



# Buckinghamshire New University

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## Council

### Minutes

date: **23 November 2015**  
time: **6.00 pm**  
location: **G5.05, Gateway, High Wycombe**

#### **Present:**

Christine Beasley (Chair)	Independent Council Member
Rebecca Bunting	Ex officio member and Vice-Chancellor
Antonia Byatt	Independent Council Member
Gurdeep Chadha	Independent Council Member
Joseph Collins	President, Students' Union
Baljit Dhillon	Independent Council Member
Lori Flynn	Independent Council Member
Lauren Griffiths	Elected Senate 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
Anthony Murphy	Independent Council Member
Hilary Mullen	Elected Staff Member (Academic)
Jenny Newton	Independent Council Member
John Smith	Independent Council Member
Terri Teasdale	Independent Council Member

#### **Officers:**

Ellie Smith	Clerk to the Council
Kam Anyadike	Registrar (Governance)

#### **In attendance:**

Ian Plover	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Tim Middleton	PVC Research and Enterprise
Tracey Price	Director of Finance
Steve Dewhurst	Director of Business Planning

#### **Apologies:**

Vicky Vass	PVC
Keith Ryan	Independent Council Member

The Chair gave a warm welcome to everyone who attended the meeting and apologies for those who were not able to make it including Keith Ryan, an Independent member of Council who was currently recovering from a period of long-term illness and was hoping to re-join the Council in the New Year.

**15.85 Declaration of potential conflicts of interest**

The Chair declared a conflict of interest in relation to Item 21.

No other declarations of conflicts of interest were noted.

**15.86 Minutes and Action Sheets of the Meetings held on 6 July 2015 and 6 October 2015**

The minutes and confidential minutes of the meetings held on 6 July 2015 and 6 October 2015 were signed as a correct record without amendment. The progress on actions from these meetings was noted.

**15.87 Matters Arising**

None

**15.88 Chair's Action**

None had been taken since the last meeting.

**15.89 Vice Chancellor's Report (including KPI's)**

Vice-Chancellor's Report (C/15/22)

The Vice-Chancellor presented her report to the Committee

The report included a commentary of the Green paper "Fulfilling Our Potential – Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice" which was published on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

Discussions were held around the proposed changes arising from this paper and how it would affect the Higher Education sector. A question arose on how the University would be responding to the consultation and the Vice-Chancellor stated that she would be delivering presentations across the University throughout December and from this would prepare the institutional response to the consultation.

Financial Health was also discussed following a report published by HEFCE on the current and projected financial position of the sector.

Council noted the commentary on the Key Performance Indicators and raised no questions of clarification

**15.90 Student's Union Report (C/15/23)**

The SU President presented his report which aimed to share with Council key messages relating to the SU's progress with activities and future plans and projects. Specific matters highlighted included: Campaigns such as the #NeverOk Campaign which tackled the issue of sexual harassment and was designed to educate students and staff whilst also highlighting support and services provided.

- Awards
- Future plans
- University Issues including the decrease in student numbers
- University Strategic plan

The SU expressed some concern about the low number of students on campus, the small class size and the effect this was having on the campus vibrancy. It was suggested that small class size could be regarded as a positive.

The SU also expressed a view that they believed that staff turnover was higher than in previous years. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor clarified that this was not the case and the University's staff

number was in line with sector benchmarks. However the reasons for leaving were not available and it was agreed that data on this would come to the next council meeting.

The chair commented on the usefulness of the students report in surfacing issues within the university.

**(Action: Deputy Vice-Chancellor)**

## 15.91 Resources Committee

### 15.91.1 Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 October 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 October 2015 were received without comment.

### 15.91.2 Bucks Students' Union Affiliations noted in the accounts for the year ending 31 July 2015 (C/15/24)

Council **RECEIVED and APPROVED** the Students' Union affiliations as circulated.

### 15.91.3 Financial Position as at 30 September 2015 (C/15/25)

The Council noted the management accounts of 30 September 2015 which clearly showed the position against budget for both income and expenditure to date. In addition the Budget, Cash Flow Forecast and KPI's and operating measures were provided. The forecast operating cash flow performance against bank covenant was noted as in line with budget.

The Director of Finance updated Council on recent changes to the financial position noting that as a result of further investigation the 2015-16 budget was now showing a £4m deficit. Management action to address this was already being undertaken by SMT and a meeting arranged with the Chair of Resources Committee and the Deputy Chair had been arranged to discuss. A full report would be provided to Council in due course.

Council **NOTED** the Financial Position for September 2015 as submitted and it was **AGREED** that the Director of Finance would send an update of situations to Council members in January.

**(Action: Director of Finance)**

### 15.91.4 Financial Forecasts 2016-2019 (C/15/26)

The Financial Forecasts were presented by the Director of Finance who stated that the reasons why there were two submissions, one in July and now another for December was because the July forecast had been submitted to HEFCE without going through due process and had since been found to be incorrect. The Director of Finance had liaised with HEFCE and it was been agreed that corrected forecasts be submitted by 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015.

Council noted the above and encouraged the University to understand the reasons behind the error and take action to ensure it is not repeated

The Financial forecasts were **APPROVED** by the Council to be sent to HEFCE on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2015.

