

BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

TUESDAY 27 SEPTEMBER 2016
1:30 PM IN HARDY TEACHING ROOM 2

Council members present:

Mr David Babb
Dr Kevin Brown
Mr David Clements
Mrs Jackie Croft
Mrs Angela Crowe
Ms Tenille Dawson
Mrs Sandra Grattrick
Mr Richard Hallsworth
Professor David Head
Dr Tony Hill
Mr Stephen Lawrence
The Right Reverend Bishop Christopher Lowson
AVM Gavin Mackay
Mr Graham Meeson
Professor Jayne Mitchell
Revd. Sally Myers
Rev Canon Professor Peter Neil
Mrs Jasmit Phull
Dr Jim Smith
Mr Bob Walder (Chair)

In attendance:

Mr Andrew Carr, Head of Admissions (for item 13 only)
Dr Anne Craven, Registrar & Secretary
Mr Stephen Deville, Director of Resources
Mrs Alice Hynes, Senior Consultant, APC Futures Ltd.
Dr Grahame Killey, Planning and Performance Manager (for item 14 only)
Dr Ruth Sayers, Executive Dean: Learning, Teaching & International
Mr Matthew Pitts, Governance, Compliance and Operations Manager
Professor David Rae, Executive Dean: Research & Knowledge Exchange
Mr Luke South, Students' Union Vice President 2016/17
Mr Andrew Tofts, Regulatory Compliance Manager (for item 15 only)



1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed those present. He gave a short introduction to his first meeting. He thanked the Members and Staff for the welcome he had received. He explained he had enjoyed his time with the University so far, and how he was looking forward to being part of University Council as the University looked to build on its recent achievements.

The Chair asked the Vice Chancellor to share several items of good news with the Members. The Vice Chancellor noted firstly that the University saw the Chair's appointment as one of a number of recent successes. The Vice Chancellor continued, telling Members that the University had recently achieved 97.2% in the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Survey (DLHE); this was the third highest score achieved by a U.K. University in 2016.

The Vice Chancellor also noted BGU's achievement of 92% in the recent National Student Satisfaction Survey. He explained this figure placed the Institution in 2nd position for student satisfaction amongst public English Universities.

The Vice Chancellor informed the Members that the Institution was expecting to receive figures on student retention very soon, which were likely to be in the range of 90-95%, which would be significantly higher than the sector average.

The Vice Chancellor added that The Times University League Table had now been published, which showed BGU had risen from 112 in the table to 95. It was noted that the rise was in spite of BGU's staff to student ratio, which was considerably lower than similarly placed institutions.

News of the University's recent successes was met with applause from those present.

2. The University Prayer

The Vice Chancellor led the University Prayer.

3. Apologies

The Governance, Compliance and Operations Manager reported that apologies had been received from:

Mr Kieran Parrish
Mr Alan Stacey

4. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

5. Election of Vice Chair for 2016/17

Dr Tony Hill was confirmed as the Vice Chair for the 2016/17 year. The Chair thanked Dr Tony Hill for his work as Vice Chair in the previous year, particularly in chairing the Chair's Appointment Panel.

6. Minutes of the previous meetings held on 28 June 2016 and 5 July 2016

The minutes of the 28 June 2016 University Council meeting were confirmed as a true and accurate record and the Chair was authorised to sign them following the meeting.

**Chair/
Gov Office**

The minutes of the 5 July 2016 University Council meeting were confirmed as a true and accurate record, subject to the addition of Mrs Jasmit Phull and Mrs Sandra Grattrick to the apologies list. The Vice Chair was authorised to sign the minutes, on completion of the agreed amendments.

**Chair/
Gov Office**

The restricted minutes from the 28 June 2016 University Council meeting were confirmed as a true and accurate record, subject to the addition of a note that Professor Mark Thomson left the meeting at item 17. The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes, on completion of the agreed amendments.

**Chair/
Gov Office**

7. Matters arising

(i) Action points

The Members reviewed the progress noted on the Action Table. The Registrar and Secretary reported that recruitment to University Council had been put on hold pending the University Council's response to the Governance Effectiveness Review. The Registrar and Secretary reported that following the Chair's recommendation, which was endorsed by Governance and Nominations Committee, that recruitment for a new Committee and/or University Council Member with Finance expertise would begin after the University Council meeting.

