



Buckinghamshire New University

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Missenden Council

Minutes

date: **2 June 2015**
time: **2.00 pm**
location: **Carrington Room, Missenden Abbey**

Present:

Christine Beasley (Chair)	Independent Council member
Antony Bellekom	Independent Council member
Antonia Byatt	Independent Council member
Rebecca Bunting	Ex officio member and Vice Chancellor
Baljit Dhillon	Independent Council member
Lori Flynn	Independent Council member
Matt Gilbert	President, Students' Union
Ian Hillan	Independent Council member
Michael Hipkins (Deputy Chair)	Independent Council member
Steve Hoole	Elected Professional Services Employee
Maggie James	Independent Council member
Tim Marshall	Co-opted Council member
Hilary Mullen	Elected Academic Employee
Jenny Newton	Independent Council member
Simon Opie	Independent Council member
Keith Ryan	Independent Council member
Linsey Taylor	Senate Nomination

Officers:

Ellie Smith	Clerk to the Council
Vanessa Pilon	Registrar (Governance)

In attendance:

Alison Chambers	Pro Vice Chancellor/Executive Dean, S&H
Vicky Vass	Pro Vice Chancellor/Executive Dean, DMM
David Bulbeck	Financial Controller
John Cooper	Consultant (for agenda item 4)
Lorraine Watkins-Mathys	Dean, DMM

Apologies:

Joseph Collins	President Elect, Students' Union
Steve Dewhurst	Director of Strategic Planning & Development
Lauren Griffiths	Senate Nomination
Ken McCrea	Co-opted Council member

Declaration of potential conflicts of interest

15.34 None were received.

Strategic Matters

University Strategy (2015>)

15.35 Rebecca Bunting presented initial thoughts on the University's strategy to 2020 under the title 20/20 Vision. Although this is only a five year strategy it is thought that with a rapidly changing sector any longer would mean it was out of date too quickly. This included successes and challenges, data, priorities and vision as follows:

- Awards in Nursing and shortlisted for a THES award
- Sector and internal challenges
- DHLE, student numbers, student population, wastage, teaching grant and research income and salaries
- The University Vision and what it might mean
- Academic and research profile as well as global reach and what it might mean
- Our partnerships, collaborations and networks
- What it means to be an anchor institution
- Economic impact and what that can tell us
- Underpinning strategies and infrastructure
- Priorities and returning to our key objectives

15.36 Challenges were highlighted around competition, enterprise, efficiencies and brand recognition as well as changes in legislation particularly in relation to consumer law. It was noted that representations to the UKVI in relation to the current suspension of the University's Tier 4 licence were on the point of submission and the reasons for the extension clearly explained.

15.37 A number of points were made by members as follows:

- The wider community is not aware of the University's national and international reputation in some niche subject areas
- The University brand and marketing is not embedded in the sector or wider community
- Partnerships take a huge amount of effort and need to be more focussed and of benefit
- More institutional pride will help increase reputation
- League table impact affects both brand and reputation
- University name and logo could have more impact on reputation
- Raise expectations as to what needs to be achieved
- A sense of disconnect between Council and SMT and the rest of the University
- Need to be a major player in local economic growth plans
- A snapshot view of the economic impact the University has on the local area has been commissioned to report in July
- Investment in corporate systems, IT, Student Records, finance and student and staff portals is urgently required
- Key priorities should include being more commercial and improving the ambience of the University externally

15.38 A further discussion took place in relation to how Bucks as an "An Anchor Institution" might be part of an overall strategy and how this might be built into a better/well-known brand. Bucks, is the only publically funded University in Buckinghamshire and has been located in High Wycombe in one form or another since the end of the 19th century. Despite the fact that full university status was achieved more than eight years ago it is still known locally as some form of college. A number of suggestions/proposals were made as follows:

