

Universities West Midlands

Business Plan 2009/10

Impact through Collaboration

1. Introduction

Universities West Midlands is a not-for-profit membership association of the thirteen Universities and University Colleges in the West Midlands. The Association was established in 1999 to foster collaboration and build regional partnerships in support of the Universities and University Colleges in the West Midlands.

2. Executive Summary

Our **Mission** is to be a force for influence and change in the West Midlands. This will be evidenced through the recognition of Universities West Midlands as the partner of choice for those seeking regional engagement with the Universities and University Colleges of the West Midlands.

Our **Strategic Goals** are to:

- i. Provide advocacy and promotion through a collective voice to those who influence the environment in which Universities operate both within and outside the region,
- ii. Gain recognition through evidence based communication for the collective impact of the region's Universities on the economic and social performance of the West Midlands,
- iii. Provide a forum and a strategic framework within which senior university representatives on regional, national and international bodies can share insights, progress opportunities and commission research and data analysis,
- iv. Facilitate and maintain collective and regular engagement on policy matters with key regional and national stakeholders,
- v. Identify, evaluate and signpost opportunities which bring benefit to West Midlands' Universities through collaborative regional action,
- vi. Position the Universities as a key stakeholder in the regional European strategy business planning process.

3. Structure and Organisation

Throughout the business planning period 2008-09 the role, structure and organisation of the Association underwent a staged process of critical review and evaluation. The first stage involved a re-examination of the role and remit of the Strategic Board. The Board refocused its direction and established a shared and clear remit to:

- i. Work in partnership to enhance and promote the individual and collective contributions of HEIs to the region,

- ii. Co-ordinate expertise and activity to drive agreed strategic themes of particular significance to the region,
- iii. Communicate West Midlands HEIs' strengths and diversity at the highest levels at home and abroad and
- iv. Be a force for influence and change in the West Midlands.

The second stage of the review process involved a fundamental review of the Universities West Midlands's support and organisational structures to ensure alignment with the Board's strategy. The third and final stage in the review process involved a re-evaluation of membership of West Midlands in Europe.

The recommendations of the review and evaluation process have been implemented as follows:

- The Strategic Board meets approximately every 2 months and hosts at least 5 ambassadorial events a year to work with key influencers, including regional leaders, on areas of strategic importance and in support of regional economic and social objectives.
- The Strategic Board has established the principle of the Chair and Vice Chair being appointed annually with the Vice Chair automatically becoming the Chair for the next one year period. The handover from Chair to the current Vice Chair and selection of the incoming Vice Chair will be completed by 1st June 2010. The Chair and Vice Chair of the strategic Board, currently Professor Madeleine Atkins Coventry University and David Green Worcester University, oversee and support the operation of the secretariat.
- The Strategic Board is reviewing its representation on all key regional Strategic Boards and Committees to ensure alignment with its strategic goals.
- A new Universities West Midlands Secretariat, equipped to deal with the new demands of the Strategic Board, was established in autumn 2009. The Universities West Midlands office has relocated to new premises in Birmingham Science Park Aston to give the association greater visibility and strategic presence.
- The Association 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 our institutions for relationships with the business community. They meet regularly with key stakeholders from AWM, GOWM and the regional business support agencies.

Health Liaison Group

Chair: Louise Jones, Worcester University

This group provides an opportunity for those responsible for health related programmes to meet together and with representatives of regional NHS bodies.

- Membership of West Midlands in Europe WMiE has been resumed for 2009/10 against an agreed Service Level Agreement. The secretariat and representatives will work with the regional Leaders Board and AWM's European Team on the review of regional European policy and engagement.