**R&S/
Gov Office**

(ii) Any other matters

There were no other matters raised.

8 Update from the Vice Chancellor

The Vice Chancellor explained developments around the Research Excellence Framework (REF), specifically the Stern Review recommendations to Government under the title 'Building on Success and Learning from Experience an Independent review of the Research Excellence framework'. This review included a key recommendation that institutions must submit information about all research active staff under REF from 2020, rather than picking what was submitted. Additionally, it was reported that research would no longer be portable.

BW

The Vice Chancellor reported that there remained many unknowns around Brexit. However, the current status with ERASMUS funding is that this should be available until 2020 when the Erasmus Charter finishes, but this may change. It was noted that EU research funding was at risk, however, funding confirmed before the Chancellor's Autumn statement would be honoured.

The Vice Chancellor reported that the University would respond to the Government's consultation on its proposal that would require HE institutions to assist failing schools if they intend to charge fees over a certain threshold.

The Vice Chancellor described developments around the Institution's internationalisation, reporting that three international students had been enrolled this year, which represented a 300% increase on the previous year. This was noted as a significant step forward. Other aspects described around internationalisation included noting that the Deputy Vice Chancellor was due to take part in a delegation to China, whilst the Executive Dean for Research & Knowledge Exchange recently took part in a trip to Czech Republic and Poland. It was also noted that the recent International Children's Spirituality Conference hosted by the University had been a great success.

The Chair responded that many of the themes of the Vice Chancellor's report would be looked at in detail at the Strategy day scheduled for 1st and 2nd February 2017.

The Members commented on the challenges presented by the potential requirement to partner with schools; it was felt that given the Institution's standing in Education that it would be well placed to respond effectively to this. The Bishop of Lincoln noted that there may be potential for the Diocese, that is responsible for 142 schools, to work with the University as it considers this potential new area of work. The Chair suggested that a 'think piece' around the proposal could be prepared for a future University Council meeting.

P Neil/ SLT

The Vice Chancellor responded to a query about whether CELT was too internally focused, and whether there was any research potential associated with it. He replied that the Executive Dean Learning, Teaching and International was working on developing links between CELT and Research and Innovation Centres, and that the work of CELT was being fed into national conferences. Staff employed in CELT are themselves research active and the intention is to integrate research in pedagogy and teaching.

9. Update on student fees

The Vice Chancellor gave an overview of the Student Fees paper. The Members noted the fee increase was discussed at Audit Committee in June 2016, not University Council, as was written in the paper. The Members AGREED that a written procedure for approving fees should be written and be in place before fees are next signed off. The Members AGREED to ratify the Executive Action to increase fees.

S Deville/
A Jackson



10. Update from the Students' Union President

Mr Luke South, S.U. Vice President, gave an overview of the tabled SU report on behalf of Mr Kieran Parrish. The Member's attention was drawn to the new BGSU logo that was recently launched. It was reported that the new S.U. Executive Team had been in post since August and had undertaken a broad range of training, including with NUS. It was reported that Fresher's week had finished on 25 September 2016. During Fresher's the S.U. trialled a fair exclusively for sports societies, which was said to be a great success; this event received support from the Rugby Football Union (RFU). Lastly, Mr Luke South reported that the S.U. had achieved 68% satisfaction in the NSS, which is the national average. This was noted as a significant achievement, considering the scale of the S.U. relative to others which were similarly ranked. The Member's congratulated the S.U. on this achievement.

11. BGU's Governance Effectiveness Review

The Chair noted that Governance and Nominations Committee had considered the Review at their meeting on 13 September, where the focus of discussion was on procedures around restricted items at University Council and Committee Meetings, BGU's relationship with BG(Lincoln)Ltd, the practices of the Remuneration Committee, the Schedule of Delegation, University Council's size and structure, and revisions to the governing documents.

Ms Alice Hynes gave an overview of the review she had undertaken. She explained the review gave University Council Members an importance opportunity to reflect on the work and operation of University Council. It was noted that she spoke to all University Council Members in the course of the review, with the exception of Mr Luke South. It was reported that the report examined the University's compliance with the CUC Code, the assessment of this was provided for information to the Chair and the Registrar and Secretary and her team.

