



# Buckinghamshire New University

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## Council

### Minutes

date: **7 June 2016**  
time: **2.00 pm to 5.00 pm**  
location: **Rooms 2.08 and 2.09, University Campus Aylesbury Vale (UCAV)**

#### Present:

Christine Beasley (Chair)	Independent Council member
Rebecca Bunting	Vice-Chancellor
Joe Collins	President Students' Union
Baljit Dhillon	Independent Council member
Michael Hipkins (Deputy Chair)	Independent Council member
Steve Hoole	Elected Staff member (PSE)
Maggie James	Independent Council member
Lise Llewellyn	Independent Council member
Tim Marshall	Co-opted Council member
Ken McCrea	Co-opted Council member
Hilary Mullen	Elected Staff member (Academic)
Anthony Murphy	Independent Council member
Jenny Newton	Independent Council member
John Smith	Independent Council member
Terri Teasdale	Independent Council member

#### Officers:

Ellie Smith (Secretary)	Clerk to the Council
Marcus Wood (Acting Minute Secretary)	Senior Registrar (Governance)

#### In attendance:

Steve Dewhurst	Director of Strategic Planning & Development
Ian Harper (Items 3 & 4 only)	Chief Executive, UCAV
Sean Mackney	Pro Vice-Chancellor Education
Tim Middleton	Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Enterprise
Ian Plover	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Tracey Price	Director of Finance

#### Apologies:

Antonia Byatt	Independent Council member
Gurdeep Chadha	Independent Council member
Lori Flynn	Independent Council member
Lauren Griffiths	Elected Senate member
Keith Ryan	Independent Council member
Phil Wood	Elected Senate member
Kam Ahumibe (Minute Secretary)	Registrar (Governance)

**16.30 Declaration of potential conflicts of interest**

No conflicts of interest were declared

**16.31 Vice-Chancellor's update**

UKVI licence

Members were informed that the University had been successful in its application to the UKVI for a Tier 4 licence. Bucks had been awarded 'probationary' status and the capability to use up to 100 Confirmations of Acceptance of Studies (CASs). After 11 months, the University would be able to reapply for a full licence. It was noted that regulations had changed and would be supported by new metrics including a requirement for an 85% completion rate for international students.

International Strategy

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Enterprise had been asked to take on strategic responsibility for the University's international strategy. This would not simply focus on international recruitment, but would include the approach to international partnerships going forward.

## **University Campus Aylesbury Vale**

**16.32 Tour of UCAV**

The Chief Executive, UCAV, gave members a guided tour of the campus.

**16.33 UCAV Business Plan**

The Chief Executive, UCAV, presented the Business Plan for 2016-2018. A copy of the presentation is available for members.

Council considered the business plan and identified:

- The top two risks were funding for developing existing 'restaurant' spaces and recruitment to programmes.
- UCAV requires £1.7m to run. Target numbers on courses have capability to earn £2.2m gross for Bucks and Aylesbury College; however, a long lead-in is expected before UCAV can start to pay for itself.
- Only 28% of the floor space is revenue generating which is problematic; this jumps to 49% when the restaurant spaces are included indicating the need for these to be developed as soon as possible.
- The larger restaurant space is now intended for business incubation and start-ups if funding through bids proves successful; there are options for third floor spaces as well.
- Market research undertaken prior to the build indicated potential for a large 'stay at home' student population. UCAV needs to extend its visibility across the county and particularly into the Bicester area.

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive for presenting the Business Plan and conducting members on the tour.

## **Bucks New University Strategy 2016-21**

The Vice-Chancellor reminded members that the Strategic Plan Vision considered by Council in March was underpinned by strands on Education, Research & Enterprise, and People & Organisational Effectiveness.

**16.34 Education Strand**

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education presented the Education strand. The key message related to "education that changes lives" building on the University's focus on widening participation. The strand placed a stronger focus on student success (both academic and graduate-level employment) and was intended to stretch and challenge students and give them a competitive edge within the market. Courses would continue to focus on solving real world problems with real world solutions but would seek for consistency across all programmes offered.

Council discussed the strand:

- Faculties and central service directorates are currently preparing operational plans to support delivery; the strand has been discussed with teams across the University in addition to all-staff meetings and discussion by Senate and its sub-committees.
- It is supported by a unified planning and budgeting approach across both Faculties and institutional scrutiny via Academic Planning Committee. The strategy is a reference point for faculties to develop their plans and ownership rests with Deans.
- A 'carousel' model of delivery with multiple entry points for students throughout the year was welcomed for its flexibility; however, it was noted that this carried challenges for administration of those programmes which would need to be worked through.
- All courses are developed following approval of a robust business case; nevertheless, there is a need to review the course costing and profitability model.
- Pre-learning packages are being put in place for September to support early engagement by students and boost retention. There are ongoing discussions about developing 'taster' courses.
- There is a need to balance how learning analytics is used. A JISC project team is currently at Bucks to assess the University's readiness as part of a wider sector exploration.
- FTUG recruitment will continue to be a key focus and the strand envisages a growth in scale and the level of provision.
- Activities need to diversify and will include development of degree apprenticeships and a new shared approach to Professional Doctorates with Staffordshire University.
- Changes to government funding mechanisms for part-time and postgraduate students are beneficial for Bucks, but other funding sources will be identified from employers, self-funders and charities.

