



Buckinghamshire New University

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Missenden Council

Minutes

date: **07 June 2011**
time: **2.00 pm**
location: **Chiltern Room 4, Missenden Abbey**

Present:

Roy Darby (Chair)	Co-opted Council member
Anthony Bellekom	Independent Council member
Mitch Brown	Independent Council member
Antonia Byatt	Independent Council member
Roger Dalrymple	Elected Senate Member
Ruth Farwell	Ex officio member and Vice Chancellor
Stephen Fox	Elected Senate Member
Tom Foy	President, Students' Union
Ian Hillan	Independent Council member
Sukhie Mattu	Elected professional service employee member
Pauline Odulinski	Co-opted Council member
Simon Opie	Independent Council member
Crystal Oldman	Elected academic staff member
Keith Ryan	Independent Council member
Brian Tranter (Deputy Chair)	Independent Council member

Officers:

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

In attendance:

John Cooper	Director of Finance
Derek Godfrey	Deputy Vice Chancellor
Chris Kemp	Pro Vice Chancellor, Faculty of Design, Media & Management
Trevor Nicholls	Pro Vice Chancellor, Campus & Facilities
David Sines	Pro Vice Chancellor, Faculty of Society & Health

Apologies:

Lori Flynn	Independent Council member
David Griffiths	Independent Council member
Terri Teasdale	Independent Council member

Roger Dalrymple, a new member elected by Senate, was welcomed to his first meeting. He identified his role within the University as that of Department Manager for Education which included, teacher training, early years study, practice and allied health care. He also held a remit as Reader in Education where he undertook considerable research within this subject area.

Ashley Cole, President Elect of the Students' Union was also introduced and advised that his subject of study was in the area of sports.

Tom Foy, retiring President of the Students' Union, was thanked both personally by the Chair and by Council as a whole for all the hard work he had put in during his two years in office. Members wished him well for the future.

709 Declaration of potential conflicts of interest

709.1 As Principal of Aylesbury College, Pauline Odulinski had declared in advance an interest in the item on the partnership with the College. This was discussed with the Chair and Vice Chancellor, and it was agreed that she would withdraw after the presentation and questions for clarification i.e. before Council discussed opinions on the proposed partnership.

No other conflicts of interest were declared or identified.

710 Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 March 2011

710.1 These were offered for information as background to previous discussions and agreement in order to help inform the current debate.

711 Tuition fees for full time undergraduate students 2012-13 and Access Agreement

711.1 Proposed Fees

The fees were confirmed within the remit identified at Council in March and approved by the Chair and Committee Chairs as follows:

- £8,000 for workshop and studio based courses (25% of students)
- £7,500 for all other courses except for (up to 75% of students)
- £6,000 for a pilot Business course redesigned to be delivered within this cost (small numbers)

711.2 Summary of the Access Agreement submitted to OFFA by 19 April 2011

OFFA will advise Universities of their decision on Access Agreement applications during the second week in July. The University application was submitted under three headings:

- Outreach – £147,000 to be used on activities including enhancing the provision developed through Aim Higher, entering into additional partnerships regionally across Milton Keynes and Oxfordshire as well as Buckinghamshire and extending sponsorship with local institutions where there are high proportions of students from low participation and low income families
- National Scholarship – provision of 101 scholarships of £3,000 within the students' first year of study and of £1,500 in both their second and third years
- Retention - £97,000 to be used to enhance and strengthen current areas of provision and new additional support in
 - The provision of a designated Learning Development Tutor
 - Strengthen the University and Students' Money Advice function
 - A Head Start programme will run prior to the start of their course, free of charge to target students
 - Diagnostic skills testing specifically for target groups
 - Enhancement of the Careers & Employability function

711.3 Notes of Chairs' Meeting 15 April 2011

These were noted.

711.4 Underpinning Financial Forecast

This was revised in line with the changes to the agreed fee structure for 2012-13. The additional income generation and expenditure on the Access Agreement initiatives were noted. The level of recruitment under the new fee structure was unknown and although a 20% reduction in student number enrolment for 2012-13 was incorporated into the financial forecast it had been assumed that this would not be carried forward into the enrolment numbers for the following year.

It was noted that the Financial Forecast has been approved by the Chair's meeting on behalf of Council.