Ms Alice Hynes explained that the report outlined actions in 3 categories: areas where specific changes must be made; areas where changes were required, where BGU had choices to make about what approach was best, and areas of governance procedure which the Chair and Registrar and Secretary would need to make decisions on technical changes to practice.

Ms Alice Hynes reflected that overall she considered that University Council led the University in a thoughtful and constructive manner, and that overall it operated in an effective way. The reviewer noted that in recent times University Council had understandably been focusing inwardly at the University, as it had been through a period of significant change, and had been subject to scrutiny as part of a number of reviews by external bodies; she advised that University Council should now move forward by having a greater focus externally, being particularly mindful of the significant ongoing changes in the HE environment.

Ms Alice Hynes added that as University Council's increasingly looked outwardly, that it would be advisable to develop its Members' understanding of its position as a registered charity. Similarly, University Council were advised to consider how the Institution's roots in Church of England may inform its future trajectory in a changing environment.

BW

The reviewer noted that there were discussions to be had around University Council's size, diversity, and composition. She highlighted the importance of the student voice in the Institution's governance, the Members were advised to maintain and develop this; it could become the University's USP. The reviewer concluded that the Institution was well positioned to prosper in the new HE environment, but that it needed to ensure that its governance was robust to support this.

The Members responded to the reviewer's comments, thanking her for her very useful work. It was commented that the report had unpicked important areas for consideration, and had given helpful input. The University Council AGREED that the University's values and culture were very precious, and must be protected to ensure its future success. The Members commented that whilst students do not necessarily share the University's values, anecdotally, many have said they feel that they play an important part in guiding the character of the University, and the student experience at BGU.

The Members reflected on the role of Sponsor Board, noting that University Council need to be mindful of its role of leading the organisation's strategy, and that Sponsor Board supported this. It was AGREED that University Council would reflect on the role of Sponsor Board at the strategy day.

**Chair/
Gov Office**

Ms Alice Hynes responded, highlighting the increased quantity of data related to strategy that is available, and the role Sponsor Board plays in supporting University Council to digest this information. Similarly, the reviewer added that Sponsor Board had an important role to play in supporting University Council's 'horizon scanning'. It was noted by the Members that Sponsor Board had originally been set up on a short-term basis as a project board to monitor strategy. On the point that Sponsor Board assists University Council to digest important information, the Chair advised that consideration should be given to increasing the communication of information to University Council Members between meetings.

[Dr Tony Hill left the meeting]

In discussion the Members AGREED that they would find it useful to have further training and information around their role as Trustees.

**R&S, Gov
Office**

It was AGREED that professional advice should be sought to ensure the relationship between the University and the Limited company is being dealt with properly.

DoR

The Members AGREED to move forward in accordance with the recommendations within the Effectiveness review. It was AGREED that an action plan would be put together and circulated to University Council Members at their next meeting.

**R&S/
GCOM**

Ms Alice Hynes advised the Members that she was available to meet one-to-one if they wished to discuss the review further.

BW

(i) Amendments to BGU's Instrument & Articles of Government

The University Council Members AGREED that they were not in a position to discuss amendments to the Instrument and Articles of Government at this point, that and further time was needed to consider any potential changes.

It was AGREED that the Registrar and Secretary would take legal advice on making changes to the Instrument and Articles. It was also AGREED that these revisions would be considered at University Council's meeting in March 2017. University Council Members AGREED that it was important that any changes were thoughtfully made, being mindful of the organisation's heritage, and did not change the ethos of the Institution. It was noted that reference must be made to the Trust in considering any amendments.

R&S/
GCOM

12. Update of the 5 Year Strategy mid point review

[Performance and Planning Manager, Dr Grahame Killey joined the meeting]

(i) SLT paper including Leadership Foundation proposal

The Performance and Planning Manager gave the Members an overview of the plans for the Strategy stocktake. He explained the stages of the work to be carried out, and gave details of the role of the Leadership Foundation in the process. It was noted that the stocktake was a time limited review, and would be completed by the end of March 2017, with a revised strategy document being produced.

It was reported that the Leadership Foundation was in the process of undertaking a desk based review which would include benchmarking data. It was noted that the progress of the stocktake would be discussed at the November Sponsor Board meeting. It was AGREED that University Council Members who were not members of Sponsor Board would be welcome to attend that meeting to give their input on the Stocktake. It was AGREED that all the information on the Stocktake that was given to Sponsor Board at their next meeting would be made available to all University Council Members.

