



Buckinghamshire New University

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Council

Minutes

date: **19 March 2012**
time: **4.00 pm**
location: **3.07, Uxbridge**

Present:

Roy Darby (Chair)	Co-opted Council member
Antony Bellekom	Independent Council member
Mitch Brown	Independent Council member
Antonia Byatt	Independent Council member
Baljit Dhillon	Independent Council member
Ruth Farwell	Ex officio member and Vice Chancellor
Stephen Fox	Elected Senate member
David Griffiths	Independent Council member
Ian Hillan	Independent Council member
Michael Hipkins	Independent Council member
Sukhie Mattu	Elected Staff member (PSE)
Jenny Newton	Independent Council member
Pauline Odulinski	Co-opted Council member
Crystal Oldman	Elected Staff member (Academic)
Simon Opie	Independent Council member
Keith Ryan	Independent Council member
Linsey Taylor	Elected Senate Member
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
Derek Godfrey	Deputy Vice Chancellor
Trevor Nicholls	Pro Vice Chancellor Campus & Facilities

Apologies:

Lori Flynn	Independent Council member
Ashley Coles	President Students' Union

757 Chairman's Welcome

757.1 The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Linsey Taylor as a new member elected by Senate and replacing Roger Dalrymple who had left the University.

Linsey introduced herself as a Senior Lecturer in Accounts and Finance, involved with the newly set up Clare Business School as well as being heavily involved in rowing both personally and with her two daughters.

758 Declaration of potential conflicts of interest

758.1 Pauline Odulinski declared an interest in item 6.2 on the agenda, "Partnership with Aylesbury College: Progress Report" and item 8.3 on the agenda, "New Delivery Models for HE". She advised that she would withdraw from the meeting for the second item.

Roy Darby and Mitch Brown declared an interest for item 13.3 on the agenda, "Retiring Council Members" and advised that they would both withdraw from the meeting for this item.

These were noted.

759 Minutes of the Meetings held on 21 November 2011 and 7 February 2012

759.1 The Minutes of the meetings held on 21 November 2011 and 7 February 2012 were signed as a correct record without amendment. The actions from the meetings were either on the agenda or had been completed

760 Matters Arising

760.1 No matters arising were noted that were not already included on the agenda.

761 Chair's Action

761.1 None had been taken since the last meeting.

762 Vice Chancellor's Report and other Strategic Matters

762.1 Vice Chancellor's Report, including Key Performance Indicators (C/12/08)

This included commentary on:

- Progress on the Higher Education White Paper and Technical Consultation
 - Technical consultation views and comments to be reflected in new Higher Education Bill expected to be introduced in 2012
 - BIS White Paper on higher education included a more risk based approach to regulation and more providers being brought within the full regulatory framework
 - Raised expectations of the Student body
 - QAA consultation on the draft section of the Quality Code on Student Engagement
- HE fees and the student finance package for the 2013-14 academic year
 - Fee caps and fee loans
 - Maintenance grants
 - Living cost loans
 - Disability grants and dependants' grants
- Wilson review of Business/University collaboration
 - The focus is primarily on leadership and best practice sharing
 - A series of recommendations are made which do not rely on government spending or increased regulation
- HEFCE consultation on its teaching funding methodology
 - Stage 2 consultation relating to arrangements for 2013-14 runs to 25 May 2012 and the outcomes go to the HEFCE Board in July
 - A number of proposals included in the consultation would benefit the University financially, in particular in relation to postgraduate teaching grant, undergraduate fees in Band C and SNC rules in relation to collaborative partner students who top up at the University
- Student Applications for 2012 entry

- The current level of applications and in what subject areas they are strongest and weakest
- Confidence in filling the places allocated within the SNC and actions taken to achieve this
- University Developments and recent successes
 - Success in NHS contracts both for adult education in London and children's nursing in Buckinghamshire
 - Launch of the Centre for Healthcare Communications Research and Excellence
 - Bang goes the Theory – BBC1 series in which the University will feature in relation to our research into crowd management and the safety of crowds at large events
- Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)
 - Student Experience
 - People
 - Estates
 - Applications for 2011-12

The balanced scorecard was noted with all statuses showing no changes except for finance where income growth shows amber and has not reached expectations in particular areas. Income derived from areas of diversification, namely overseas income is also less than predicted. One high risk area, Employee Satisfaction showing red was improving and several areas showing amber risk, namely space efficiency and managing performance were also showing improvements.

The Director of Finance advised Council that the March grant letter from HEFCE had been received but the information provided remained confidential until 29 March 2012. The grant for 2012-13 was now known and was better than reported at the last meeting. However it was more uncertain as it was dependent on student numbers enrolled. In addition there would be no tolerance band.