712 Partnership with Aylesbury College

712.1 Presentations and questions

Clarity was provided about the educational character of the University, its' powerful vision and markets as well as the student experience, current student base, proposed growth and future fees.

a. HE Sector Context

A number of uncertainties arise from the change to the fee structure including demand, location of study, price as a determining factor, mode of study, provision of equivalent correspondence courses and student number control as well as control of overseas visas. There is potential for failure and mergers, and such institutions will no longer be underpinned by public funding from HEFCE. Competition may come from private providers, ambitious FE colleges and predatory universities.

Planning to manage change is the key and will include the ability to move into different markets and products with agility and speed.

b. The further education (FE) sector and facts and figures about Aylesbury College; the vision for Aylesbury College's learning campus

There are 352 FE Colleges in England and these provide 38% of entrants to HE as well as 50% of students who study Foundation Degrees at levels 4 and 5. 50% of 16-18 year olds study at Aylesbury College. The focus is on quality and 81% of these students succeed. In addition there is a 95% success rate for 14 -16 year olds on practical courses. These are students who are not succeeding at school. Only a small proportion of students studying at level 3, move on to higher education. This is a market waiting to be developed.

Aylesbury College has a new purpose built building, which is only four years old and which focuses on a business model to provide active commercial services in the area of Sports, Hair and Beauty and Restaurant facilities. This has enabled the College to raise standards and aspirations as well as providing a clear practical insight into the real world of work. The College is identified as having outstanding financial health by both OFSTED and the Skills Funding Agency and is on target to raise their review scores, currently 80% of grade one, to 100% grade one during 2012. The College have been foresighted enough realise that apprenticeships were the way forward and were at the forefront of their development, thus ensuring that at the present time they are not in a position where their public funding has been reduced. However they are aware that 80% of their funding comes from the public sector currently and are looking at ways to diversify and reduce reliance on this income stream.

Ambitious plans for the next 10 years have been identified and are currently being taken forward. The development of a Sustainable Learning Campus for completion by 2020, for which funding could be realised through land sale, will include:

- **Nursery and Children's Centre** – just opening and already student numbers are increasing as a consequence
- **University Technical College** – application to be one of the first 24 in England has already been submitted jointly with the University, and with the support of local businesses, to provide a state of the art building with sustainable technologies and a model of innovative good practice to provide high quality technical, practical and vocational training for 14 to 19 year olds in the subject areas of construction and IT
- **Apprenticeship Academy** – this is part of the existing building and is already offered – students are employed by the college for one year with employers paying a top slice and providing work based training and projects undertaken by students alongside College based activities
- **FE provision**
- **University Centre Aylesbury Vale** – already has 500 students studying with the University, Aylesbury College, Oxford Brookes and Bedfordshire Universities – growth has increased by 49% since 2008

- **Technical Innovation Centre** – in partnership with local businesses and Aylesbury Vale District Council to develop new products – membership scheme to be offered which will include services and meeting centre facilities, for example
- **Accredited Independent Living Centre** – day provision for the disabled and those with learning needs where they will acquire the skills to live and work independently
- **Nationally recognised Centre of Excellence for Mobile Learning** – delivered anytime/anywhere

The growth agenda is to provide a quality and financially viable community asset “used by and available to all” to ensure that local people have access to education and training entertainment and clubs, networks and meetings locally, from the “cradle to the grave” Their preferred option is in partnership with the University providing a seamless transition through the qualifications framework.

c. The qualifications framework: how FE and HE fit with this: examples of qualifications

This was explained from entry level English language qualifications through to doctorates at level 8. FE colleges traditionally deliver entry level to level 4 of the National Vocational Qualifications Framework, including GCSE and ‘A’ levels as well as national diplomas and professional qualifications. The University is licensed to validate and deliver level 4, the first year of an honours degree, to level 7, taught Masters degrees, with delivery of level 8 being licensed by Brunel/Coventry Universities. Entry routes into HE study might be through both traditional and professional qualifications as well as accreditation of prior experience. The data for 2009-10 show that the University has an excellent track record for non-traditional entry and identifies that there is no discernable difference in their progression compared with young/traditional entrants.

d. The current partnership with Aylesbury College and its limitations

The current partnership agreement is for a limited period of time, for specific courses, is non sub-contracting, non-exclusive with finance and student numbers being agreed annually.