Gov Office

The meeting discussed why consultants were being used for the stocktake, rather than it being conducted internally. It was concluded that whilst there was a cost associated with using consultants, it was valuable to receive external input and challenge. It was noted that the methodology provided by the consultants was promising.

(ii) Council Strategy day

It was AGREED that the University Council Members who were due to end their terms of office and leave in the coming months would be invited to the University Council Members' dinner before the Strategy Day.

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14. Issue of Strategic Planning

This item was swapped with item 13

BW

(i) Key Performance Indicators

The Performance and Planning Manager gave an overview of the KPI's dashboard. It was highlighted that the Recruitment Indicator had turned from amber-red to amber-green. It was noted that the KPI's now included detailed information around the University's research, this was provided by Prof David Rae and Dr Kate Adams. It was also reported that data was provided relating to the Institution's influence and reputation, this included information on website hits and media profile. It was noted that the Communications Oversight Group (COG) would be reviewing the comparative data which is used for this.

[Performance and Planning Manager, Dr Grahame Killey left the meeting]

13. Update on student recruitment

[The Admissions Manager, Mr Andy Carr joined the meeting]

The Admissions Manager explained to the Members the changes that had taken place around the national allocation of PGCE places, and the changes the Institution had made to maximise the number PGCE students it could confirm under the new allocation model. It was reported that these changes had resulted in a significant increase in the number of students joining the University's programmes.

The Admissions Manager reported that the University was in the process of enrolment, noting that early figures suggested that over 700 students would be enrolled this year. It was explained that this year the University opened clearing early, before the normal date of 1st July. It was reported that Clearing yielded 57 enquiries, 43 of which were expected to materialise into enrolments. It was reported that the number of students enrolled on Foundation Courses was down on the previous year, however it was noted that the previous year's figures were higher than normal.

It was reported that the Masters programmes had been particularly successful in this year's enrolment, with 56 students joining Masters courses, 30 of which were on the TESOL course.

A Member queried whether the increased number of students coming through clearing risked the University compromising on entry standards. Staff members responded that the University only accepts students that it believes can meet the demands of its courses. Additionally, the Institution's record of adding value was highlighted, this record of adding value was recognised in the University's joint bid for funding to encourage potential students from 'cold spots' to access HE.

Clarification was requested about what the budgetary impact of the shortfall in enrolled students was, relative to the business plan numbers. It was noted that this figure was not yet available as enrolment was ongoing. It was AGREED that information on the true shortfall would be shared with University Council members as soon as it was available.

[The Admissions Manager, Mr Andy Carr left the meeting]

HoF/DoR

BW

15. HEFCE revised operating model for quality assessment

[The Regulatory Compliance Manager, Mr Andy Tofts joined the meeting]

Mr Andy Tofts reported that HEFCE had published its 'Revised operating model for quality assessment' in March 2016. Under the revised model institutions' governing bodies are required to give annual assurance on the continuous improvement in the student academic experience and student outcomes, and the reliability of degree standards, at the same time as the deadline for submission of financial data. In the past assurance on academic standards had not been required until later into the academic year.

The statements of assurance that University Council would be asked to sign were included in the meeting papers for Members' information. It was reported that University Council must sign the statements by 1 December 2016. It was noted that ordinarily University Council were given information on the University's academic quality within the Academic Health Report. This report was normally not available until the Spring Term. The Regulatory Compliance Manager reported that other institutions had also commented that the submission date for the assurance statement was out-of-sync with their internal reporting timescales. This issue was raised with HEFCE, who advised that governing body members could use previous years' data and progress against enhancement plans to inform their decision to certify the requested statement.

The Council Members expressed concern that they were being asked to sign a declaration confirming performance and practice in the 15/16 year when the Academic Health Report would not be available. It was discussed that assurance could be taken from the successful NSS, QAA, DLHE, BPA, and Ofsted results and reviews, as well as recent internal audit reports, and degree award data. It was AGREED that a report summarising the assurances available to University Council would be available to accompany the request to sign the assurance declaration at University Council's meeting on 25 November 2016. It was AGREED that the update enhancement plan, and 15/16 Examiners' report would also be available to support University Council's decision.

The Members discussed the possibility of including a covering letter with the return explaining the University Council's concerns. The Deputy Vice Chancellor noted that the University were reviewing their processes around the Academic Health Report, and that in 2017/18 this would be available before the December deadline.