763 Partnership Model with Aylesbury College: Progress Report (Verbal)

Pauline Odulinski, following the declaration of a conflict of interest in this item refrained from contributing to the discussion.

- See: Reserved Business

764 Report on Senate Matters

764.1 Quality and standards outcomes (2010-2011) (C/12/09)

A report was received which confirmed that academic standards were commensurate with sector standards for 2010-11. This report highlighted the successes and good practice achieved both in the faculties and service departments as well as the reviews undertaken within the University and at our Regional Partner Colleges. A Quality and Standards Action Plan (2010-11) has been developed to enable the University to track progress of actions which related to improving processes.

Sector changes were noted in the areas of Public Information (Key Information Set), a new methodology for Institutional Review and the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

Council welcomed the excellent report and thanked the team for achieving such a high standard.

764.2 Minutes of the Student Experience Committee on 1 November 2011 and 15 February 2012

The minutes of the two meetings were noted as received. Council asked that a copy of the attendance list be included in future.

A comparison was made between the student opinion in relation to the academic work load and that noted in the KPI's. It was noted that it was not possible to compare the two measures as the KPI's were based on finance and risk whereas student opinion, as reported to this committee, was based on the fact that students have less access than they would like to academic staff who have commitments to a wide range of students and other responsibilities.

(Action: Clerk to the Council)

765 Resources Committee

765.1 Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 March 2012

Minutes of the meetings held on 6 March 2012 were received. Attention was drawn to future capital investment proposals and it was noted that two of the proposals were for substantial amounts, namely the redevelopment of South Block and conversion of D Block to a Live Performance space. It is planned that an Investment Strategy is brought to Council during the next academic year.

765.2 Financial Position January 2012 (C/12/10)

The Financial position was noted. The improved financial position was welcomed.

765.3 New Delivery Models for Higher Education (C/12/11)

Pauline Odulinski left the meeting at this point having made a declaration of interest in this item.

- See: Reserved Business

765.4 Tuition Fees 2012-2013 (C/12/12)

The fees for 2012-13 for undergraduate, postgraduate, overseas students, full time, part time and continuing students were detailed in the paper presented. It was noted that the government have from 2012-13 set fee limits for part time undergraduate courses for the first time. Previously these were set by individual institutions.

These recommendations were **APPROVED** by Council

765.5 Student Residences (C/12/13)

An additional paper was considered at the meeting regarding a proposal to buy and develop, instead of leasing, student accommodation in Rye Park House. The owners have been unable to obtain financing for its development as student accommodation but are prepared to sell it to the University. The costs of purchase and development were noted. In order to meet the need for student accommodation in September 2012, a decision on the proposal to buy this property was required urgently. Members supported the proposal to increase student accommodation as quickly and economically as possible.

It was AGREED that a small group of Council Members, namely Keith Ryan, David Griffiths and Simon Opie, meet with the Director of Finance to satisfy themselves that the proposal is viable and give approval to the University to progress this purchase and development, if appropriate.

The main report included information relating to capacity and demand, private and commercial sector availability as well as the current position and financial implications for the various options being considered.

Approval was sought for the following recommendations:

- a. Attempts are made to secure Alexandra House and Abbey Lodge at rents affordable to students for September 2012.
- b. Formal proposals are prepared for an initial further phase of development at Hughenden and changes to the relationship with CSV, with a view to final approval being given when the recruitment picture for September 2012 is clearer and the cash position for 2012-13 more firmly established.

These recommendations were **APPROVED** by Council

766 Audit Committee

766.1 Minutes of the Meetings held on 24 January 2012

Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 January 2012 were received without comment.

766.2 Appointment of Auditors

Confirmation of the appointment of the existing External Auditors was noted.

The current position of the tendering process to appoint new Internal Auditors was explained.

Council **APPROVED** the appointment of the existing External Auditors subject to agreement on fees and the process for tendering for a new appointment of Internal Auditors.

(Action: Director of Finance)

767 Governance Matters

767.1 Minutes of the Meeting held on 31 January 2012

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2012 were received without comment.

767.2 Council Membership (verbal)

The proposal to appoint a replacement for Senate Nominated member, Roger Dalrymple was noted. Linsey Taylor had the next highest votes during the election process and had agreed to take Roger's place to the end of his term of office in July 2013.

Two members were due to retire in July 2012 at the end of a four year term of office, namely Lori Flynn and Keith Ryan. Both were able to be reappointed and had agreed to be appointed for a second term of office.

Council **APPROVED** their appointment for a second term of office.

