



Buckinghamshire New University

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confirmed by Council:	

Council

Minutes

date: **22 November 2010**
time: **5.45 pm**
location: **Boardroom, High Wycombe**

Present:

Roy Darby (Chair)	Co-opted Council member
Anthony Bellekom	Independent Council member
Mitch Brown	Independent Council member
Ruth Farwell	Ex officio member and Vice Chancellor
Lori Flynn	Independent Council member
Tom Foy	President, Students' Union
David Griffiths	Independent Council member
Ian Hillan	Independent Council member
Sukhie Mattu	Elected Staff Member (PSE)
Pauline Odulinski	Co-opted Council member
Simon Opie	Independent Council member
Crystal Oldman	Elected Staff Member (Academic)
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
Chris Kemp	Pro Vice Chancellor, Faculty of Design, Media & Management
David Sines	Pro Vice Chancellor, Faculty of Society & Health
Trevor Nicholls	Pro Vice Chancellor, Campus & Facilities

Apologies:

Antonia Byatt	Independent Council member
Keith Ryan	Independent Council member
Terri Teasdale	Independent Council member
Derek Godfrey	Deputy Vice Chancellor

682 Chairman's Welcome

682.1 The Chair welcomed Sukhie Mattu and Crystal Oldman to their first meeting as elected staff members. They were congratulated on their appointment. Ms Oldman was a continuing appointment and Mr Mattu was invited to introduce himself.

Mr Mattu advised that he had been with the University for several years and as Student Centre Manager worked with both students and staff across the University.

The nomination from Senate was still to be appointed.

682.2 The Chair advised that unfortunately Smita Jamdar had, with regret, decided to resign from her position on Council due to a conflict of interest in relation to her work commitments. Her resignation had been accepted. A letter of confirmation and appreciation had been sent to her.

683 Declaration of potential conflicts of interest

683.1 No conflicts of interest were declared or identified.

684 Minutes of the Meetings held on 12 July 2010 and 19 October 2010

684.1 The Minutes of the meetings held on 12 July 2010 and 19 October 2010 were signed as a correct record without amendment.

685 Matters Arising

685.1 QAA Institutional Audit Report (C-10-02):

The summary and more detailed annexe of the 2010 report were circulated for information. These documents were published on the QAA Website. The next audit would be in 5 years time under a new revised methodology currently being developed.

686 Chair's Action

686.1 None had been taken since the last meeting

687 Vice Chancellor's Report and other Strategic Matters

687.1 Vice Chancellor's Report (C-10-17)

This included commentary on :

- Higher Education Sector Developments
 - University and Student Finance
 - Action plan to develop a new business model for 2012-13
 - Developments in quality assurance
 - Key information set
- Recruitment Update – applications continuing to increase
- Key Performance Indicators
- University Development and recent successes
 - Official opening of the Gateway – by the Minister of State for Universities and Science – to be used to emphasise who we are, links with employers, employability, links with the local community and a demonstration of what students undertake in a non-traditional university
 - National School of Furniture – joint venture with OCVC launched in November
 - University shortlisted for award - THES, Outstanding contribution to the Local Community
 - National Teaching Fellow appointment – the first for Bucks

687.2 Key Performance Indicators (C-10-03)

The development of this report was to continue to build on discussions and current information. Although it would not be normal to make any revisions following Resources Committee, some had been made on this occasion to improve the presentation of the KPI's. Questions were asked around whether the University was on target to achieve these aims as well as the current

position. It was thought that this was the case but would be monitored by the SMT on a monthly basis and an updated report considered at each Resources Committee and Council.

This report was a useful mechanism by which Council were informed of current progress but concerns were expressed whether this was the most efficient way of undertaking this. The designing and production of this report had taken some time but it was thought that the updating process was a useful way of monitoring progress and the current position and would be carried out as efficiently as possible.

688 Audit Committee

688.1 Minutes of the Meetings held on 28 September 2010 and 9 November 2010

Minutes of the Meetings held on 28 September 2010 and 9 November 2010 were received without comment.

688.2 Summary of Subsidiary Companies signed Financial Statements for the Year ended 31 July 2010 (C-10-10)

The year end accounts had been approved by the Audit Committee. However one of the External Auditors recommendations, namely the forgiving of the loans to 2 of the subsidiary companies as well as the forgiving of the rent for Missenden Abbey to ensure that these companies would not show a loss required Council approval. Advice had been obtained through the University lawyers who had supported this recommendation. The management and performance of these companies had been turned around and would continue to be closely monitored and reviewed.

Council agreed that these recommendations be **APPROVED**.

688.3 Financial Statements for the Year ended 31 July 2010 (C-10-040)

Attention was drawn to a number of points within the final Financial Statement as follows:

- No provision is made for asset lives in excess of 50 years
- The accounting standard FRS 17 is now reflected in the accounts through recognized gains and losses rather than within the income and expenditure accounts which avoids giving a misleading picture of employee costs – this was necessary as a result of the Governments change from CPI to RPI for future pension increases and approved by the External Auditors
- The results for the year are clearly detailed on page 1
- Income grew by 6.5% during the year as a result in increases in tuition fees and grants
- Employee costs fell by 13.4% following a restructuring effected at the end of 2008-9
- Other operating costs increased substantially as a result of the completion of the major building projects and the resulting management costs and repayment of loans

In considering the Accounts the Audit Committee had also reviewed the work of the external auditors whose three year term of appointment ended this year. It was agreed to recommended their re-appointment to Council for a further year. Council endorsed this proposal.