[The Regulatory Compliance Manager, Mr Andy Tofts left the meeting]

16. Key items from sub-committees

- (i) Governance & Nominations Committee (meeting of the 13 September 2016)

It was AGREED that key items from G&N had already been sufficiently covered under the discussion on the Governance Effectiveness Review.

Andy Tofts

BW

(ii) Audit Committee (meeting of the 27 September 2016)

Mr David Clements gave a verbal report on the Audit Committee meeting which was held on the morning of 27 September. It was reported that the meeting received the following 4 internal audit reports, it was noted that all the reports were graded as 1's or 2's.

Internal Audit report title	Effectiveness	Efficiency/Economy
Review of Collaborative Provision	Substantial Assurance (1)	Substantial Assurance (1)
Review of Admissions	Reasonable Assurance (2)	Reasonable Assurance (2)
Review of Treasury Management, investments and cash	Reasonable Assurance (2)	Reasonable Assurance (2)
Review of IT Governance	Reasonable Assurance (2)	Reasonable Assurance (2)

It was reported that within the Treasury Management Report that there were some concerns around the cash flow of the limited company, in was noted that the Director of Resources was looking in to this. It was also noted the IT Governance report highlighted some issues around BLE and Blackboard. Overall the Auditors reported that the Institution was in a good position in the areas which had recently been looked at.

The Members were informed of changes to the Executive Risk Table which had been looked at by Audit Committee. It was reported that Audit Committee AGREED SLT's requests to amend the table. It was highlighted that there was some concern about the request to remove Ofsted from the Risk Register. The Members noted that they felt it was important that the register covered key areas, in order that University Council did not find itself in a position where it was surprised where a risk materialised into an issue. Staff members responded that the University ensured that information was available and was monitored at appropriate levels, in this instance Ofsted risks would be monitored and mitigated at Schools level and by SLT.

17. Chaplain's report

The members received the Chaplains written report. The Vice Chancellor reported that the Chaplain does an excellent job for the University, internally and externally. The Vice Chancellor noted that he felt the Chaplain was an integral part of BGU's USP. The Members discussed the low attendance at the Service held by the Chaplain following Graduation. It was AGREED that the University would look at rescheduling this to encourage more students to attend. The members also discussed how the University's roots could be given greater emphasis within the Graduation Ceremony itself.

Chaplain

[Mr David Clements left the meeting]

BW

18. Draft minutes of the Senate meeting held on 1 June 2016

The meeting noted the successful bid for the Learning Gain Pilot project. The Deputy Vice Chancellor explained that metrics from the pilot would inform the development of the TEF, she added that there may also be other opportunities for the University to inform the TEF development. The Deputy Vice Chancellor explained that as part of the project students' learning gains would be tracked across 3 years, and that this project would receive funding which would be managed through CELT.

The Vice Chancellor reminded University Council Members that they were eligible to nominate individuals for honours at the University's graduation ceremonies. The Chair advised that he felt the University needed to give consideration to the role honorary graduates play in the life of the University.

19. Agenda Management and review

The Chair asked Mrs Angela Crowe to give a review of the meeting. Mrs Angela Crowe thanked the Chair for leading the meeting. She echoed the Members' earlier praise for the University's recent achievements. She told the meeting she was inspired by what the University Council had learnt from the Governance Effectiveness Review, and was looking forward to the Strategy Day, and the challenge of the changes in the HE environment.

20. Any other business

The Chair thanked Dr Jim Smith and Mrs Sandra Grattrick for their work on University Council during their time in office. He added that he hoped they would continue to be involved with BGU.

The Chair noted that there were some concerns around BGU's relationship with the limited company, and requested that this be put on the agenda of a future meeting.

(i) Introduction of digital papers/iPads

The Chair directed Member's attention to the paper enclosed informing the Members of the University's intention to transition to digital meeting papers.

20. Any other business

There was no other business to discuss.

21. Date of next meeting

The Chair reminded Members that the next meeting of the University Council would take place on Friday 25 November 2016 at 13:30 in Hardy Seminar Room 2. Prior to the meeting there would be a presentation at 12:15 followed by lunch at 13:00 in Hardy Seminar Room 1.

Signed  Date 25/11/2016

Gov Office

