



# Buckinghamshire New University

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## Missenden Council

### Minutes

date: **16 October 2012**  
time: **4.00 pm**  
location: **Barn Hall, Missenden Abbey**

#### Present:

Christine Beasley (Chair)	Independent Council member
Antonia Byatt	Independent Council member
Ashley Coles	President, Students' Union
Baljit Dhillon	Independent Council Member
Ruth Farwell	Ex officio member and Vice Chancellor
Lori Flynn	Independent Council member
Stephen Fox	Elected Senate Member
David Griffiths	Independent Council member
Ian Hillan	Independent Council member
Michael Hipkins	Independent Council member
Sukhie Mattu	Elected Professional Services Employee
Jenny Newton	Independent Council member
Pauline Odulinski	Co-opted Council member
Crystal Oldman	Elected Academic Employee
Simon Opie	Independent Council member
Keith Ryan	Independent Council member
Linsey Taylor	Elected Senate Member
Terri Teasdale	Independent Council member
Brian Tranter (Deputy Chair)	Independent Council member

#### Officers:

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

#### In attendance:

Derek Godfrey	Deputy Vice Chancellor
John Cooper	Director of Finance
Pam Owen	Equality & Diversity Manager – for Agenda item 7
Ian Plover	Director of Faculty, Design, Media & Management
David Sines	Pro Vice Chancellor, Faculty of Society & Health

#### Apologies:

Antony Bellekom	Independent Council member
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## **808 Chair's Welcome**

808.1 The Chair welcomed Ian Plover to his first meeting and advised that he would introduce himself as part of his presentation later in the meeting.

808.2 The presentations, the discussions and debate at this meeting would guide the Senior Management Team further in a review of the Strategic Plan and the development of projects and future spending. This would be preparation for further discussion relating to a revised Plan and decision making about investments at the February meeting.

## **809 Declaration of potential conflicts of interest**

809.1 No conflicts of interest were declared or identified.

## **810 Corporate Planning Statement 2012-13 (Presentation) and(C/12/40)**

810.1 This continued to be based around the S & 4P's (Student Experience, People, Partnerships Performance and Physical Environment). The statement had been updated to reflect priorities for the current academic year following agreement by Remuneration Committee of key objectives for the Senior Management Team. The responsibility for each objective/measure and timescale were shown. Performance would be measured against these objectives both during the year and at the year end. Links to other reports include, the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) reported to Council through the Resources Committee and financial measures for income growth related to the Financial Forecast approved and monitored as part of the Strategic Plan.

810.2 The main priorities included;

- Delivering the budget for 2012-13
- Minimum standards of course delivery
- Staff engagement – the hearts and minds agenda
- Delivering enhancements to the student experience which will include enhancing academic scholarship and improving NSS scores

810.3 Further plans to embed the CORD values through personal example and improve staff engagement were planned as well as implementing reward and recognition for managers and enhancing academic scholarship through evidence based practice.

In addition work would be undertaken to deliver the Investors in People Well Being Agenda over the next eighteen months. This would drive the Health & Well Being Strategy through cross University themes and groups. Successful completion of PDR's, line manager capability and clarity as well as identifying and developing succession planning are also key to the approach.

810.4 Ian Plover introduced himself as a civil engineer who had migrated to HR, worked in several industries including HE and offered change management guidance through his own company. Having undertaken projects for the University he welcomed the invitation to undertake a twelve month secondment with the University to identify and provide clarity on the management of the Faculty of DMM. He felt from the very first visit that Bucks was different, it was welcoming, had a good heart and huge potential.

He suggested that a number of initiatives could be developed or extended to increase the level of pride and enthusiasm within the institution and these included:

- A good team briefing system
- Reward and recognition of achievement
- More effective email communication
- Reduce initiative overload – consolidate and focus on a small number of changes
- Clarity of job descriptions and how each job fits together
- Manager development, recognising that academic and support staff have different needs and design and manage a development programme by the staff themselves

- 810.5 Further clarification was sought regarding the successful implementation of an IT system to manage the PDR process and a challenge to staff on "What can Council do to help staff make things better".
- 810.6 It was **agreed** that the Corporate Planning Statement 2012-13 be approved.

**811 Student Recruitment: September 2012 (Verbal)**

- 811.1 Full time undergraduate recruitment was reported as 300 FTE down on the combined student number control (SNC) and AAB+ target. The late recruitment campaign had been successful and had reduced the deficit from 25% to 14%. Retention of continuing students was better than expected. Nursing recruitment to date had been very successful with an 8% improvement in retention of continuing students.
- 811.2 Council were interested to know how the University's retention compared against sector benchmarks. It was agreed to provide this data and noted that retention appears as one of the KPIs reported to Council.

**(Action: Clerk to the Council)**

- 811.3 The financial impact of actual recruitment and the retention of continuing students would be built in to a year end forecast outturn for comparison with the committed budget for consideration by both Resources Committee and Council this term.

