



Buckinghamshire New University

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Council

Minutes

date: **21 March 2011**
time: **4.00 pm**
location: **3.07, Uxbridge**

Present:

Roy Darby (Chair)	Co-opted Council member
Anthony Bellekom	Independent Council member
Mitch Brown	Independent Council member
Antonia Byatt	Independent Council member
Ruth Farwell	Ex officio member and Vice Chancellor
Lori Flynn	Independent Council member
Stephen Fox	Elected Senate Member
Tom Foy	President, Students' Union
David Griffiths	Independent Council member
Ian Hillan	Independent Council member
Sukhie Mattu	Elected Staff Member (PSE)
Crystal Oldman	Elected Staff Member (Academic)
Simon Opie	Independent Council member
Keith Ryan	Independent Council 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
Ashley Coles	President elect Students' Union

Apologies:

Roger Dalrymple	Elected Senate Member
Pauline Odulinski	Co-opted Council member

694 Chairman's Welcome

694.1 The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and drew attention to the absence of a new Senate Member, Roger Dalrymple who had given his apologies because of an extremely urgent research project with a deadline of Friday. Council understood the importance of such work and his absence was noted. The new President-elect of the Students' Union was welcomed as an observer to the meeting and Council noted that he would be commencing his post officially from 1 July 2011.

694.2 The Chairman advised that independent and co-opted members had not taken up the invitation for a private meeting to discuss the Remuneration Committee Minutes of 22 February 2011.

695 Declaration of potential conflicts of interest

695.1 No conflicts of interest were declared or identified.

696 Minutes of the Meetings held on 19 October 2010, 22 November 2010 and 8 February 2011

696.1 The Minutes of the meetings held on 19 October 2010, 22 November 2010 and 8 February 2011 were signed as a correct record without amendment.

697 Matters Arising

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

698 Chair's Action

698.1 None had been taken since the last meeting.

699 Vice Chancellor's Report and other Strategic Matters

699.1 Vice Chancellor's Report, including Key Performance Indicators (C/11/20)

This included commentary on:

- Higher Education Sector Developments
 - Policy update
 - OFFA, National Scholarship Programme and Access Agreements
 - The market and "off quota" options
 - NHS Commissions
- Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)
 - Student Experience
 - People
 - Estates
 - Applications for 2011-12
- Local Developments
 - District Councils' proposals to create a single Chief Executive and Senior Management
 - Buckinghamshire Economic and Learning Partnership to be replaced by Buckinghamshire Business First
- University Developments and recent successes
 - University Technical College to be based at Aylesbury College
 - Times Higher Education coverage
 - Royal Society of Arts project
 - Applied Research projects

In relation to the KPI's a new approach was being undertaken with the full set considered by Council and a subset of the finance indicators, staff and student numbers considered by Resources Committee. Members were invited to make comments on the new process.

The balanced scorecard was noted as expected except for the Academic Quality and Governance rating being shown on a downward trajectory as amber. There was no concern re the academic quality of provision offered to students, the amber designation related wholly to the HEFCE data audit for 2009 where the completion rate claimed by the University had been over

ambitious and had resulted in a no assurance outcome although HEFCE sampling found the data to be highly accurate. The audit report had now been agreed with HEFCE and the University were awaiting the final financial settlement for 2008-9 and 2009-10.

Other questions raised by members related to student satisfaction with their accommodation, access agreements and what is currently spent on outreach activities as well as the UKBA restrictions on visas and how this might relate to the recruitment of international students.

700 Partnership Model with Aylesbury College (C-11-15)

700.1 The continuing development of a partnership with Aylesbury College included a proposal, supported by the Baker/Dearing Trust, gatekeepers for the new Technical Colleges, to submit a statement of intent to set up a University Technical College. This was seen as a positive step forward as there would be additional funding attached to this as well as creating a base for continuing education into adulthood in technical and practical subjects in the local area.

The development of this partnership was being carried out within the five year strategy of financial stability, sustainability, consolidating quality and working in partnership. Work relating to a proposed partnership mission had already been undertaken jointly with both senior management teams in relation to what could be done together to seamlessly integrate study from school to FE to HE as well as businesses and mature students.

700.2 Objectives and possible partnership models were considered. See reserved business minutes.

701 Resources Committee

701.1 Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 March 2011

Minutes of the meetings held on March 2011 were received without comment.

