acting as sponsors of developments to reflect particular expertise and insights. This fit for purpose model will also ensure wider engagement. In addition one to one programme review meetings between board members and the Executive Officer will be held annually.
- iv. The Universities WM secretariat team and their key roles are:

Richard Riley, Executive Officer

Business planning, staff and finance management, Board and Chair support and reporting, HEFCE, BIS and other strategic body liaison, strategic partner networking and representation, think tank facilitation, negotiation and commissioning, client relationship management, signposting and brokering of opportunities

Helen Carvell, Communications Officer

Office Manager and administrative support for Executive Officer and EBEG Group, support for board meetings, Communications programme lead, e-forum support and Website enhancement, Procurement and Internships task and finish groups coordination and research, partner networking and signposting

- v. The secretariat will be augmented with the engagement of associates with particular expertise and experience and the use of commissioning to undertake one off analysis and research to inform developments.
- vi. Universities West Midlands has two standing committees drawn from among its membership to support common interests and collaborative activity.

Employer and Business Engagement Group (EBEG)

Chair: Phil Extance, Aston University

This group brings together those with the main responsibility in member institutions for innovation, enterprise and entrepreneurship activity and engagements with the business community.

Health Liaison Group

Chair: Louise Jones, Worcester University

This Deans of Health group provides an opportunity for those responsible for health related programmes to share insights and intelligence and identify common challenges to be addressed with the Strategic Board.

- vii. A range of Task and Finish groups are formed and terminated to address key development priorities arising from the Strategic Board. In 2010/11 these have focused on Procurement Services, European Funding and Internships. The Internships task and finish group is now self-sustaining and will be supported through a Universities WM on line forum.
- viii. The secretariat liaises with and advises two established and effective regional HEI groups addressing EU Funding and Careers and Employability. The WM European Research and Innovation group has emerged from the AWM committee with the region's HEIs taking the lead and establishing new terms of reference reflecting the need to focus on 'the art of the possible' and the associated barriers and opportunities. The heads of careers following a review in 2010 renewed their WM University Careers Services group and this has become a strong forum for sharing good practice and liaising with regional business representatives.

3. Priorities and Values: *More with Less: Less is More*

The following priority areas and activities resulted from a review of 2009/10 and the 2011 one to one meetings between Strategic Board members and the Executive Officer.

i. Economic prosperity of the West Midlands and our role in growth strategy

Communication plan to convey the impact of member institutions – bi-annual conference
 Inward Investment – commission profiling exercise in conjunction with employers and inward investment teams – pilot with Deans of Engineering and EEF/Engineering UK
 Innovation Alliance (Science City/Clusters/IATC) collaboration and alignment

ii. Efficiency

Procurement – realise benefits – travel and legal services plus
 European funding – structural and non structural - positioning post regional structures
 Effective liaison, lobbying and representation e.g. All Party Parliamentary Group and Health

iii. Comparative advantage and collaborative solutions

Think tanks: Food and Low Carbon
 Food Consultancy and research – Regional industrial engagement...
 Low Carbon Housing: retrofit programme - HCA and LGA conference and developments

Recent examples

Influencing and Profile Raising

Midlands Business Awards – objective to profile the West Midlands HEIs to the 400+ business people attending the Feb 2012 event. Leading on the coordination of Fashion show event with input from Coventry and BCU students and joined judging panel.

Big Bang event NEC 15th-17th March 2012 – profiling of Engineering programmes and research and Food collaborative solutions – 40,000 plus young people and launch by Prime Minister 15th March. UWM on event steering group.

Deutsche Bank and Marketing Birmingham meeting and subsequent recognition that HEIs are a key partner in, not just supplier to, inward investment process.

Keynote Universities WM presentations currently diarised

Business Voice WM Board June 2011

AGCAS conference Nottingham University Sept 2011

AUA conference Oxford University Sept 2011

Universities WM Values

- Foresight – *intelligence* - the future is here now; tuning into low level signals
- Celebrate diversity – *communication* - no wrong door
- Collaborative solutions – *filter* - win win direct with the client
- Inward Investment model – *on the front foot* – proactive partner not supplier
- Import and Export model – *story telling*- the best into and best out of the region
- Empower doers – *translate* – decisions then action then support
- Build on success – *grow with multiple pay offs* – back winners/play the hand you are dealt