



Buckinghamshire New University

Draft:	31 May 2012
approved for circulation:	18 June 2012
confirmed by Council:	9 July 2012

Missenden Council

Minutes

date: **29 May 2012**
time: **2.00 pm**
location: **Carrington Room, Missenden Abbey**

Present:

Roy Darby (Chair)	Co-opted Council member
Antony Bellekom	Independent Council member
Mitch Brown	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	Senate Nomination
Ian Hillan	Independent Council member
Michael Hipkins	Independent Council member
Sukhie Mattu	Elected Professional Services Employee
Jenny Newton	Independent Council member
Crystal Oldman	Elected Academic Employee
Simon Opie	Independent Council member
Keith Ryan	Independent Council member
Linsey Taylor	Senate Nomination
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:

John Cooper	Director of Finance
Steve Dewhurst	Director of Business Planning
Derek Godfrey	Deputy Vice Chancellor
Chris Kemp	Pro Vice Chancellor, Faculty of Design, Media & Management
Trevor Nicholls	Pro Vice Chancellor, Campus & Facilities
Tristan Tipping	Chief Executive Officer, Students' Union

Apologies:

David Griffiths	Independent Council member
Pauline Odulinski	Co-opted Council member
David Sines	Pro Vice Chancellor, Faculty of Society & Health

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting and particularly welcomed Tristan Tipping as the new Chief Executive Officer of the Students' Union.

772 Declaration of potential conflicts of interest

772.1 Lori Flynn declared that as an employee of Hewlett Packard, a partner of the University, she may have a conflict of interest. This was noted.

772.2 Baljit Dhillon declared that the Chair of HEFCE is a member of the board of the Space Agency of which he is also a member. This was noted and it was agreed that the Clerk would log on the membership records for future reference

(Action: Clerk to the Council)

772.3 No other conflicts of interest were declared or identified.

Membership Matters

773 Recruitment to Chair of Council: Progress update

773.1 Council members were advised that four applications had been received for the position of Chair of Council. Only one of the applicants fully met the criteria with the three other applicants only partially fulfilling them. The Vice Chancellor had met the shortlisted candidate and she had been invited to a formal meeting on 30 May 2012 with the selection panel consisting of herself, Brian Tranter, Lori Flynn and Michael Hipkins. Members would be advised of the outcome of this meeting and formal consideration of the panel's recommendation would be made by Council in July.

(Action: Vice Chancellor, Selection Panel, Clerk to the Council)

774 Election of Deputy Chair

774.1 An invitation for nominations for the post of Deputy Chair had been circulated. The date for the close of the nomination process is Friday 1 June 2012. If there is more than one nomination, an electronic ballot will be held with the closing date for voting being Friday 15 June 2012 by 12.00 noon.

Overview and Introduction

775 Introduction (presentation)

775.1 Members were reminded of the discussions held at the last meeting and how this had developed into the current programme which includes:

- Core Business – student number and financial projections
- Keeping flexibility and the University's options open through developing a new company with business opportunities and a partnership with Aylesbury College
- Finalising the budget and presenting this together with the up-to-date financial forecasts to HEFCE by 20 June 2012
- Approving the principles underpinning the Access Agreement for submission to the Office of Fair Access (OFFA) by 31 May 2012

775.2 The University's up-to-date position on full-time undergraduate recruitment was noted including the estimate of the potential shortfall. Comparisons with 2010 and 2011 were made and it was noted that applications for 2011 had been higher than usual as a result of students applying to benefit from the lower level of student fees. Full details of the planned late recruitment campaign were explained including plans for clearing, marketing and advertising and targeted individual recruitment.

776 National Policy Developments (presentation)

776.1 The Tariff, Core and Margin rules in relation to the government Student Number Control (SNC) were explained in relation to full-time undergraduate entrants in 2012 and 2013.

- 776.2 In addition HEFCE is consulting on funding allocation from 2013 onwards and the proposals include some public funding for undergraduate intermediate cost subjects as well as postgraduate students. In addition student opportunity (formally widening participation) premium remains and more flexibility for Foundation Degrees and HND top-up courses to be outside the SNC were noted.

Tuition Fees/Access Agreement

777 Full time Undergraduate Tuition Fees (2013-14) (presentation)

777.1 The policy strands for 2012 recruitment of full-time undergraduates include:

- Removing the highest performing applicants from the control
- Creating a competitive margin to redistribute numbers on the basis of Quality, Value and Demand

777.2 Possible scenarios for 2013 were shown based on meeting the SNC in 2012 and increasing the University's core and margin allocation – this showed the University as maintaining its SNC at 1829. On this basis the University proposed maintaining the 2012 fee structure for 2013 entry.