701.1a Student Residences (C/11/16)

The report as submitted was noted. As there was no possibility of funding the building of additional accommodation at Hughenden at the present time, support was sought to explore further the possibility of developing accommodation in a central location in High Wycombe. This would not fulfil the total needs of the University in terms of accommodation but would improve the student residential provision in the short term.

Council supported the proposal to explore this possibility further.

701.2a Fees Strategy 2012-2013 and beyond (C/11/23)

The fees suggested, were being made against a background of a three year consecutive increase in applicants, a clear view of our primary purpose, strong awareness of the markets, a unique selling point in The Big Deal and our reputation for undertaking widening participation projects. They will also enable the University to undertake improvements to fulfil our mission. It is felt that demand would still be buoyant as students take account of not just the fee but also perceived value for money, perceived quality, value added and a strong employment record. The approach we make to marketing will be as, if not more important than, the fees set. The fees set were clearly laid out and included the proposed spending on both the National Scholarship Scheme and Access Agreements.

Member's questions and comments included:

- What are other institutions considering
- The financial forecast outcomes of different scenarios are quite broad
- Provision over £6000 supported by access agreements
- Employability prospects for those students undertaking courses at the higher band
- If the assumed reduction in numbers does not happen then more funds become available
- The student number cap is set at least for 2012
- Concern expressed about student debt
- The % proportion of the target numbers for the lower band are very small
- Fees must be set at a level which enables the University to improve the student experience and continue with their widening participation activities

- There must be some transparency around how the additional money is used to improve the student experience

The University's access agreement including its decision on fee setting must be submitted by 19 April 2011. The full details of the National Scholarship Scheme are not yet available.

The recommendation to Council was that:

They approve the proposal from SMT that full-time undergraduate (FT UG) fees from 2012-2013 onwards should be based on the following model:

- High level fee of £8,500 (about 8% of FT UG courses)
- Medium level fee of £7,500
- Low level fee of £6,000 (about 7% of students)

and to delegate to the Chairs of Committees the final approval of the fees strategy within a range of plus or minus £250 of the fee levels proposed by SMT, or the equivalent in total FT UG fees income.

A vote was taken and the results were 14 for the proposal and 2 against.

This recommendation was **APPROVED** by Council and Chairs of Committees were asked to make themselves available for consultation on the final decision.

701.2b Financial Forecast (2011-2015) (C/11/19)

The Financial forecast was based on the proposed fee structure as detailed previously as well as a flat fee of £6,000 and the comparative figures for the forecast proposals from July 2010 were provided. The assumptions made were clearly detailed as well as the outcomes at the end of the plan period. The fee income would gradually replace the fees and HEFCE funding currently received, and would provide greater degrees of freedom to invest in improved provision. The part time fees would be set nearer the date of recruitment as this market recruited later and would not need to be included in the access agreement for the first year, 2012-13. These would be set at a rate that it is thought the market would bear.

Whilst the forecast at the end of the plan period does not achieve what the plan showed in July 2010, with the level of fees agreed it will be close to that position.

This recommendation was **APPROVED** for submission to HEFCE by Council.

701.3 Financial Position January 2011 (C/11/18)

The Financial position was noted. Council welcomed the positive news regarding the HEFCE Data Audit. The financial settlement following this decision was not yet known but should be better than forecast.

701.4 Treasury Management Update (C/11/17)

No further information was available regarding the early settlement of the sale of Chalfont. The deadline for this is the end of March. However in anticipation of this Barclays has approved the early sale and the facilities agreement needs to be changed to accommodate this. It was recommended that this be progressed by the Vice Chancellor and the Director of Finance.

In order to invest the monies received from the sale of Chalfont, Council were asked to approve a variation on the limit set for investment with an individual bank from £5m to £10m for Barclays Bank only.

Council **APPROVED** both these recommendations.

701.5 Employee Number Reduction Plans – Update

The savings on staff costs through both voluntary and compulsory redundancy were on target to be achieved by the year end although the process had not yet been completed.

701.6 Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan (2011-2012) (C/11/06)

The new scheme and action plan was developed as a framework under which the equality objectives would meet the requirements of the new Public Sector Equality Duty. This had been considered by the Resources Committee at their last meeting and was put forward for approval by Council. Senate had also approved it at its recent meeting.

Council **APPROVED** the new scheme and action plan for implementation under the new legislation.

701.7 Sustainability Policy (March 2011) (C/11/07)

This policy was developed to comply with funding requirements as well as to reduce costs and improve efficiency. This had been considered by the Resources Committee at their last meeting and was put forward for approval by Council.

Council **APPROVED** the new policy for implementation.