Council **APPROVED** the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2010 as circulated

688.4 Audit Committee Annual report 2009-10 (C-10-05)

The following reports were presented to council for consideration and approval:

- a) Annual Report 2009-10 to the Council and Vice Chancellor as Designated Officer – for note and submission to HEFCE
- b) External Auditors Report and Key Issues Memorandum
- c) Letter of Representation for signature – endorse the letter for signature by the Chair
- d) Value for Money Report from the Vice Chancellor – to approve
- e) Internal Auditors Report – recommended the report to Council

Council **APPROVED** these reports as circulated to be processed as detailed.

688.5 Strategic Risk Assessment and Annual Report 2009-10 (C-10-06)

The report covers early warning controls, impact, probability and risk scores as well as risk controls, risk treatments and risk owner and strategic aims in the following areas:

- Student Experience
- People
- Estates and Facilities
- Financial Performance and
- External Forces

In addition a guide to impact and probability scoring is included. It is aimed at providing a high level view of strategic risks facing the University in relation to their current assessed level and progress against controls.

It was thought that some of the scoring was rather pessimistic but it was suggested that the predictions made related to future proposals made by external organisations. Such proposals would be reviewed on a regularly basis both by SMT and Audit Committee.

688.5 HEFCE Assurance Review Interim Report: Follow-up Action (C-10-07)

This report identified a number of minor issues relating to the work of Council that the University may wish to reflect on and address. Improvement actions were detailed, many of which have already been completed, and actions will be reflected in a report to HEFCE when finalised in six months time.

An update of progress against actions would be brought to a future meeting of Council.

688.6 External Returns - Data Quality Monitoring (C-10-08)

This provides the visibility of key data returns, associated risks and progress against return schedules and requirements. The deadlines shown were noted and a request was made for the committee responsible for each return to be noted. This will be updated regularly for Audit Committee.

689 Resources Committee

689.1 Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 November 2010

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2010 were received without comment.

689.2 Bucks Students' Union signed Financial Statements and Students' Union Auditors' Management Letter for the year ending 31 July 2010 (C-10-09)

The Students' Union balanced the accounts for this year and raised substantial funds for charity as well as undertaking many more events. Council noted the Students' Union affiliations detailed on page 1. Appreciation was expressed regarding performance for 2009-10

Council **RECEIVED and NOTED** the statements as circulated.

689.3 Financial Statement as at September 2010 (C-10-11)

This was included for information:

- Speedier receipt of tuition fees up front and due in February
- Expenditure higher than last year
- Residences and catering below budget
- Final payment for Chalfont still to come
- SMT still working on employee cost savings
- Current overdraft is lower than 2009
- Money market loan facility is being agreed
- Offshore VAT now being charged at the normal rate

689.4 Financial Forecasts 2010-2015 (C-10-12)

These are normally required to be submitted to HEFCE by the end of November each year but, in view of the potential changes to funding, the forecast deadline has been put back until early 2011. As a result this forecast has been deferred but will be considered further before the end of

February 2011. It is likely that there will be a significant difference in the amount of income paid to partner colleges and it is not known yet what the tuition fees will be for 2011-12. It is hoped that this information will be available in January.

689.5 Hostel & Tuition Fees C-10-13)

Consideration regarding proposals to set Tuition Fees was made and it was **AGREED** that this be delegated to SMT with a summary being fed back to council in relation to groups of students.

Council **APPROVED** recommendations regarding Hostel Rents.

689.6 Money Market Loan Facility (C-10-14)

The interest on such a facility was less than a bank overdraft facility and would be particularly useful when cash is required in a matter of weeks rather than days.

Council **AGREED** that the University enter into an agreement with the Bank for a Money Market Loan Facility up to £2.5m for 2010-11.

689.7 Missenden Abbey Business Plan (C-10-15)

A summary of the Business plan, which had been developed following receipt of consultant's advice, included identification of capital investment, the forgiving of loan and rent charges previously agreed, further consideration of charges made for internal and external use and the contractual commitment to the county council for adult learning to 2016 was received. Realistic targets on income for the first quarter had been met but the adult learning part of this was disappointing.

Council **APPROVED** the revised business and capital expenditure plans for Missenden Abbey Limited for 2010-11.

690 Remuneration Committee

690.1 Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 July 2010

Reference was made to the recommendation by the HEFCE Assurance Review that Independent and Co-opted Members be given an opportunity to have a private meeting, without staff present, to discuss any issues that had arisen. The Chair noted that this had been offered but no member requested a private meeting.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2010 were received without comment.

691 Governance Matters

691.1 Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 October 2010

The Chair encouraged members to complete the Register of Interests Form, which had been sent out recently for 2010-11, by the deadline specified.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2010 were received without comment.

692 Other matters

692.1 Student Disciplinary Procedures (September 2009) minor amendment

Attention was drawn to the minor amendment that was altered to take account of an OIA ruling on a specific case.

Council **APPROVED** the amended procedures

692.2 Student Complaints Annual Report 2009-10 (C-10-19)

This annual report was tabled and noted.

692.3 Student Disciplinary Annual Report 2009-10 (C-10-19)

This annual report was tabled and noted.

693 Date of next meeting

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

Tuesday 8 February 2011, commencing at 4.00pm at Missenden Abbey

The meeting started at 5.45pm and finished at 7.15 pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chair of Council)

Prepared by Registrar (Governance) – 25 November 2010
Checked by Clerk to the Council – 30 November 2010
Confirmed by the Chair – 12 December 2010