

## Council – Business Meeting

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### Open Minutes

Date of meeting: **Monday, 18 March 2019**

Duration of meeting: **4:00pm to 6:00pm**

Location: **Room 3.07, Uxbridge Campus**

### Attendance

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Category of membership</b>
Michael Hipkins	Chair	Independent
Irene Kirkman	Deputy	Independent
Nick Braisby		Vice-Chancellor
Gurdeep Chadha		Independent
Anna Crabtree		Independent
Ken McCrea		Co-opted
Tim Marshall		Co-opted
Jenny Newton		Independent
Susan Rosser		Independent
John Smith		Independent

### Officers

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Category of membership</b>
Ellie Smith	Secretary	Academic Registrar
Marcus Wood	Minute Secretary	N/A

### In attendance

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>
Julie McLeod	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education)
Sean Mackney	Pro Vice-Chancellor
Rod Mercer	Director of Finance

### Apologies

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Category of membership</b>
Joanna Boardman		Elected PSE Representative
Baljit Dhillon		Independent

Florin Ioras		Senate Nominee
Maggie James		Independent
Lise Llewellyn		Independent
Anthony Murphy		Independent
Lauren O'Shea		SU President
Cheryl Pitt		Elected Academic Representative
Bob Shennan		Independent
Megan Staples		Student Representative
Phil Wood		Senate Nominee

## Committee Business

### Welcome / Apologies for Absence

19.27 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. Apologies for absence were recorded as noted above.

### Declaration of potential conflicts of interest

19.28 No conflicts of interest were declared.

### Minutes and Action Sheet of the previous meeting(s)

19.29 The Open minutes of the meetings of 19 November 2018 (Business) and 12 February 2019 (Strategy) were approved and signed as an accurate record.

19.30 All Actions had been completed.

### Matters Arising

19.31 There were no matters arising.

### Report on Chair's Actions

19.32 It was reported that Chair's Actions had been taken in two instances:

- To approve the University's PREVENT submission
- To approve an agreement with the Buckinghamshire College Group in relation to future involvement with UCAV in line with discussions at the Council Strategy meeting in February.

19.33 Council endorsed both decisions.

## University Matters

### Vice-Chancellor's Report (COU19.01)

This item was considered under Reserved Business.

### Key Performance Measures (COU19.02)

19.34 Council noted the updated Key Performance Measures. Attention was drawn to the following:

- A modest improvement was noted in relation the student FTEs (KPI1). This largely related to slower than anticipated apprenticeship recruitment where employers had been unable to mobilise and / or recruit staff to meet deadlines

agreed. In addition, due to accreditation of prior learning the University did not receive the total cash per learner. The University was focusing apprenticeship work on larger tenders as discussed at the recent Council Strategy meeting.

- There were still opportunities for further recruitment this year, including an International Foundation Year programme, to help address the shortfall.
- Work was ongoing to reduce the projected deficit of £2.5m (KPI2).

19.35 Council considered the new approach useful but noted that targets still related to the 2016-2021 strategic plan rather than the targets as reported to the OfS and against which the University would be held accountable. Council had previously agreed that the targets in the strategic plan were no longer useful.

### **University Strategic Plan (Presentation)**

19.36 The Vice-Chancellor presented to members on work in progress towards development of a new strategic plan initially entitled "Impact 2022":

- The Strategy covered a new Vision, opportunities for strategic alignment with the University's partners, and the overall approach and measures to achieve this
- It would be supported by key strategies around: (i) Education and (ii) Research & Knowledge Exchange; as well as 'enabling' strategies for (iii) People, (iv) Finance, (v) Digital, and (vi) Estates.
- A new set of Key Performance Measures and an operational plan with annual milestones would accompany the Strategy and against which Council could measure achievement
- Quick wins would include: a new model for BEST / UCAV ensuring that nursing provision could be rolled out for September 2019 to transform the financial position; Portfolio review was also critical to grow the University and generate economies of scale
- Consultation with staff was already underway with a number of focus groups established to develop key components of the strategy.
- The University was in discussions with an external company with a reputation for developing 'narrative leadership' to create a narrative rather than a series of KPIs that would be more understandable for staff.

19.37 Council noted that portfolio review was fundamental but was an existing workstream within the Transformation Programme while the budget for expansion of courses needed to demonstrate that the plan was deliverable. It was reported that:

- The introduction of Foundation Years across all FTUG programmes had delivered a 2% growth in applications and (with ongoing activities on retention) would lead to four years' worth of student fee income
- Efficiencies in delivery are needed in some areas to create capacity to support expansion
- Academic Planning Committee (APC) assesses the profitability of different types of programme. Some courses are particularly 'lean' and generate a large surplus but this is more challenging for other areas

19.38 A copy of the Presentation was saved with the minutes.

### **Transformation Programme Update (COU19.03)**

19.39 Council noted the paper. Attention was drawn to the following aspects:

- Development of a more flexible academic calendar to support multi-point entry to programmes following semesterisation
- The Placements Plus initiative to tackle highly skilled employment via work readiness initiatives at Levels 4, 5 and 6
- Improving use of the physical estate across all campuses
- The need for a further phase of restructuring to ensure that growth in selected areas is supported while issues of overcapacity and redeployment can be addressed

