



Buckinghamshire New University

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Council

Minutes

date: **8 July 2013**
time: **4.00 pm**
location: **Missenden Abbey**

Present:

Christine Beasley (Chair)	Independent Council member
Antony Bellekom	Independent Council member
Baljit Dhillon	Independent Council member
Ruth Farwell	Ex officio member and Vice Chancellor
Lori Flynn	Independent Council member
Naomi Franco	President, Students' Union
David Griffiths	Independent Council member
Ian Hillan	Independent Council member
Michael Hipkins	Independent Council member
Julie Irwin	Elected Senate member
Sukhie Mattu	Elected Staff member (PSE)
Hilary Mullen	Elected Staff member (Academic)
Jenny Newton	Independent Council member
Pauline Odulinski	Co-opted Council member
Simon Opie	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
Steve Dewhurst	Director of Business Planning
Derek Godfrey	Deputy Vice Chancellor

Apologies:

Antonia Byatt	Independent Council member
Keith Ryan	Independent Council member

866 Declaration of potential conflicts of interest

866.1 Pauline Odulinski and the BEST Board members, Ruth Farwell, Brian Tranter, Simon Opie and Michael Hipkins declared their conflict of interest in agenda item 7 'Proposal for the HE Centre at Aylesbury'.

This was noted.

867 Minutes of the Meetings held on 18 March 2013 and 4 June 2013

867.1 The Minutes of the meetings held on 18 March 2013 and 4 June 2013 were signed as a correct record without amendment. The actions from the meetings were noted as either on the agenda or completed.

868 Matters Arising

868.1 847.1: Access Agreement for 2014-15

The final approval has not been received yet from OFFA. However, having addressed queries raised by the OFFA officer, approval of the Agreement was being recommended to the Director of OFFA by the officer. The final recommended Agreement is in line with the 22.5% spend of full-time undergraduate fee income above £6,000 agreed by Council previously.

868.2 857.1: Appointment of new members

Attention was drawn to the appointment of Tim Marshall as a co-opted member with education expertise. It had been thought that there was insufficient information provided at the last meeting and an opportunity should be given to provide additional information concerning this appointment. This additional information was noted.

869 Chair's Action

869.1 None had been taken since the last meeting.

870 Vice Chancellor's Report

870.1 Vice Chancellor's Report, including Key Performance Indicators (C/13/18)

This included commentary on:

- National Policy Developments
 - Government Spending Review and how this will impact on reduced resources as well as changes in focus on areas of support in HE
 - HEFCE consultation on Student Number Control for 2014 onwards
 - Risk based quality assurance methodology – new method to be introduced in 2013-14 with an increased number of judgements over a wider area of scrutiny
 - Summary outcomes so far of the current QAA Institutional Reviews as implemented in 2011-12
 - The joint Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) – Which? Student Academic Experience Survey
- Recruitment of full-time undergraduate students at Bucks
 - Student number control for 2013
 - Applications for 2013
- Recent successes
 - Oxford Academic Health Science Network – formally designated by NHS England
 - Wycombe Sculpture Competition – three Bucks students have been shortlisted
 - Queen's Nurse – prestigious recognition for Bucks Academic Head of Academic Department of Primary Care and Public Health
 - Dance Showcase and Awards Night and the Design and Craft Degree Shows
 - NHS Educational Outcomes Framework – Bucks have won a tender to become a Preferred Educational Supplier for NHS Employees working on the (EOF) development programme as well as funding for Project Proposal: Developing on-line system for collecting student feedback about clinical placements
 - Saudi nurses – first intake commenced in June 2013
 - eXtra Awards – four awards made to professional service employees for exceptional service and going the extra mile from 186 nominations
- Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)
 - National Student Survey – targets, results and action plans
 - League Tables – task group established to identify how very easy changes to our data returns might improve our position
- Buckinghamshire Education Skills and Training (BEST) – full report received by Resources Committee
- Sports Officials UK (SOUK)

- Higher Apprenticeships – Health and Social Care
- Assisted Living – a research grant has been secured as well as a teaching contract from Buckinghamshire County Council

The balanced scorecard was noted with the status showing several changes. In the area of green and improving these included employee efficiency, equality & diversity, income growth, affordability and investment, milestones and facilities. In the area of amber and improving these were employee satisfaction and investment. A number of areas were shown as red or red and deteriorating and these included NSS and income diversification. It was noted that where indicators were annual rather than current these had been provided with an additional forecast RAG rating and were now clearly shown. This was welcomed by members. Clarification was sought in a number of areas.

