

BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
AUDIT COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 18 JUNE 2014
1:00 PM IN ROOM 103, SKINNER BUILDING

Present

Mr David Clements (Chair)
Rev'd Sally Myers
Mrs Bridget Starling

In attendance

Mr Tom Astell, Internal Auditor (Uniac)
Mr Stephen Deville, Director of Resources
Mr David Hoose, External Auditor (Mazars)
Mr Joe Johnston, Internal Auditor (Uniac)
Mr Steve Kirby, Head of Finance
Ms Haf Merrifield, Deputy Vice Chancellor: Strategy & Performance
Professor Jayne Mitchell, Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic
Rev Professor Peter Neil, Vice Chancellor
Mr Sean Ryan, Internal Auditor (Uniac)
Mrs Katie Skilton, Clerk to the University Council
Ms Emma Smeaton, Governance Officer

Action

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and Professor Jayne Mitchell to her first Audit Committee. The new External Auditor David Hoose and Internal Auditor Tom Astell, who conducted the data audit to be discussed later in the agenda, were also welcomed to their first meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from The Very Rev'd Philip Buckler.

3. Declarations of interest.

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minutes of the last meeting held on 4 March 2014

The minutes of the last meeting held on 4 March 2014 were APPROVED as a true record of the meeting and the Chair was authorised to sign them.

5. Matters arising

(i) Action points

4(i) Matters arising – Environmental issues

The Director of Resources reported that having spoken with the contact regarding improving BGU's position on the Green League Table, the subsequent proposal of 4 half days per month at a charge of £1k had been discussed with the Head of Estates. It was decided that a discussion would be required by Audit Committee on whether the money could be better spent gaining more support across the institution.

The Committee AGREED that in terms of priorities it was felt that this issue would be revisited at a more appropriate time, however in the meantime the Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic would offer advice and contacts to the Director of Resources based on her past experience at her previous role.

JM

(ii) Charity Commission submission

The Committee RECEIVED and NOTED the Charity Commission Annual Return and Summary Information Report which was submitted to the Charity Commission on 7 May 2014.

(iii) Any other matters

9(ii)(b) – Internal audit – Reports – Review of Budgeting and Budgetary Control, Resources Allocation and Planning

- Budget holder training and development is not sufficient.

The Director of Resources REPORTED that training on budget management and support for budget holders would be given. It was also NOTED that as written in the strategy, the message of under spending would be clearly communicated to budget holders, emphasising the importance of spending on investment for the future.

6. Student contention report

The Committee RECEIVED the report on student contention. The report was a brief overview of the types of complaints received, presented alongside benchmarking statistics from the OIA. Members NOTED that the University was doing very well against the sector average and that the figures would be reported year on year for comparison purposes from now on. The Chair thanked the Clerk for her report.

7. External audit

(i) Planning arrangements for financial year ending 31st July

The Audit Strategy Memorandum was RECEIVED and External Auditor, David Hoose summarised Mazars audit approach, highlighting significant audit risks and areas of key judgements and provided the Committee with details of their audit team. The total fee figure noted on page 9 of the document was reported as incorrect and should have read £18,350. The Memorandum was APPROVED ^{by} and the Committee.

It was also NOTED that David Hoose would send through the engagement letter for signature within the next few weeks.

Mazars

8. Risk management

(i) Updated table of major risks

The Deputy Vice Chancellor: Strategy & Performance presented the summary of institutional top level risks and REPORTED the following:

- The summary assumed that the Strategy proposed was the Strategy the University would pursue.
- The Planning and Performance Manager would bring forward proposals of future management of risks to the Committee in due course.
- There was cautious optimism during a very turbulent time in the sector regarding recruitment.
- The School of Teacher Development Undergraduate Primary route should reach target and a bid for extra places had been submitted.
- PGCE Primary numbers were not recruiting.
- School Direct numbers were modest although a shortfall was expected.
- Firm acceptances for BA (Hons) subjects were already 20% higher than the same reporting period last year.
- Foundation Degrees were recruiting well showed very little impact arising from the mid-year start intake in January.
- The Director of Resources would do some modelling of data to show the jump from 500 to 700 FTE places.

SD

The summary of institutional risks were RECEIVED by the Committee, noting that all would be seen in the context of the Strategy.

9. Internal audit

(i) Reports

(a) Library system and resource management

Joe Johnston, Internal Auditor presented the Review of VLE & Library System report to the Committee. The report was RECEIVED and the following highlighted:

- Reasonable reassurance was offered and the areas identified were highlighted as observations in the report.
- Observations 1 and 2 required immediate actions. These were already in place.
- The removal of excess Blackboard accounts that were inactive would be a long term process.

(ii) Progress against plan 13/14

Members RECEIVED an update on the progress against the audit plan NOTING the remaining reports that would come to the September meeting.

It was AGREED that in future meetings, a grid would be reported to Audit Committee by Sean Ryan which recorded the progress of the actions required from previous audits.

(iii) Proposed timetable for academic year 2014/15

The proposed Internal Audit Plan 2014/15 was RECEIVED. The following was noted:

- The draft plan was work in progress; a final draft would come back to the Committee at the September meeting following further discussions with SLT.
- Strategy risk assurance would be included in the programme.
- Members highlighted the importance of flexibility within the plan for any ad hoc issues which may arise over the year.

The Committee were content with current proposals and would receive the final plan for approval at their next meeting.

10. Student data (RESTRICTED BUSINESS)

11. Agenda suggestions

- Data update;

Next meeting

Uniac

Next meeting

- Final Internal Audit Plan for 2014/15.

12. Any other business

There was no other business to discuss.

13. Key items for University Council

- Data audit

14. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Audit Committee would take place on Tuesday 30 September 2014 at 10:00 am in Room 102.

The Chair acknowledged that the present meeting would be the last for the Deputy Vice Chancellor: Strategy & Performance. The Committee joined in thanks for all she had done for the University and in particular for the Audit Committee.

Signed  Date 30 Sept 2014