- a) External, local Partnerships. Successful drivers include individuals coming together from different organisations with a vision to make specific focussed changes for improvement which benefit the local area in some way. In undertaking projects of this type organisations can embed themselves within the community and increase reputation and brand recognition in a positive way. The challenge is to identify organisations and individuals who have the energy and vision to contribute a significant investment in time for projects which may not be part of their core business. Organisations which could be brought into such projects might be the local and county authorities, the NHS, football club, business groups, media, charitable organisations and the Swan Theatre not forgetting the Students' Union as well as the new businesses setting up in the local area (NEXT and Waitrose). How do you identify the local leaders who have ambition and influence and contribute not just time but money as well? We need to ask the question "What can we do to contribute to the success of the town and make a difference". How do we make High Wycombe worthy of being called the "County Town", a "University Town".
- b) Internal partnerships. We need to identify how to make internal partnerships work better to create a pride in the University by focussing staff contacts outside their own small departments/directorates. In addition there should be a focus on identifying internal talent that might help the University to both bring people together and to make contacts externally. One example given was that one university invited 10 graduate students every week to lunch to encourage them to join their alumni and give something back to the university in time or students placements.
- c) How do we make High Wycombe known as a University town? The University is a major player in the economic growth of High Wycombe and the brand and reputation we create should and will contribute to that growth. Marketing the achievements of the University is key to creating a distinctive brand and reputation in addition to ambiance improvements to the external campus and making the community proud of being part of a University town. Brand must be developed alongside commercialisation and campus improvements. The Students' Union contributes to this through fund raising, the festival day and students volunteering and could be the focus of increasing the social life within the town centre. The focus of the University name and brand should be on High Wycombe but a specified focus should also ensure that the other University campuses are identified and differentiated in their locality within this same single brand. Other suggestions included directions to the University within the town and banners identifying the fact we are a University.
- d) The vision and image of the University whatever shape that takes will be shared with stakeholders to consult and inform as well as embed the outcome widely. Communication is key and community engagement must be a priority.

The next step will be to bring a more focussed outline strategy together to share with other stakeholders to inform more development and ensure buy in.

Normal Business Matters

University College Aylesbury Vale (UCAV) (MC/15/02)

15.39 The delivery plan for 2015-18 was presented and included information in the following areas:

- Context
- Developments since the business case was approved
- Planning for September 2015
- Proposed programmes for 2015-16 to include Cyber Resilience, Security and Resilience, Project Management, Business Management, CILEX, Engineering and Health & Social Care
- Proposed additional undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes for 2016-17 to include Environmental Management, Design for the Environment and Event and Festival Technology

- A summary detailing the importance of the efficient and focussed development of the recruitment, marketing and enrolment provision as well as sound market research in the development of programmes

15.40 The current position on the completion of the building, and additional costs, was fully explained and included the following:

- Expected completion of construction by 14 September 2015
- BEST expected to be asked to approve a cost overrun in relation to ground works in addition to that already approved as a result of legislative change. Discussions with AVDC relating to this and to the potential revenue from the restaurant lets were noted as scheduled for 3 June 2015
- The extra build costs were not known until recently and there was no proper advanced consultation offered or clear responses to questions asked later
- Members were reminded of the costs of the lease over the whole lease period including how and when the extra costs would be due and how arrangements are in place to extend the lease at the end of the lease period for a peppercorn rent
- BEST pays for the lease but the owners of BEST, Bucks and Aylesbury College underwrite this payment
- The building can be sub-let to others
- The agents appointed by AVDC to take forward the letting of the restaurants provided disappointing views of the potential rental yield
- Additional costs relating to changes to the original design to facilitate its immediate use
- The financing of fixtures and fittings as well as IT provision
- This building is strategically placed in Aylesbury for the delivery of HE study