NSS scores, where it is anticipated that in part as a result of the overall completion rates which have remained static, there will be no change to the overall satisfaction rating this year although it was thought that some areas would be improved whilst other areas might slip a little. Plans were being developed to be more ambitious with the overall completion rates for next year, targeting the courses where there are a large numbers of students and where improved completion rates would make a greater difference.

The University outcome for the league tables this year was reported as disappointing and although it had been identified why this had occurred it was thought that the data used was not as advantageous as it could be. Provision of our own data to the Guardian, for example, was being considered to improve the position e.g. by excluding partner students where partner staff were not included as this particularly skewed the data. It was known that other universities were challenging some of the data used and providing their own data direct. Work was being commissioned to identify what actions might make the most difference. However, whatever actions are taken to improve the University position, this would only improve the level not change the maximum achievable level. Other actions being considered are, the comparator set being used to benchmark the University, the way our own metrics are set and whether the completion of the DLHE survey should continue to be outsourced. All were agreed that opting out of the league tables was not a wise move. It was also agreed that league tables and the 2013 NSS analysis would be a discussion topic for the Missenden Council in October where more detailed information would be provided for further debate, including achievements made in relation to the three week turnaround on feedback on student assessments and the Students' Union data on cancelled lectures.

(Action: Vice Chancellor, Director of Business Planning and Clerk to the Council)

871 Proposal for HE Centre in Aylesbury (C/13/19)

871.1 See confidential appendix.

872 Students' Union Report (C/13/20)

872.1 The President's Report provided full details of the work undertaken during the year together with progress across a range of services. These included increased course representation, links with other universities, employability, participation, strategic planning and new income streams. The NSS score for students' satisfaction with their Union rated the Bucks Students' Union within the top third nationally. Particular attention was drawn to the work undertaken and completed in partnership with the University. Plans for the year ahead included creating opportunities, improving stability, broadening participation, enabling potential and building reputation as well as continuing to collaborate with the University to manage and organise an exciting and productive activity week.

The University congratulated the Students' Union on their enthusiasm and achievements and commended their strategic direction statement "ensuring opportunities are never defeated by circumstance".

873 Audit Committee

873.1 Minutes of the Meetings held on 7 May 2013

Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 May 2013 were received and attention was drawn to the continuing progress of the security, disaster and recovery plan and the completion of the transfer to the new Internal Auditors.

873.2 HEFCE's annual assessment of institutional risk (C/13/21)

It was noted that this annual letter advised that the University is not at higher risk following their assessment of the accountability returns made for 2011-12.

874 Governance Committee

874.1 Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 May 2013

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2013 were received and particular attention was drawn to the rules laid down for the membership of the BEST Board to ensure there is a separation between it and the University.

874.2 Single Equality Scheme: Objectives for 2013-14 (C/13/22)

The Action Plan for 2013-14 was considered in detail and it was thought that this was progressing well.

Council **APPROVED** the planned activities for 2013-14.

874.3 Health & Safety Policy (C/13/23)

The revised policy was put forward for consideration. It included all the changes recommended previously and it was noted that this now came within the remit of the PVC Learning & Teaching. Attention was drawn to item 1 on page 5 which clearly detailed the responsibilities of Council.

Council **APPROVED** the revised Health & Safety Policy

874.4 Council Membership of University Committees and Boards of Subsidiary Companies (2013-14) (C/13/24)

The revised membership of Committees including the members appointed from 1 August 2013 and the revised membership of the Boards of Trustees of the Subsidiary Companies were put forward for consideration. Attention was drawn to the lack of representation on the University Student Experience Committee and two volunteers were sought with time available to undertake this. Details of the commitment and responsibilities were explained and members were asked to contact the Clerk to the Council or the Chair of Governance Committee to discuss this further.

Council **APPROVED** the changes to the membership of University Committees and Boards of Subsidiary Companies for 2013-14.

