

BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
AUDIT COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 6 MARCH 2013
2PM IN ROOM 102, SKINNER BUILDING

Present

The Very Rev'd Philip Buckler
Mr David Clements (Chair)
Mrs Bridget Starling
Mr Jim Smith

In attendance

Professor Muriel Robinson
Mr Steve Deville, Director of Resources
Mr Jonathan Holmes, External Auditor (Tenon)
Mr Steve Kirby, Head of Finance
Ms Vicky Mays, Clerk to Governors
Ms Haf Merrifield, Deputy Principal
Mr Michael Ritzman, Internal Auditor (UNIAC)
Mr Rob Jones, Director of Enterprise
Dr Jenny Rees, Dean of Academic Engagement (item 7)

1. Welcome from the Chair

The Chair welcomed colleagues to the third meeting of the Audit Committee for 2012/13 and welcomed Jim Smith to his first Audit committee meeting.

2. Apologies

Julie MacDonald sent her apologies

Action

3. Minutes of the last meeting held 7th November 2012

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

4. Matters arising

- (i) (Item 12 of the previous minutes.) The Director of Resources reported that he had not yet met with his counterpart at the Diocese to talk about treasury management. It was agreed that the monitoring of treasury management belonged within the remit of the Audit Committee and reviewing the practice of investment belonged within the remit of FE & GP committee.
- (ii) (Item 6 of the previous minutes) It was reported that the activities that will be transferred to the Limited Company were approved at the extraordinary University Council meeting held on 30 January 2013. There will be a further update at the University Council meeting to be held on 14 March 2013. The consultation with staff in these areas will begin just after Easter. It was also reported that the directorships for the Limited Company will be put in place before the departure of the current Vice Chancellor. Council members were asked to send suggestions for suitable nominations.
- (iii) (Item 9 (iii) of the previous minutes) It was reported that Tenon had worked with us for 5 years and reappointment rules confirms this is reviewed every 7 years.
- (iv) (Item 12 of the previous minutes) It was reported that the work on assurance was in progress.

5. TRAC (Transparent Approach to Costing)

The annual TRAC report was presented. The report is designed to take institutional expenditure and income and make a judgement on whether the institution is operating on a sustainable basis. The Committee agreed to approve the report.

6. Internal audit

(i) Internal Audit Timetable

Some concern was expressed regarding the timetable for the planned internal audits. The internal auditor reassured the Committee the remaining audits would be achieved on time and confirmed that additional staff had recently been recruited to UNIAC to resource these audits.

It was noted that this academic year the bulk of audits were being carried out in a very short timeframe. It was agreed that in

order to avoid this reoccurring next academic year planning for the next audit programme must start earlier. It was agreed that the committee would start planning the internal audit programme 13/14 at the June committee meeting.

Clerk

(iii) Reports

Review of Management of Grant Income and Expenditure
(tabled paper)

It was reported that the audit was received too late to feed into the EDRF audit, however, the verbal feedback from the EDRF audit was satisfactory.

7. Student data update

It was reported that a temporary appointment within the Student Data team had now been made permanent and this role was currently tasked to improve the quality of the data on the student system. Progress had been made with improving the student data but the complexity of the data was causing a challenge. An increase in hours had been agreed for a member of staff who was working on documenting processes and procedures to speed up this activity. The submission of the HESA and HESES statutory returns had for the first time being completed directly through the system which was reported as a big step forward. An improvement had also been made in the ability to make better management information reports available.

In parallel to this work a project had been initiated to look at the student journey through enrolment and work on improving these processes. This will be a key piece of work which will feed into the improvement of the student information system.

Consultancy has been provided by Unit4 which has enabled the team to address issues with the student information system and learn about what it can and cannot do. An external consultant has also visited and shared experience of student information systems and help the team scope work which could be done to improve the system. The team is now finding out what other higher education institutions are doing to build up a better understanding of how these systems work in the sector which will feed into the creation of an option appraisal and the development of a project plan.

Currently there is no firm time scale for this work. At the moment the approach is iterative and the Dean agreed to go back to the team to attempt to determine firmer timescales.

The Director of Resources also reported that there were challenges with collecting student fees. It was agreed that this would be reported more fully at the next meeting of the Audit Committee.

Next mgt

8. Risk management

It was reported that the paper circulated showed that the register ratings had remained unchanged since the committee last reviewed them. However, there had been one significant change since these papers had been circulated following a meeting of the Recruitment and Retention committee. The rating for recruitment had been downgraded to amber – red. It was reported that it was currently difficult to predict whether we would recruit to target and it was hard to establish confidence in any level of assessment regarding the position for September. It was noted that everything possible was being done and staff were working hard to recruit to target. Effort was being made to keep applicants warm with initiatives such as sending monthly BG tips and using social media.

7 The staff ^{moral}~~moral~~ indicator had not changed and it was difficult to confirm whether this has changed until a new staff satisfaction survey was conducted.

Mechanisms had been put in place to analyse retention data. Effort is made to identify why students leave so that more support can be put in place where possible. It was suggested that this analysis could also be conducted at the interview stage.

9. Agenda suggestions

- Update on student data
- Review audit reports
- Report on the student fees collection system
- Planning for 13-14 audit programme
- Matters arising for treasury management
- External audit strategy

DoAE
Internal
DoR
Internal
DoR
External

10. Key items for the Governing Body

- TRAC
- Risk register
- Internal audit

VM

11. Any other business

There were no items raised.

12. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Audit Committee will take place on Tuesday
18 June 2013.

Signed 

Date 30/6/13.