701.8 Carbon Management Implementation Plan (C/11/22)

This plan was an extension of the Sustainability Policy and is a requirement for consideration of capital grant funding from HEFCE. The University's submission to HEFCE's Capital Investment Framework 2 had been approved subject to it having an approved Carbon Management Plan. HEFCE sets targets for reductions in emissions for the sector, and whilst the targets set are high they should be achievable by the University in the timescale.

Council **APPROVED** the new policy for implementation.

701.9 Health & Safety Report (C/11/08)

This annual report and planned activities was considered by the Resources Committee and recommended for approval.

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

702 Report on Senate Matters

702.1 Quality and standards outcomes (2009-2010) (C/11/13)

A brief verbal report was received which confirmed that academic standards had been achieved for 2009-10. This report noted that the internal processes ensuring quality and standards in the Faculty of Society and Health were of such a high standard that the professional bodies of the nursing profession were now allowing the faculty to undertake their own monitoring.

Sector changes were noted in the areas of Public Information, Institutional Review, External Examiners and Academic Infrastructure and recommendations set in relation to all of these would be taken forward by the University by the deadlines set.

702.2 Minutes of the Student Experience Committee on 4 November 2010 and 9 February 2011

The minutes of the two meetings were noted as received.

703 Audit Committee

703.1 Minutes of the Meetings held on 25 January 2011

Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 January 2011 were received without comment.

703.2 HESA Data Audit

A positive outcome from this audit was noted although the final financial position was not yet known.

704 Governance Matters

704.1 Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 February 2011

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2011 were received without comment.

704.2 Council Membership (C/11/09)

Four members were due to retire in July 2011 at the end of a four year term of office. Three members, namely Anthony Bellekom, Ian Hillan and Simon Opie had all been invited and agreed

to continue for a second term of office. They were thanked for their hard work during their first term and for agreeing to continue in office.

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

It was with regret that Kathy Grimshaw had decided to stand down as her work commitments continued to increase with a great deal of international travel. The Chair was asked to thank her for the work she had undertaken and wish her well in the future.

The process of recruiting new members was now underway with an advert on the Cabinet Office Public Appointments website with a deadline of 31 March 2011 for applications. A number of applications had already been received and these would be considered with any additional applications received following the deadline. The skills noted as being required were legal, finance and business as well as NHS experience.

704.3 Students' Union Revised Constitution (C/11/10)

The revision was undertaken to bring the Bucks Students' Union in line with new regulations and enable it to apply for charitable status. The student population of the University had been able to consider this through the referendum process and had agreed the new constitution. This was considered by the Governance Committee at their last meeting who asked a number of questions around the balance of membership of the trustees and supported the new constitution.

Council **APPROVED** the new Constitution

704.4 Calendar of Meetings (September 2011 to December 2012) (C/11/11)

Council were asked to approve the new dates with the proviso that if any changes to timings were noted through the review process there may still be minor amendments.

Council **APPROVED** the dates for September 2011 to December 2012.

704.5 Appointment of Chancellor update

Council were advised that an approach had been made through an intermediary and the potential candidate was considering the possibility.

Members were reminded of the highly confidential nature of this information.

704.6 Review of Governance

This was due for completion and most members had now completed the questionnaire. Those few still outstanding had all confirmed they were in the process of completion.

An analysis and report of the findings would be prepared for submission to the next Governance Committee in May.

705 Remuneration Committee

705.1 Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 February 2011

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2011 were received without comment.

705.2 Remuneration Policy (C/11/21)

This was noted as a new policy which had been written to comply with sector best practice. This covered about 60 senior staff and an annual report on decisions taken would be submitted to this committee.

Council **APPROVED** this new policy.

706 Honorary Awards Committee

706.1 Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 February 2011

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2011 were received without comment.

706.2 Recommendations for Honorary Awards (C/11/12)

A number of questions were asked around the gender balance and awards being made. It was agreed that the criteria for the different types of award should be circulated to members.

Council **AGREED** the awards suggested as circulated for graduation 2011.

707 Other Matters

707.1 Use of University Seal and Coat of Arms

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

708 Date of next meeting

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

Tuesday 7 June 2011, commencing at 4.00pm at Missenden Abbey and
Monday 11 July 2011 at 4.00pm at High Wycombe.

The meeting started at 4.00pm and finished at 6.40 pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chair of Council)

Prepared by Registrar (Governance) – 23 March 2011
Checked by Clerk to the Council – 23 March 2011
Confirmed by the Chair – 30 March 2011