



Buckinghamshire New University

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Council

Minutes

date: **6 July 2015**
time: **4.00 pm**
location: **Missenden Abbey**

Present:

Christine Beasley (Chair)	Independent Council member
Antony Bellekom	Independent Council member
Rebecca Bunting	Ex officio member and Vice-Chancellor
Joe Collins	President, Students' Union
Baljit Dhillon	Independent Council member
Lori Flynn	Independent Council member
Lauren Griffiths	Elected Senate member
Ian Hillan	Independent Council member
Michael Hipkins (Deputy Chair)	Independent Council member
Steve Hoole	Elected Staff member (PSE)
Maggie James	Independent Council member
Tim Marshall	Co-opted Council member
Ken McCrea	Co-opted Council member
Hilary Mullen	Elected Staff member (Academic)
Jenny Newton	Independent Council member
Simon Opie	Independent Council member
Terri Teasdale	Independent Council member

Officers:

Ellie Smith	Clerk to the Council
Vanessa Pilon	Registrar (Governance)

In attendance:

Ian Plover	Deputy Vice Chancellor
David Bulbeck	Financial Controller
Steve Dewhurst	Director of Strategic Planning & Development
John Cooper	Consultant

Apologies:

Antonia Byatt	Independent Council member
Keith Ryan	Independent Council member
Vicky Vass	Pro Vice Chancellor and Executive Dean DMM

Welcome and Congratulations

15.48 Joe Collins was welcomed to his first meeting of University Council as the Students' Union President for 2015-16.

15.49 Tim Marshall was congratulated on being awarded his OBE for services to the Armed Forces and ex-Service Personnel.

Declaration of potential conflicts of interest

15.50 No declarations were made.

Minutes of the Meetings held on 23 March 2015 and 2 June 2015

15.51 The minutes of the meetings held on 23 March 2015, including the confidential appendix, and 2 June 2015 were signed as a correct record without amendment. The actions from the meetings were noted as either on the agenda or having been completed.

Matters Arising

15.52 No matters arising were noted that were not already included on the agenda.

Chair's Action

Emeritus Professorship, Honorary Awards Committee (C/15/10)

15.53 See Reserved Business.

Vice-Chancellor's Report (C/15/11)

15.54 The report provided briefings in the following areas:

- The University budget for 2015-16
- Staffing in the Senior Management Team and other key appointments
- Faculty organisational changes
- Senate and its committees
- UKVI Licence
- Student business start-ups
- Consultation on proposals for a new national quality assurance system for HE
- UCAV
- Clearing
- Research degrees validation
- Estates issues
- Universities UK
- University Strategy

The Vice Chancellor also commented on the three key elements of the new Higher Education and Science Minister's recent speech on outcomes of the Conservative Party manifesto which were, Widening Participation, Value for Money and a new Teaching Excellence Framework. The latter would be developed around a basket of metrics/indicators defining teaching excellence with further changes in relation to the external examiner system, quality assurance and grade point average in addition to existing qualification indicators. Commentary on measures to monitor value for money and doubling the widening participation rates by 2020 were also provided.

15.55 Members made further comments and sought additional information as follows:

- DHLE measures and how the University can improve its standing
- Differential pricing based on teaching excellence and economically productive citizens
- Entrepreneurial opportunities at Uxbridge as a result of the announcement to build another runway at Heathrow Airport
- Universities are autonomous and can only be incentivised to do something through funding or by legal means
- A government green paper on Higher Education is due out in the autumn
- Support from the sector professional organisations
- The briefing of and support to current international staff and students

15.56 Key Performance Indicators and Balanced Scorecard (KPI's)

The headline position was reported on updates on financial, enrolment and recruitment performance and forecasts as the end of the year approaches. The current financial position is cautiously optimistic, the student numbers for 2014-15 will meet the HESES forecast but recruitment for 2015-16 is still lower than last year for 'HEFCE' undergraduate programmes.

The balanced scorecard was noted with the status showing several changes. In the area of green and improving these included employment, progression and achievement, people, managing performance, current condition and functional suitability, milestones and facilities performance. A number of areas were shown as red and these included student satisfaction, academic governance and reputation, academic productivity, income growth, and diversification.

15.57 Clarification was sought and given in the following areas:

- Employee satisfaction where turnover has increased - it is noted as improving – good applicants are coming forward to replace staff leaving and this is improving the quality of the workforce
- Student Satisfaction moving from red to amber through only soft rather than numerical evidence - it was thought that there was currently insufficient evidence to make the change

(Action: Director of Strategic Planning & Development)

Students' Union Report (C/15/12)

15.58 The newly appointed President of the Students' Union was introduced to members. He formally took up his appointment on 1 July 2015. It was reported that the elections had been well contested with record numbers of students voting. He thanked members for such a warm welcome and looked forward to working with members.

15.59 The report provided commentary on the current achievements and plans from both the outgoing and incoming President as follows:

- Recognition by both the University and Council of the value of the Students' Union
- Poor NSS results around organisation and management of the course and assessment and feedback show how dissatisfied students still are despite everything which has been done
- Commitment to their strategic plan to entrench professionalism
- Work within the community continues to grow giving students new opportunities and a sense of civic duty
- Maintain effective and transparent communications with students and with the University
- Continue to develop graduate prospects with industry placements and work opportunities in order to build successful careers
- Continue to foster an understanding of how students' needs are supported both here at High Wycombe as well as Uxbridge and partner colleges
- Develop the strategic plan further

15.60 Further details were provided on plans for 2015-16 as follows:

- Preparing students to reflect more on their time here at Bucks
- Identify where lectures are cancelled and not replaced and ensure the University supports academic staff as necessary
- Share and analyse data to identify where and when problems arise
- Ensure that students are aware that non-attendance reduces chances of success
- Setting up a drop in centre to assist students with concerns
- Students need to be aware of value for money and how non-attendance is wasting their money
- Students expect marked work to be returned by a deadline in the same way that they have to submit work by a deadline
- Students would like to have a cost breakdown of how their fees are spent particularly in relation to academic staff time, library, management etc

Governance Committee

15.61 Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 May 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2015 were received without comment.

