

BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LINCOLN

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
GOVERNING BODY

THURSDAY 22nd NOVEMBER 2012
2:00 PM IN HARDY TEACHING ROOM 1

Present:

The Very Rev'd Philip Buckler
Mr David Clements
Mr Richard Corn
Mrs Sandra Grattrick
Dr Tony Hill
Mr Graham Meeson
Ms Hâf Merrifield
Mrs Jasmit Phull
Professor Muriel Robinson
Mr John Rowland
Dr Jim Smith
Mrs Bridget Starling
Mrs Pamela Taylor (Chair)
Professor Mark Thompson
Mr Rob Thorpe
Mr James Turner

In attendance:

Mr Nigel Appleton, Dean of School of Teacher Development
Mr Stephen Deville, Director of Resources
Mr Rob Jones, Director of BG Enterprise
Ms Vicky Mays, Clerk to Governors
Dr Jenny Rees, Dean of Students and Academic Engagement
Ms Ruth Sayers, Dean of School of Culture, Education and Innovation
Mrs Emma Smeaton, Minuting Secretary
Mr Aaron Smith, Students' Union Vice President 2012/13
Rev'd Canon Alex Whitehead, University College Locum Chaplain (Up to item 4)

1. The University College Prayer

Rev'd Canon Alex Whitehead led the University College Prayer.

Action

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Judith Babb, Haydn Beeken, Kevin Brown, Bishop Christopher Lawson, Julie McDonald and Lucy Wood.

The Chair welcomed new governors Jim Smith and Sandra Gratrack to their first meeting as members of the Governing Body. It was noted that Jim Smith would also sit as a member of Audit Committee and Sandra Gratrack as a member of Governance and Nominations Committee.

4. Chaplain's report

The interim Chaplain presented his report to the Governing Body and noted that he had accompanied the BGSU at the national demonstration in London the previous week, reporting a good day and good spirits. It was also reported that he had attended the Dearing Lecture. Members noted that full text of the lecture was available on the internet. Rev'd Whitehead also reported that toys were been collected to present to the women's refuge at Candlemass on 2nd February 2013. It was also noted that two hard back bibles and some prints for the Chaplaincy space in the Students Union had been recently purchased. Members noted that this was to be Rev'd Whitehead's last Governing Body meeting and thanked him warmly for his significant contribution and for all of his work over the past months.

5. Minutes of the last meeting held 20th September 2012

The minutes of the meeting of the 20th September 2012 were confirmed as a true record of the meeting and the Chair was authorised to sign them.

6. Matters arising

Governors were reminded to return their financial interest and related party disclosure forms for the academic year 2011/12 to the Principal's Office as soon as possible.

7. Key items from sub-committees

(i) Audit Committee

(minutes of 27th September 2012)

The Chair reported that changes to the minutes of the 27th September meeting were made at the 7th November meeting for clarity.

- Audit reports

It was reported that the following internal audit reports were judged to be satisfactory:

Review of invoicing, income, receipting and debt collection;
Network security review;
Review of costing (catering).

(minutes of 7th November 2012)

- Audit programme timetable for 2012/13

Following the Committee's recommendation, the Governing Body approved the 2012/13 internal audit programme.

- Annual audit report

The internal auditors' annual report was submitted and approved by governors. The Chair of the Audit Committee reported that the auditors have to re tender every seven years and would therefore not have to go to tender at this point as this would only be the fifth year. Members agreed that it was not necessary to do so at the present time.

- BG (Lincoln) Limited directors

Members recommended that the Chair of the Governing Body would be added as the second Director of BG (Lincoln) Limited.

- SU post audit review

It was reported that the majority of issues that arose from the review were being satisfactorily addressed and the Audit Committee would receive the Students' Union's post audit review in due course.

(ii) FE&GP Committee

(minutes of 7th November 2012)

- Students' Union governance

The Chair of the FE&GP Committee reported on the review process and noted that the Deputy Principal and Students' Union President had made a very constructive start.

- Employment

It was reported that the FE&GP Committee had looked at the staffing report and noted that staff turn-over had gone up but no more than expected for an institution of this size. The sickness absence was below average. The 1% increase to the pay spine had not yet been communicated to staff as an announcement from UCEA was expected. It was anticipated that the increase would be paid in the December payroll.

- Buildings work update

The Director of Resources reported that planning permission had now been received for the new student accommodation building. The Chair noted the excellent work in transforming the campus managed by the Director of Resources' team.

- Risk management

The Committee had received the institutional risks and these were an item on the main Governing Body agenda.

(iii) Governance & Nominations Committee

(minutes of 19th September 2012 and 9th October 2012)

- Instrument & Articles

Members noted that nomenclature changes to the recently approved Instrument and Articles would be necessary though no other changes would be needed at this time.