**(Action: Director of Finance)**

### 15.91.5 Course Fees for 2016-17: Part-time undergraduate, part-time and full-time postgraduate students (C/15/27)

The proposals as considered by Resources Committee were fully explained. An increase of 2% was proposed for new and continuing students.

It was **AGREED** that the fee charges for part-time undergraduate courses, full and part-time postgraduate courses as detailed in the report were approved.

## 15.92 Audit Committee

### 15.92.1 Minutes of the Meetings held on 6 October 2015 and 10 November 2015

The minutes and confidential minutes of the meetings held on 6 October 2015 and 10 November 2015 were received without comment.

#### 15.92.2 Financial Statements for the Year ended 31 July 2015 (C/15/28)

The Director of Finance presented the paper summarising key aspects of the University's accounts and its subsidiary companies. These included the following:

- Financial statements for the University and its subsidiary companies for the year ending 31 July 2015
- Annual Sustainability Assurance Report: December 2015

It was also clarified that the University made a surplus of £1.3 million part of which arose from the decision to change the funding for BEST from a grant to a loan.

The Audit and Resources Committee recommend that Council:

- Approve the signing of the letter of representation;
- Approve the Annual Sustainability Assurance Report: December 2015;

The Vice-Chancellor stated that the University plans to create an Annual Report for 2015-16 which showcases the University's story with pictures and to which the financial statements would be appended

Council **APPROVED** the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2015 including the above recommendations.

**(Action: Director of Finance)**

#### 15.92.3 Internal Auditor's Committee Annual report 2014-15 (C/15/29)

The report was presented to Council for consideration and approval.

Council **APPROVED** this report without comment.

#### 15.92.4 Research Integrity C/15/30

The PVC Research & Enterprise explained the requirement for the University to be compliant with the Concordat to support Research Integrity and the report presented detailed the evidence to support this. This paper had previously been to the Ethics Committee and also to SMT and Audit Committee who recommended Council to approve it.

The Council **APPROVED** this report.

#### 15.92.5 Strategic Risk Assessment and Annual Report 2014-15 (C/15/31)

The details and the summary of this report were considered with risks anticipated during the next year clearly shown. Decreased risk scores were explained and noted. Increased risk scores were also fully explained in the area of Reputation. Significant decisions made by the University and Council during the year show that there is an appetite for projects carrying a higher level of risk when they are fully assessed and considered and plans for mitigation are in place.

Clarifications were sort on why most of the risks were owned by the Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor and whether accountable people could be identified as individuals. It was explained that this was more of a register rather than an action plan and at the level the risks are at those are the identified risk owners.

This report was **NOTED** by the Council but it was added that in future the structure of this report will need to be relooked at.

**(Action: Director of Strategic Planning and Development)**

#### 15.92.6 Audit Committee Review of the effectiveness of the Internal and External Auditors (Verbal)

See Confidential Minutes

15.92.7 Annual Report from the Audit Committee to the Council and Vice-Chancellor as Designated Officer (2014-15) (C/15/32)

The Council **APPROVED** this report with no comments.

**15.93 Governance Matters**

15.93.1 Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 November 2015

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2015 were received.

The Chair of Governance brought to the attention of the Council minute 15.55 where the Governance Committee agreed to recommend to Council the revised structure for Senate and its Committees. Council **APPROVED** the revised changes to the structure.

15.93.2 Replacement/Recruitment of Council Members process/timescale (C/15/33)

Council was invited to consider and approve the replacement and recruitment strategy for 2015-16. The Chair left the room at this point whilst her re-appointment was considered by the Council. It was noted that she had worked well as a member of Council and especially as Chair. Council **AGREED** that Christine was to be re-appointed for a further four years as a member of Council and was invited to run for Chair again when elections take place next year.

It was also **AGREED** that successors are brought in for retiring members.

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

15.93.3 2015-16 Effectiveness Review of Governance (Verbal)

The Deputy Chair informed the Council that it is responsible for reviewing its Governance every four years.

Council noted that the plans and progress of this review and that a project board has been established and will be reporting to the Governance Committee. A Questionnaire has been created and will be available for completion by relevant people in December whereupon answers will be analysed, following which one to one interviews will be set up with a sample of those surveyed. Feedback from the HEFCE Assurance review in March 2016 will also be incorporated into the interviews. The process of self-reflection will be audited via the use of an external consultant in due course

This plan was noted and commended by the Council.

**15.94 Remuneration Committee**

15.94.1 Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 July 2015

The minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2015 were received without comment.

15.94.2 *(See confidential appendix)*

**Other matters**

**15.95 National Pay Bargaining August 2014-15 (Verbal)**

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor reported that the Unions (UCU and UNISON) had now completed negotiations for the 2015 pay settlement and that the agreed 1% increase will be paid to staff with their November salary.

On a separate matter Council were informed that SMT had agreed that the Uxbridge allowance for all Uxbridge-based staff will be increased by 10% from £800 to £880.

**15.96 Use of University Seal and Coat of Arms (C/15/34)**

This report was received for information.

**15.97 Date of next meeting**

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

Monday 21 March 2016 at 4.00pm at Uxbridge

Note: Missenden Council scheduled for 9<sup>th</sup> February has been cancelled.

The meeting started at 6.00pm and finished at 7.30pm.

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Prepared by Registrar (Governance) – 24 November 2015  
Checked by Clerk to the Council – 26 November 2015  
Confirmed by the Chair – 04 December 2015