778 Access Agreement (2013-14) (C/12/22)

778.1 The steer that the Office of Fair Access (OFFA) has given to HEIs is to change as little as possible for 2013-14 but bearing in mind that by then there will be two cohorts of students now falling under the Agreement. However a number of changes have been made by OFFA including the addition of part-time students. After consultation across the University and approval by the Senior Management Team (SMT) the following changes are proposed to the University OFFA agreement for 2013-14:

- Part-time student fees confirmed within the £4.5k band with higher cost courses to be charged at no more than 75% full-time equivalent (fte) fee
- More detail and evidence based statements have been included to demonstrate our adoptive approach in supporting our delivery, e.g. flexible access and supportive provision for widening participation (WP) students
- National Scholarship Programme (NSP) allocation of £534k (matched equals £1,068k) from £306k (matched equals £606k)
- Retention financial commitment of £489k from £97k, this could entail extra staff to provide additional help with pastoral support and academic studies.

779 Plenary Discussion leading to approval of FTUG Tuition Fees and Access Agreement for 2013-14)

779.1 A number of points were raised and responses made in the discussion:

- Applicant conversion is better at Bucks than at other comparator Universities – considerable work is being undertaken to make this happen
- Experience of increased fee levels when this took place twice before across the sector is that recruitment goes down for a year and then recovers
- In the current climate not meeting at least 95% our student number control would mean that those places not filled would be lost
- The late and Clearing marketing campaign is targeting underperforming areas and those students who are still undecided about studying in higher education
- The University's Unique Selling Point is The Big Deal.
- One course has been closed because of lack of recruitment, some target numbers are being redistributed to higher recruiting courses where the facilities are available and effort is being targeted at those areas where lower than normal recruitment is being experienced
- The University has an experienced recruitment team who will work hard to fulfil the SNC
- Plans for organising and managing Clearing are well in hand with a clear focus on what is required, including where necessary acceptance with lower entry qualifications
- One suggestion was to make later years of study cheaper than the first year
- No good arguments to make changes in fees at this stage as there is no evidence yet of the impact of the new fees system on enrolments and no trend data on which to make predictions

- No evidence that changing fees will increase numbers – when recruitment is confirmed in October may need to rethink
- 779.2 It was AGREED that the full-time undergraduate fees for 2013-14 remain the same as for 2012-13. It was also noted that Council may debate the matter of fees at its autumn meeting once the 2012-13 full-time undergraduate recruitment cycle is complete.
(Action: Clerk to the Council – agenda item)
- 779.3 It was AGREED that the Access Agreement as considered be submitted to OFFA by the deadline of 31 May 2012.
(Action: Head of Student Centre)

Other Aspects of the Strategic Plan

780 Student numbers underpinning the 2012-13 to 2014-15 Financial Forecasts (presentation)

780.1 Included in the proposed Financial Forecasts were actual and indicated student numbers for the period 2010 to 2015. These show the increased target for full-time undergraduate numbers for the future. It is anticipated that overseas recruitment will decline initially and then slowly improve. Part-time students will continue to decline with the increased fees to compensate for the decline in HEFCE funding. Postgraduate recruitment has been reduced to a more realistic level to match the scale being achieved. In summary it was noted that student numbers are planned to increase by 1300 over the period of the plan.

781 Shape of the Academic Portfolio (presentation)

781.1 The successes achieved by the Faculty of Society & Health have already been reported. A further tender for other specialist provision, Operating Department Practice, has been submitted for further work locally.

781.2 Attention was drawn to the decline in some and increase in popularity of others in the very diverse range of subjects that are managed by the Faculty of Design, Media and Management. This will result in restructuring the School/Departments as well as redesigning some individual courses to meet the current requirements of the market place. In addition new courses are being introduced to fulfil student demand. All academic provision is regularly monitored to ensure it is up-to-date and recruiting.

782 International Strategy (C/12/23) (presentation)

782.1 A draft International Strategy was presented. This included background, current position, key objectives and strategy for growth, types of recruitment and an implementation strategy as well as targets and financial projections.

782.2 The strategy is based on “a new university providing international students with focused professional and creative higher education” as per the Strategic Plan 2010-2015

782.3 The aims of the strategy are to:

- steadily increase the international population of the University
- develop partnerships for 'in-country' delivery of Bucks New University courses
- develop specialist international partnership offerings
- further enhance the International Student Experience
- promote an internationalisation ethos throughout the University

782.4 The approach to International Recruitment would be in three ways:

- Direct Recruitment onto existing Bucks UK programmes studied in the UK
- In-country delivery where partnerships are set up for the validation and delivery of courses overseas
- Specialist Programmes – designed for specific partners and delivered in the UK or overseas

- 782.5 Clarification was sought in some areas and questions and responses raised as follows:
- How decisions are made about which countries to target – all opportunities are reviewed by the Research and Academic Resources Committee including resources
 - Increasing restrictions on immigration are making it harder for international students to obtain visas, hence the conservative projections to increasing student numbers and the move to in-country delivery
 - The margins for the different delivery models are different
 - Quality assurance through validation, due diligence and review are monitored and taken seriously to ensure the University's reputation is maintained

782.6 Members welcomed the submission of this draft strategy and appreciated the care and effort taken to formulate it. Some reservations were expressed around financial margins, spreading effort too thinly and time taken away from the core business. However, overall Council supported recruitment in this area which was carefully monitored, reviewed and managed.