(Action: Clerk to the Council)

The Chair of Council, Roy Darby had completed two terms of Office as an Independent Member as well as a two year appointment as a Co-opted Member and Chair. In addition the Chair of Resources Committee Mitch Brown had completed two terms of office as an Independent Member. Proposals to fill these vacancies, were considered as part of the next item "Council Chair".

767.3 Council Chair

Changes to the process of recruiting for a Chair of Council were considered. It was stressed that the proposal was offered for consideration so that, in context of the University's current position, the best candidate could be found for this most senior post whether it was from an internal or external applicant. Experience from the sector as well as through the meetings with the Committee of University Chairs indicated that Universities undertake an external search for their Chairs as a matter of good practice. Papers providing information on the choices available and the rationale for making a decision were as follows:

- Context paper showing rationale, process good practice and recommendations
- Role Description and Person Specification
- Recruitment Process and Timescale
- Changes to Council Procedures

The proposal to recruit only one new member meant that the usual membership level of 20 would be maintained and this was a viable number to fill the committees and undertake the work of Council. It was agreed at Governance Committee that recruitment would be for only one vacancy. If the new Chair were to be an external appointment then there would be no further vacancies.

A number of points were drawn out including practice elsewhere, the current position of the University within the sector, how the new Chair might support the University in gaining respect and place within the sector as well as the urgency and timescale. Clarification was sought around a fallback position in the event of receiving no applicants, the very short timescale and wording within the job description and person specification, including understanding and commitment to HE. It was thought that an application form should be part of the applicant process.

Council **APPROVED** the recommendation that the process for the appointment of a new Chair of Council should include an external search as well as applications from the existing Council

membership according to the process provided and based on the proposed role description and person specification. The amendments to the Procedures were also **APPROVED**. In addition the interview process would include the Vice Chancellor, the Chair of Governance and two other members of Council. Members were asked to contact the Clerk to the Council if they were interested in being part of the Interview Panel.

The position of Deputy Chair would be considered once the formal recruitment of a Chair had taken place and would follow the usual process of nomination and election from amongst the Independent and Co-opted Council Members.

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

767.4 Calendar of Meetings (September 2012 to December 2013) (C/12/15)

Council were asked to approve the new dates which had been changed since the meeting to include the confirmed dates for graduation 2013.

Council **APPROVED** the dates for September 2012 to December 2013.

(Action: Clerk to the Council)

767.5 Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan (2010-2011) and Action Plan (2011-12)(C/12/16)

This report and planned activities was considered by the Governance Committee for the first time under the new arrangements for Committee responsibilities and recommended for approval.

Work to implement the new scheme introduced last year was continuing with considerable progress having already been made.

Council **APPROVED** this report and it was agreed that a more appropriate timescale for reporting is agreed for 2012-13.

767.6 Health & Safety Report 2011 (C/12/17)

This annual report and planned activities was considered by the Governance Committee for the first time under the new arrangements for Committee responsibilities and recommended for approval. It was noted that the items highlighted at Governance Committee had all been followed through and had been completed satisfactorily.

Council **APPROVED** the report and planned activities.

767.7 Students' Union – Revised Code of Practice (C/12/18)

The amendments requested by Council in November to clarify the reporting requirements in relation to the Students' Union interim and end of year financial accounts have been made. Council is invited to approve the Revised Code of Practice including the amendments.

Council **APPROVED** the revised Students' Union – Code of Practice.

768 Remuneration Committee

768.1 Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 February 2012

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2012 were received without comment.

768.2 Proposal for the Appointment of a Pro Vice Chancellor Learning & Teaching (C/12/21)

This is reported under Reserved Business

769 Other Matters

769.1 Use of University Seal and Coat of Arms (C/12/19)

A report on the use of the University Seal and Coat of Arms was received.

770 Honorary Awards Committee

770.1 Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 February 2012

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2012 were received without comment.

770.2 Recommendations for Honorary Awards (C/12/20)

It was noted that a nomination from a previous year was now able to attend this year's graduation and would be included in the programme.

Council **AGREED** the awards suggested as circulated for graduation 2012. These are detailed in the Reserved Business

Roy Darby and Mitch Brown declared a conflict of interest and left the meeting.

Brian Tranter, Deputy Chair of Council took over as Chair for the last item on the agenda.

770.3 Recommendations for Honorary Awards – Retiring Council Members (C/12/21)

- See: Reserved Business

771 Date of next meeting

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

Tuesday 29 May 2012, commencing at 4.00pm at Missenden Abbey and
Monday 9 July 2012, commencing at 4.00pm at Missenden Abbey.

The meeting started at 4.00pm and finished at 6.35 pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chair of Council)

Prepared by Registrar (Governance) – 20 March 2011
Checked by Clerk to the Council – 21 March 2012
Confirmed by the Chair – 17 April 2012