15.62 Single Equality Scheme: Objectives for 2015-16 (C/15/13)

The Action Plan for 2015-16 was considered in detail and it was thought that this was progressing well. The plan promoted the raising of equality awareness and the embedding of equality policy across the University.

Council **NOTED** the planned activities for 2015-16.

15.63 Council Membership of University Committees and Boards of Subsidiary Companies (2015-16) (C/15/14)

The revised membership of committees and the revised membership of the Boards of Trustees of the Subsidiary Companies from 1 August 2015 were put forward for consideration. The process by which memberships were considered and proposed as well as the changes was clearly explained. The proposals for appointing new members to committees was noted. Jenny Newton, who was standing down as Chair of Audit Committee and moving to Resources Committee, was thanked for her hard work over the last few years and especially in managing the external audit tender process. Members thanked the Clerk to the Council for the new, very succinct and clear spreadsheet showing the changes.

Council **APPROVED** the changes to the membership of University Committees and Boards of Subsidiary Companies for 2015-16.

(Action: Clerk to the Council)

Audit Committee

15.64 Minutes of the Meeting held on 9 June 2015

The minutes including confidential minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2015 were received without comment. It was particularly noted that the tender for the Internal Audit would be managed in a similar way to the External Audit and that the new Director of IT would be taking up his post in August.

15.65 HEFCE's annual assessment of institutional risk (C/15/15)

It was noted that this annual letter advised that the University 'is not at higher risk' following their assessment of the accountability returns made for 2013-14.

Resources Committee

15.66 Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 June 2015

The minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2015 were received without comment.

15.67 Financial Position April 2015 (C/15/16)

The current Financial Position was noted as reported to Resources Committee. It was similar to that reported in January with an operating performance favourable to budget and it is anticipated that this will continue largely unchanged for the full year. Income is below budget with expenditure better than budget across both the faculties and directorates and this translates into better than budget for the full year.

15.68 Draft Budget 2015-16 (C/15/17)

The report on the proposed draft budget showed the key areas of movement between the forecast for 2014-15 and budget for 2015-16. These included a reduction in grant income, an increase in undergraduate fee income, increased costs in several areas, including employee

costs and how these are being mitigated for as well as depreciation costs as a result of the completion of capital projects at Hughsden and South Wing. It is anticipated that student numbers may be lower than the current year and work continues to convert applicants to students across the University. Expenditure is being constrained in all areas with more in year reporting through the year and encouragement being given to spending less. Other assumptions included in the budget are UCAV, capital investment and contingency at the usual level. The student number assumptions relate to a low case scenario and it is hoped that students recruited through clearing will exceed those planned. In addition it is expected that there will be in year cuts to HEFCE funding as well as lower HEFCE income in 2015-16. Plans for investment long term are being prepared and expenditure tested throughout the year to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.

The draft budget for 2015-16 was **APPROVED** by Council for submission to HEFCE.

(Action: Financial Controller)

15.69 Missenden Abbey Summary Report: 2015 (C/15/18)

- 15.71 See Reserved Business.

Report on Senate Matters

15.72 Quality and standards outcomes (2014-2015) (C/15/20)

The report on Senate Matters for 2014 to date was received. It included those matters which had been discussed, reported and approved, including approval of several procedural and regulatory documents, as well as standing items, the receipt of reports from Committees and Faculties and approval of Honorary Awardees. This was noted.

Other items for discussion and note included sector updates, re-structuring of SMT, suspension of the University's UKVI Licence, UCAV, government priorities and the forthcoming validation with Staffordshire University in relation to research degree accreditation.

Other Matters

15.73 Use of University Seal and Coat of Arms

A report on the use of the University Seal and Coat of Arms was received.

15.74 Formal thank you to departing Council Members

Antony Bellekom, Ian Hillan and Simon Opie were thanked individually for their contribution and support to the University and Council, all in different ways contributing to committees and subsidiary companies as well as providing a helping hand to students and a wealth of knowledge as ordinary members and as a Committee Chair.

Students' Union President, Matt Gilbert, was thanked for his positive and constructive contribution to both the Council and Senior Management Team during his term of office and the Chair and members wished him well in his future endeavour.

John Cooper was also thanked for his contribution to Council over a number of years.

Vanessa Pilon, who was retiring at the end of July, was also thanked for all her hard work in making sure members had the information required in an organised manner at the right time.

Date of next meeting

15.75 The next meeting of Council is scheduled to take place on:

Tuesday, 6 October 2015, commencing at 4.00pm at Missenden Abbey and

Monday, 23 November 2015, commencing at 4.00pm in WW1.11 (Joint meeting with Senate)

Monday, 23 November 2015, commencing at 6.00pm in G5.05

The meeting started at 4.00pm and finished at 5.40pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chair of Council)

Prepared by Registrar (Governance) – 13 July 2015
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Confirmed by the Chair – 31 July 2015