**812 Backdrop to 2012-13 and beyond: the external content (Verbal)**

- 812.1 There had been a national reduction in recruitment of full-time undergraduate students this year following an increase in 2011. HEFCE's decision regarding the withdrawal of student numbers from the SNC for 2013 will be influenced by government direction and potential overspend on loans. Decisions on fees for 2014-15 will need to be taken once HEFCE's decision on SNCs is published and consideration should be given to whether fees should be increased at the February meeting.
- 812.2 A number of comments, questions and responses were made as follows:
- Government fees policy may be impacted by the pool of potential 18-21 year olds as well as this year's cohorts being smaller
  - The international dimension will change as a result of UKBA controls and actions
  - Open Days – making the students welcome and the enthusiasm shown by staff can make a big difference – exit evaluations would be a useful analytical tool to identify applicant satisfaction – similar numbers to last year are attending open days
  - In response to a request the trend data relating to conversion of applications to enrolment will be reported to Council in the next KPI report

**813 Investment Strategy (C/12/41)**

- 813.1 Details of the investment programme undertaken over the last five years were given together with the campus consolidation programme. Planned investments for the future should be linked to the following principles:
- Maintaining the quality and standards of our campus and facilities
  - Enabling future growth of the University
  - Achievement of the strategic goals

These may include:

- Improving IT and Learning Facilities
- Improving the overall look and feel of the Queen Alexandra Road Campus as well as environmental aspects of all campuses
- Development of the Queen Alexandra Road Campus
- Provision of outdoor sports facilities
- Provision of additional and improved student accommodation
- Providing additional accommodation at the Queen Alexandra Road Campus
- Refurbishment of South Block internally and externally

- Other additional facilities that might achieve the strategic goals

The key issues for Council discussion and decision were identified as:

- Building out the student accommodation at Hughenden and
- The external cladding of South Block

813.2 Detailed costs of the options supported in the short term would be brought to the February meeting. In coming to a decision members were advised to bear in mind the comfortable financial position of the University, the lower recruitment achieved this year and how this would inform income over the next few years and the continued uncertainty regarding future recruitment and the SNC.

813.3 An extensive discussion took place regarding student accommodation with the following points made:

- A reduction in head tenancies would ensure that additional accommodation at Hughenden would be filled but this would remove the flexibility that the former provides
- Head tenancies are agreed on an annual contract and are cheaper than University student accommodation
- Building out at Hughenden would give a better student experience but would not be completed for September 2013 unless a decision to go ahead was made now
- If University accommodation is not available for all first years some students may choose elsewhere
- Support was given for deferring a decision because of reduced student numbers and the uncertainty regarding future recruitment in relation to SNC
- Need to invest for the future – with no additional accommodation there was the risk of reduced revenue, reduced opportunity and less students
- Need to preserve long term strategic robustness and a decision taken today on pursuing additional student accommodation at Hughenden would reduce the option available for investment as it would involve committing £5m of the £15m reserve.

813.4 Clarification was sought regarding the refurbishment of South Block as follows:

- South Block cladding and windows will take a year to complete
- The internal space available is flexible and should be used for additional developments to extend the business of the University
- By undertaking the external and basic internal refurbishment it would reduce the time needed to complete the project and make the facilities available for use once viable options for its use were agreed

813.5 It was AGREED that no investment be made until detailed costs are available in February and external sector guidance obtained about future SNCs.

#### **814 Equality & Diversity Matters (Presentation)**

814.1 The Chair welcomed Pam Owen, Equality & Diversity Manager, to the meeting to help the Council understand more about equality & diversity and their responsibilities as Council Members.

814.2 Information was provided in relation to the handbook for governors of higher education institutions produced by the Equality Challenge Unit which covered the role of governors, diversity of governing bodies as well as a check list of equality questions and guidance on terminology. In addition the induction information given to new employees on Equality & Diversity at Bucks was circulated.

814.3 It was stressed that the University are trying to embed equality & diversity in everything that is done. There is both a legal requirement and a responsibility to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. The University Equality and Diversity Policy, Equality Scheme and Action Plan are published on the web and the Council approved a new Bullying and Harassment Policy earlier in the year.

**(Action: Circulate the Equality & Diversity Policy to Members)**

814.4 Council welcomed the briefing provided and congratulated the University on maintaining currency.

**815 Date of next meeting**

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

Joint Senate/Council: Monday 19 November 2012, commencing at 4.00pm in the Boardroom, High Wycombe.

Council: Monday 19 November 2012, commencing at 5.45pm in the Boardroom, High Wycombe

The meeting started at 4.00pm and finished at 6.35pm.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chair of Council)

Prepared by: Registrar (Governance) – 17 October 2012  
Checked by: Clerk to the Council – 24 October 2012  
Confirmed by: Vice Chancellor – 25 October 2012  
Confirmed by: The Chair – 29 October 2012