783 Students' Union contribution to delivering a good student experience (presentation)

783.1 Work undertaken during the year included the production of both a Training Guide and a Student Involvement Guide for students to help identify the advantages of getting involved in Students' Union activities and the impact this would have on their employability. Experience is showing that there are an increasing number of students not only using the bar (which has done well this year) but also joining in events and sports as well as societies and volunteering. Students increasingly want to gain transferrable skills.

783.2 'Project X', a development of The Big Deal, is being introduced by the Students' Union as a re-focusing of priorities, a re-allocation of resources, a re-organisation of the team and a new approach to invigorate The Big Deal, which is one of the University's unique selling points. This will mean offering:

- Increasingly diverse events still free of charge
- Extending both competitive and recreational sports and providing development opportunities in the areas of training and coaching
- Enriched extra-curricular opportunities with a wealth of personal development and leadership opportunities in addition to increasing community links
- Recreational Activities programme reaching all student groups across both campuses which develop skills based opportunities linked to employability
- In the area of Employability, recognising and formalising transferrable skills as well as increasing the profile of this through the employment of a Training Manager to support students
- Continue to increase the profile of and work undertaken at the Uxbridge Campus
- Other projects include, further investment in the community volunteering programme, extending the opening hours for a range of services and the development of an SU communications department to include greater multimedia activity

783.3 Project X will enable the University to continue to confidently offer the "Big Deal" to current and prospective students as part of a wider Students' Union package that bigger Universities would value highly.

783.4 Members congratulated the Students' Union on their excellent presentation and welcomed the planned changes to the work undertaken by them.

Financial Aspects

784 Draft Budget 2012-13 (C/12/24) (presentation)

784.1 The key areas of movement from the forecast for 2011-12 to the budget for 2012-13 were explained as well as the assumptions which underpinned these changes. The proposed budget identifies only a partial commitment of the total budget with an amount being held in reserve to reflect the consequences of a possible reduced level of recruitment for 2012-13. The Financial Forecast, which includes the budget for 2012-13 is required to be submitted to HEFCE in

advance of the next Resources Committee Meeting in June where consideration and the formal adoption of the budget will be made.

785 Financial Forecasts: 2012-13 to 2014-15 (C/12/25) (presentation)

785.1 The forecast for the period 2012-2015 was put forward for consideration prior to submission to HEFCE by 20 June 2012. The principles applied and the changes made to the current forecast were explained and it was noted that these figures are subject to any changes required to reflect decisions made regarding tuition fees and the access agreement.

786 Plenary discussion leading to approval of the Budget and Financial Forecasts

786.1 The consequences of not meeting the student number control target in relation to the budget were considered with funds being held back in the areas of increasing staff numbers, discretionary spend, student accommodation and investment fund. However the forecasts comfortably show the University meeting the debt covenants over the plan period.

786.2 The best case scenario included increased income in the areas of HEFCE grant, full-time undergraduate fees, and NHS income enabling planned projects to be approved and progressed.

786.3 A number of points were raised including the significance of research income, increased numbers of students leading to increases in activities and increases in staffing, reduced payments to partners as a result of the funding regime changes and equipment budget costs cease as leases end.

786.4 Council APPROVED the draft budget for inclusion in the Financial Forecasts submitted to HEFCE by 20 June 2012 and the basis for Resources Committee to discuss and finalise at their meeting in June.

786.5 Council APPROVED the Financial Forecast for 2012-2015 for submission to HEFCE by 20 June 2012.

(Action: Director of Finance, Resources Committee)

Skills and Training Education Partnership (STEP)

787 STEP update (C/12/26)

787.1 A primary subsidiary company wholly owned by the University has been established and the proposed alternative governance models for a University Subsidiary and a joint University and Aylesbury College Subsidiary were shown. The proposed products and timescale for introduction were provided in detail.

787.2 Progress on the current position is that the University is currently interviewing for a new CEO and continuing negotiations are being held with Aylesbury College. The targeted income and expenditure were discussed. A key task of the new CEO will be to review these current proposals and to identify other opportunities to develop the STEP product offering both within the University only subsidiary and within the joint University/Aylesbury subsidiary.

(Action: Deputy Vice Chancellor)

787.3 Council AGREED that the membership of the Subsidiary Company Board be actioned as detailed in section 1c of the paper presented.

(Action: Deputy Vice Chancellor, Clerk to the Council)

788 Aylesbury College Investment in STEP (C/12/27)

- See: Reserved Business

Partnership with Aylesbury College

789 - See Reserved Business

790 Date of next meeting

790.1 The next meeting of Council is scheduled to take place on: **Monday 9 July 2012, commencing at 4.00pm at Missenden Abbey.**

The meeting started at 2.00pm and finished at 6.15pm

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chair of Council)

Prepared by Registrar (Governance) – 31 May 2012
Amended by Clerk to the Council – 8 June 2012
Confirmed by VC – 13 June 2012
Confirmed by the Chair – 18 June 2012