#### 16.35 **Research and Enterprise Strand**

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Enterprise presented the Research and Enterprise strand. Three main drivers were identified as being (1) productivity levels, (2) support, and (3) recognition. Through the areas outlined in the strand the University will grow its enterprise activity to help make research sustainable. The research environment is a key metric in assessment exercises and will focus on inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary activities and the Research & Enterprise Committee is looking at cross-cutting discipline areas to develop research clusters. The University needs to make better use of the dual-funding model for research funding and increase the numbers of bids submitted and grow capacity. The Bucks Academic scheme will help colleagues identify development and support needs to deliver on the strategy and a paper is scheduled for discussion by Senate on 8 June.

Council discussed the strand:

- The current sum ring-fenced for research (£273k) will be available via a more structured approach to support development. This is a starting point which when added to research income generated gives a total of £780k rising to £4.4m when enterprise activities are also included.
- A new Research & Enterprise unit is being created out of the existing Research Unit in AQD together with enterprise staff drawn from the faculties. This will allow for greater co-ordination and recalibration to grow activity.
- Measures have been benchmarked and developed from sector standards including the HEA Fellowship and the Vitae Researcher Development frameworks. Enterprise has proved less easy to benchmark across the sector and has focused on HEIs with a similar subject mix.
- The Bucks Academic framework will be discussed by Council at its July meeting.
- Ahead of the EU referendum on 23 June it was noted that while UK HE does well from EU funding sources, including the Erasmus+ scheme, this has not majorly impacted on Bucks. Most activity at the University is contract work which is not dependent on EU funding. A decision to leave the EU could lead to funding sources such as Erasmus drying up.

#### 16.36 **People and Organisational Effectiveness Strand**

The Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor presented the People and Organisational Effectiveness strand. This was different to the education and research strands as it was more directly focused on underpinning the overall strategy and focused on central service and support directorates. Directorates are exploring innovative ways of generating income, while as part of this cultural change to develop greater commercial understanding robust processes have been put in place to deliver a future financial surplus.

Council discussed the strand and the strategy as a whole:

- Capital expenditure and affordability is still being looked into. The budget has been set for 2016-2017 and the 3 year plan for HEFCE is also being reviewed.
- Faculty Plans will take some time to examine (6 months) and KPIs are being worked on (see below). It is too early for a full 5 year plan to accompany the strategy as a whole although the University would be in a better position to assess this in 12 months' time. In effect a rolling financial plan will be prepared which is updated annually
- The HE White Paper has heavily influenced development of the strategic plan. The White Paper will be a specific area for discussion at the Council meeting in July but the strategy captures many of the drivers including competition, flexibility, commercialisation and diversification of income.

## Other business

### 16.37 Key Performance Indicators

Council considered the University's key strategy performance measures and targets as presented by the Director of Strategic Development and Planning. KPIs were still being finalised but set out goals for success over a period of five years and will be supported by milestones which will be updated and reviewed annually. KPIs were largely financial and had been benchmarked to HEFCE indicators and league tables. The ambition was for the University to be placed in the top third in the sector in those areas where it was most successful.

KPIs fell into four areas:

1. Students to be successful (KPIs 1-5) – encompassing learning gain and analytics
2. Curriculum (6-11) – embedding intended characteristics of the Bucks graduate e.g. globalised outlook, employment ready
3. Research & Enterprise (12 & 13) – focussing on growing income
4. People and Organisation (14-20) – aligning support functions to promote sustainability

A key consideration raised by Council was the overall number of KPIs (20) which was considered to be too many. The number of high level KPIs should be reduced and should be supported by more detailed lower level indicators that could be interrogated as necessary. It was agreed that the number of KPIs should be reviewed and further reduced.

#### **(Action: Director of Strategic Development and Planning)**

Members requested a report on IT systems to determine whether these remained on track to be able to support delivery of KPIs. It was agreed that a report will be prepared for Resources Committee and will then be presented to Council in July.

#### **(Action: Deputy Vice-Chancellor)**

### 16.38 Appointment of New Council Members

Council received the report. This included:

- Commentary on the advertising process
- Applications which were generated
- Shortlisting
- Interviews and recommendations for appointment

Governance Committee recommended that appointments were made to fill vacancies for three independent members. The application forms and CVs of the proposed appointments were considered for:

- Mr Bob Shennan
- Ms Irene Kirkman
- Dr Susan Rosser

It was agreed that the three candidates proposed for appointment by the Interview Panel and Governance Committee as being both appropriate and fitting the skills needs are approved for an initial four year term of office, commencing 1 August 2016.

A question was raised regarding the current BME representation on Council and recruitment methods to encourage a greater level of application from ethnic minority candidates. It was reported that there had been one BME applicant in the current recruitment round. The Chair recognised the need for greater BME representation which was a challenge for recruitment. Some considerations had been tried. Nevertheless, it was noted that Council has a good record on gender representation. The question would be picked up at Governance Committee.

**(Action: Clerk to Council)**

**16.39 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of Council is scheduled to take place on Monday, 11 July 2016, commencing at 4.00pm at Missenden Abbey, to be followed by a formal Council dinner at 7.00 pm.

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 5.15 pm.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chair of Council)

Prepared by Senior Registrar (Governance) – 8 June 2016  
Checked by Clerk to the Council – 14 June 2016  
Checked by the Vice Chancellor – 15 June 2016  
Confirmed by the Chair –