875 Resources Committee

875.1 Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 June 2013

Minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2013 including the confidential minutes were received. Progress achieved at Missenden Abbey was noted together with additional information provided on the University Strategic Investment Plan projects for Brook Street, South Wing and the Rose Garden.

875.2 Financial Position May 2013 (C/13/25)

The current Financial Position was noted as reported to Resources Committee. It was thought that the outturn figures could be better than reported. Income and expenditure as well as the operating performance are better than budget with an overall forecast position similar to that reported previously. Detailed income and expenditure as well as balance sheet, KPI's and forward projections for cash balances were noted.

875.3 Draft Budget 2013-14 and HEFCE forecast to 2016

The report on the proposed draft budget showed the key areas of movement between the forecast for 2012-13 and budget for 2013-14. These included a reduction in grant income, an

increase in undergraduate fee income as well as NHS contract income and increased costs in several areas. Assumptions were made in relation to employee salary increases, capital investment and investment fund spend to sustain the University's infrastructure. The budget is based on the recruitment of student numbers at the same level as for 2012-13 and is, therefore, a conservative budget. The University is striving very hard to achieve a better position in recruitment for 2013-14. Attention was drawn to the pension liability which was increasing and it was confirmed that this was because of a bad valuation position the last time it was undertaken.

The financial forecasts to 2016 included, the increase in undergraduate student fees from 2014, the meeting of the debt covenants, the risks to the University and how these might be monitored and mitigated over the plan period.

The draft budget for 2013-14 and HEFCE forecast to 2016 and their submission to HEFCE were **APPROVED** by Council

(Action: Director of Finance)

875.4 Student Residences (C/13/27)

The paper received by Resources Committee was noted.

The Resources Committee AGREED to recommend that Council approve proceeding with building (180) rooms, taking a lease from Legal & General if it is a bank requirement and underwriting as necessary the costs in order to maintain the planned delivery of additional student rooms for September 2014. The execution of any necessary legal agreement is to be delegated to any two council members.

A report on the up-to-date position was received and this included that the land valuation had been agreed at the level needed by the University and whilst this was not a foregone conclusion it was thought that agreement would be reached with the banks for the University to fund the project. The University will still be able to meet the target date for the signing of contracts and the completion of the build for 180 additional rooms by September 2014. Members congratulated the University, particularly the Director of Finance, on achieving the best deal with such a difficult negotiation.

This recommendation was **APPROVED** by Council

(Action: Director of Finance)

875.5 CRDM – Update (C/13/28)

See Confidential appendix.

876 Report on Senate Matters

876.1 Report on Senate Matters (2012-2013) (C/13/29)

The report on Senate Matters for 2013 to date was received. It included those matters which had been discussed, reported and approved, including approval of several procedural and regulatory documents, as well as standing items, the receipt of reports from Committees and Faculties and approval of Honorary Awardees. This was noted.

876.2 Minutes of the Student Experience Committee held on 14 May 2013

The minutes of the meeting were noted as received. These included discussions on The Bucks Welcome: the restyled student induction, a draft Learning and Partnership agreement for 2013-14, student representative recruitment, 24/7 library access and feedback turnaround for student work. This was noted.

877 Other Matters

877.1 Use of University Seal and Coat of Arms (C/13/30)

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

878 Formal thank you for departing Council Members

878.1 The retiring Council Members, Pauline Odulinski and David Griffiths were thanked for their unstinted support and their contribution to both the Council and Senior Management Team over many years without which the University would not have moved into the modern ways of working now expected. The Chair and members wished them well in their future endeavours.

879 Date of next meeting

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

Tuesday 15 October 2013 commencing at 4.00pm at Missenden Abbey.

Monday 25 November 2013 commencing at 4.00pm at High Wycombe (joint meeting with Senate followed by a Council Meeting).

Members were reminded that the Graduation Ceremonies are to be held during the week beginning 9 September 2013 and that they were all welcome to attend. This is a great event celebrating the success both of the students and the University.

The meeting started at 4.00pm and finished at 6.15pm.

Signed: _____
(Chair of Council)

Date: _____

Prepared by Registrar (Governance) – 10 July 2013
Checked by Clerk to the Council – 11 July 2013
Confirmed by the Chair – 23 July 2013