Its limitations include, provision is not jointly planned, additional projects require separate legal agreements with all the time and costs that entails, there are no opportunities to respond quickly to changing market forces and there are few economic incentives to make changes.

The two organisations have a similar mission and ethos and with an equal partnership could focus on emphasising work skills and employment, improving quality, providing a compatible curriculum without competition, an outstanding learning experience with widening participation as well as growth from the international market.

e. Vision for the partnership and opportunities for growth

The vision is to:

- Provide integrated, flexible and high quality further and higher education learning opportunities
- To produce a competent and productive workforce, in a particular local area

This would be undertaken through a skills escalator where a seamless delivery of curricula from pre-entry to level 8 in a range of technical, practical and academic subjects can be provided for local people to study at their own pace at the right time in their lives.

The rationale for this would be to maximise business opportunities including employer skills gaps and untapped demand, managing future risks together and therefore mitigating the level of risk for both and providing a service and position within the local community.

f. Potential benefits with reference to the outline business case

The Business Case, benefits and disadvantages of a partnership arrangement were clearly provided and debated. See reserved business minutes

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills as well as the local government and businesses in Buckinghamshire are excited by the proposals to create something new and dynamic.

g. Proposed University Technical College (UTC)

This is a new Government initiative to provide 24 UTC's in England by 2013 for 14-16 year olds and 16-19 year olds. It will be work related with a work ethic, include work placements and core curriculum, providing opportunities and employment to those who have "stalled", in conventional education. An application has been made jointly by the University and Aylesbury College together with the support of many local businesses but it will be independent and governed by its own Trust. It will be based at Aylesbury College, initially in the existing buildings and later in a new custom designed building. It will cover two main subject areas, construction – restoration/sustainable and IT. It will provide additional feeder students to Bucks courses, enable growth in some areas, increase visibility as well as our network and engagement with local businesses and enhance our reputation.

712.2 Establishment of a SMT-Council Working Group

An initial meeting was held to consider establishing a group to develop thinking about what a partnership might look like and to jointly share the thinking and development work necessary to take this forward. It was stressed that this was not a formal committee and would be used initially to identify the development work and information required to support further debate to take this proposal forward in a more formal way, including at this meeting. Terms of Reference were discussed, amended and put forward for approval as well as notes of the meeting held on 17 May 2011. If this proposal was approved for further development, it is proposed that it would be chaired by the Vice Chancellor who would be supported as Vice Chair by the Deputy Chair of Council. Membership would also include Chair of Council, Chair of Resources Committee as well as the Pro Vice Chancellor, Campus and Facilities and the Director of Finance.

Pauline Odulinski left at 4.00pm to ensure that there would be no conflicts of interest.

712.3 Presentation on Structures

a. Case Studies of Universities with further education provision

Eight case studies of different types of partnerships of FE and HE were presented in summary and in detail as well as a prediction on the proposed partnership. The benefits and advantages/success of each case was detailed and discussed. In addition a number of hypothetical student experiences were presented with outcomes based on and accommodated within the proposed partnership.

b. Preferred structure for the partnership with Aylesbury College
See reserved business minutes

Thanks were expressed to all those who had prepared, presented and answered questions on the information provided.

712.4 Council discussion and exploration of partnership with Aylesbury College and its rationale

Members were asked to identify questions queries for clarification or to alleviate concerns in order to come to a decision whether the development of this partnership should continue.
See reserved business minutes

Following the debate and discussions full support was given to taking the proposals to the next stage through the proposed Council - SMT Working Group as detailed in the Terms of Reference and membership noted earlier in the meeting. There will be a further development of the Business Case and progress on the work needed to undertake due diligence. An early meeting of the SMT - Council Working Group was agreed.

A report on progress in these areas will be made at the July meeting of Council together with the timescale for progression and final decision. The Chair and Vice Chancellor would be working more closely with their opposite numbers with a view to Council and Corporation meeting together at some point.

(Action: Chair/Vice Chancellor)

713 Date of next meeting

713.1 The next meeting of Council is scheduled to take place on Monday 11 July 2011, commencing at 4.00pm in G5.05, at the **High Wycombe Campus**.

The meeting started at 2.00pm and finished at 6.30pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chair of Council)

Prepared by Registrar (Governance) – 9 June 2011

Checked by Clerk to the Council – 13 June 2011

Confirmed by the Chair – 16 June 2011

Confirmed by VC – 17 June 2011