15.41 Members raised several questions relating to concerns and responses were made as follows:

- Substantial work in developing an offering and the recruitment of students has been undertaken and is on-going, but signing up of students for these types of courses will only happen close to the delivery date
- Creating an educational presence in Aylesbury will take time and effort and is challenging to achieve in a short time scale
- The creation of brand to market and recruitment is a long term proposal based on presence in the town
- Exposure and risk for the first year or two was clearly explained in terms of recruitment and financial sustainability
- Some of the information provided as part of the business case was more aspirational than was clearly identified
- The right academic offer is being developed as quickly as possible in areas with which the University has expertise – Business Continuity, Project Management, Business Management, Accountancy, Law, Engineering and Health & Social Care
- This will be offered through a mix of delivery by University staff, staff employed just for this, partnerships and businesses
- Questions were asked around who is responsible day to day for recruitment and forecasting, as well as the potential to sell bulk courses through relevant institutions and businesses. The General Manger of BEST is undertaking this role and reports back to the BEST Board and BEST Executive on a both frequent and regular basis
- Earlier investment over a longer time period would have enabled this project to go ahead more effectively and efficiently
- UCAV does not yet have a presence in Aylesbury either in the Town, Buckinghamshire or through the website where access to the current offering is only available through links to the University and Aylesbury College websites – work on improving the website is in hand
- There is a budget of £500,000 in place for fit-out
- Members were reassured regarding the efforts being made but would like to see additional on-going communication between meetings in future and a paper re lessons learned reported to Council

15.41 It was agreed that an updated report would be provided to Resources Committee in June 2015 and the University continue to discuss over runs with AVDC as well as undertake extensive marketing and recruitment for September 2015.

(Action: Vice Chancellor, Financial Consultant and the Clerk to the Council)

CUC Higher Education Code of Governance (MC/15/03)

15.42 Attention was drawn to the prioritised Action Plan approved for implementation at the last Governance Committee. It included specific targets in the areas of a regular updating of the Scheme of Delegation, additional information in the Council Procedures, reporting on the dissemination and effectiveness of regulations and policies, dissemination of Senate minutes, information provided to members and training for new members as well as minor changes in other areas. The prioritisation was at three levels which included actions which were straight forward, one off changes which required some work and substantial changes requiring extensive work across the University. It was reported that there were no major risks identified although the University could be more compliant in some areas. The following areas were identified as requiring change and monitoring:

- Freedom of Information and Counter Terrorism Bill
- Memorandum of Assurance and Accountability
- Whistle blowing – how to monitor and report to Council
- Audit of governance
- Partnerships
- Robust review of council effectiveness
- Ethics and accountability

15.43 Members thought that this was a very good piece of work and thanked the Clerk to the Council for a focussed, clear and organised action plan. They supported the work identified that would need to be undertaken to comply with the new code.

Appointment of New Members (MC/15/04)

15.44 A report was received which covered the following areas:

- Commentary on the advertising process
- Applications which were generated
- Shortlisting
- Interview and recommendation for appointment
- Recruitment now and in the future

Governance Committee recommended that appointments were made to fill the three vacancies and as there was a fourth applicant who fulfilled all the criteria that a fourth appointment is made within the terms set by the University Articles of Government. The application forms and CV's of the proposed appointments were considered for:

- Mr John Smith
- Mrs Gurdeep Kaur Chadha
- Dr Lise Llewellyn
- Mr Anthony Murphy

15.45 It was AGREED that the four candidates proposed for appointment by the Interview Panel and Governance Committee as being both appropriate and fitting the skills needs, are approved.

Formal thank you to departing Members

15.46 The Chair thanked departing members Matt Gilbert, President of the Students' Union, who was retiring, Alison Chambers, PVC and Executive Dean, Faculty of Society & Health and Linsey

Taylor, Senate Nomination to Council who were leaving the University to undertake roles elsewhere, for all their hard work.

Date of next meeting

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

Monday 6 July 2015 commencing at 4.00pm, Missenden Abbey, followed by a formal Council dinner at 7.00pm.

The meeting started at 4.00 pm and finished at 6.00pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chair of Council)

Prepared by: Registrar (Governance) – 3 June 2015
Checked by: Clerk to the Council – 9 June 2015
Confirmed by: Vice Chancellor – 11 June 2015
Confirmed by: Chair – 17 June 2015