### **Minutes from University Committees (COU19.04)**

19.40 Council received minutes from the following Committees:

- Senate, 5 December 2018, which covered Annual Monitoring, preparation for REF2021 and ongoing work to prepare for Subject-level TEF in early 2020
- Education Committee, 30 January 2019, including a useful paper from the SU covering issues raised via the recent round of Programme Committees, a report on degree classifications and OfS / sector concerns in relation to grade inflation, and a review of guidance material for Associate Lecturers
- Research & Enterprise Committee, 19 February 2019, which included report of a £700k Innovate UK grant, staff involvement in a MedTech Super Connector Project, development of a Code of Practice for REF2021, support for an underpinning research environment; and an update on a proposed Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) to supplement REF and TEF.

### **Students' Union President's Report (COU19.05)**

19.41 The report was received.

### **Use of the University's Seal and Coat of Arms (Verbal)**

19.42 The Secretary reported that the Seal and Coat of Arms had not been used since the previous meeting.

## **Governance Committee**

### **Minutes from the meeting of 27 February 2019**

19.43 The minutes were received. These included: proposed changes to the SU constitution (below); and an update on Council membership and arrangements to replace members stepping down in Summer 2019.

### **Students' Union Constitution: Proposed changes (COU19.06)**

19.44 Council endorsed changes to the SU constitution as approved by Governance Committee and summarised in the paper.

### **Calendar of Meetings (Sept-2019-Dec-2020) (COU19.07)**

19.45 Council approved the calendar of meetings.

## Resources Committee

### Minutes from the meeting of 5 March 2019

19.46 The Open minutes were received. Attention was drawn to the salient points arising from the meeting as follows:

- Encouragement to the SU to generate additional commercial revenue
- Pay and pensions implications for budget targets for 2019-20
- Transformation Programme targets to be achieved under Phase 3
- Development of new revenue streams for the University to continue to improve the financial position
- Consideration of an ambitious proposal for BEST / UCAV

### Financial Position (M5) and Forecast for 2018-19 (COU19.08)

19.47 Council noted the updated position as reported to Resources Committee:

- Good progress had been made in many areas. In particular core student numbers had held up well and been buoyed by the addition of Foundation Year options
- Difficulties had been encountered meeting the stretch targets – particularly in relation to challenging income targets for partnership and apprenticeship activities. Overall income was forecast to be £1.4m adverse to budget.
- Pay restraint has been strong and would overachieve against budget targets
- A cost reduction exercise has been implemented to offset the income shortfall and had already achieved £0.6m in-year savings
- Changes in banking arrangements for BEST had been agreed and would allow opportunity to restructure
- The cash position remains strong and the University continues to meet all covenant requirements

## Audit Committee

### Minutes from the meeting of 19 February 2019

19.48 The Open minutes were received. Attention was drawn to the following:

- ‘Satisfactory assurance’ outcomes in relation to internal audits for Student Systems, Marketing, and Student Complaints. All recommendations had been accepted by the University and staff will take forward actions as agreed.
- External audit recommendations had been considered, including a paper on internal control and risk management to take further action in this area.
- Full consideration had been given to the updated Strategic Risk Register, including assessment of the BEST recovery plan
- The Committee continued to monitor the University’s financial and banking covenants and had concluded that covenants would be passed even on a Draft Worst Case Scenario forecast presented to the meeting

## Honorary Awards Committee

### Minutes from the meeting of 27 February 2019

19.49 The Open minutes were received.

### Honorary Award nominations (COU19.09)

This item was considered under Reserved Business.

## Remuneration Committee

### Remuneration Annual Report to Council (2017-18) (COU19.12)

19.50 Council received the report which had been prepared by the Committee in accordance with the 'Higher Education Senior Staff Remuneration Code' (CUC, July 2018) and which covered the period 1 August 2017 to 31 July 2018.

## Other Business

### Subsidiary Companies and Related Organisations

19.51 Council received written reports in relation to BEST (COU19.10) and Missenden Abbey (COU19.11). Missenden Abbey was considered under Reserved Business – see Reserved Minutes.

### Feedback from Sector events attended by Council members

19.52 JISC Digifest: This had focused on ways to engage students as conventional methods such as email were now dated. Universities also needed to consider relevance of digital skills for employment.

19.53 Committee of University Chairs (CUC): An upcoming meeting had been scheduled for 3-4 April and would be attended by the Chair. An update would be provided at the next meeting.

### Date of next meeting

19.54 The next meeting would be on 4 June 2019 and would focus on strategic matters.

19.55 The next business meeting would be on 8 July 2019 at Missenden Abbey and would be followed by the annual Council dinner.

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

Drafted (Minute Secretary): 1-Apr-2019  
Checked (Clerk to the Council): 10-Apr-2019  
Checked (Vice-Chancellor): 11-Apr-2019  
Confirmed for circulation (Chair): 11-Apr-2019