- Naming conventions

The Governing Body unanimously approved the Governance and Nominations Committee recommendation for the use of Chancellor to replace Provost, Vice Chancellor to replace Principal and Deputy Vice Chancellor to replace Deputy Principal. After some discussion they amended the Governance & Nomination Committee's suggestion of Governing Council to replace Governing Body to University Council, with Council agreed as the everyday abbreviation.

- University Court

Following the University Court paper that was circulated to all governors with the recommendation of the Governance and Nominations Committee the purpose of the Court was outlined. Governors confirmed that they were content for plans for the Court to go ahead. The University Court would meet up to twice a year, with the first being held on 30th January 2013, the day of the University title celebrations. Governors were reminded to save this date in their diaries.

- Update on membership

It was noted that Professor Mark Thompson was to become a member of the FE&GP Committee and as previously noted Sandra Grattrick would sit on Governance and Nominations Committee and Jim Smith on Audit Committee.

- Effectiveness review

The Chair thanked those who engaged in the effectiveness review exercise during the lunchtime session prior to the Governing Body meeting. Following feedback from governors that it would be more helpful for them to have the questions before a session to enable them time to reflect rather than react the Principal agreed that forms would be e-mailed out in advance for future sessions.

8. Academic Board

The minutes of the 11th September 2012 meeting were received. The committee structure of the School of Teacher Development was also circulated and agreed by the Governing Body.

9. Chair's items

The Chair reported that committees were sometimes struggling for quoracy with the last two FE&GP Committees not being quorate. Governors were reminded of the importance of attending meetings if possible.

10. Students' Union

- (i) President's report

The Students' Union President presented his report that had been circulated with the agenda. The Deputy Principal noted the excellent level of attendance, preparation and contribution by the Students' Union team. These comments were seconded by Graham Meeson who noted how impressed he had been by the productive way in which the Students' Union was working.

- (ii) Accounts for year ending 31 July 2012

Governors received the Students' Union accounts, prepared by the Director of Resources and the Students' Union. It was confirmed that the deficit was due to refurbishment work that had been carried out and the accounts would be back to a surplus position by the end of the year. It was also noted that sabbatical wages were higher as accommodation costs were no longer included.

11. Principal's business

- (i) Report

The Principal's report was received and it was reported that the amount raised from the Bollywood event organised by Jasmit Phull now totalled £2,082.50. It was also reported that following correspondence from Andy Westwood, Chief Executive at GuildHE an announcement regarding university title was expected the following week. Governors were also reminded of the Advent service on Sunday 2nd December in Lincoln Cathedral.

- (ii) Income generation

Governors received the income generation table which was an update on the one they had previously received.

- (iii) External engagement

A paper outlining the Senior Leadership Team's external engagement activity was received and noted by the Governing Body.

- (iv) Student recruitment update

The School of Teacher Development applications table was discussed, noting that the encouraging figures were as near as possible to a definite situation regarding final enrolment. The figures for the School of Culture, Education and Innovation were noted as being more complicated with 501 as the control number and 459 as the final figure with an additional 89 off quota students paying fees. It was reported that the figures were anecdotally average or even slightly better than average compared to the sector but a 3 year impact on the budget was anticipated. BG was slightly up in terms of numbers but financially slightly down, resulting in a reduction of approximately £200k according to the current forecast position now at a £2.8 million surplus rather than £3 million. Governors noted that the generation of a surplus and the retention of students was critical and in line with the University College ethos.

12. Fees Strategy 2014 CONFIDENTIAL

Governors received the confidential fees paper and were reminded that the intention was for the matter to be discussed at the meeting. The Deputy Principal highlighted the recommendations noting that a steer from governors was required. The issue of why the original fee was set, what had changed and what was occurring within the sector needed consideration as well some guidance on students' thoughts. Evidence suggested that higher fees were having an impact as to whether prospective students went to university at all but variations in fees did not seem to be an issue.

Additional funding would be used for investment in the campus as it was clear the government would not be paying to invest in the infrastructure and students would expect capital improvements year on year. A build up of surpluses for capital investment was therefore crucial. It was noted that lower level fees may influence students as to what is on offer, although it was also noted that the issue of fees was not mentioned throughout clearing and the habit of price differentials for programmes might increase throughout the sector. It was reported that there was no correlation between places that had under recruited significantly and the fee that they had set.

The original proposal for differential fees comprised two main components to the rationale; focussed group discussions with students had indicated that it was clear one fee was wanted and in addition to the loan system it would be necessary to charge for extra things on certain courses. Having spoken to students since about these costs it was clear that they were finding it much harder to find the money for extras which would have been much easier to subsidise through the loan system. It had also been reported that it was felt that Primary Education students were seen to be receiving more contact hours than other courses. Governors happily endorsed the principles set out in the paper. The principle that the University College raises the fee significantly above inflation, between £500 and £1K, and considers a differentiation between different courses was also endorsed. The Chair noted that the Governing Body looked forward to seeing the detailed working of fee setting going through the committee cycle and coming back to them for final approval.

13. HEFCE Annual Return

(i) Annual Monitoring Statement

The Principal reported on the Annual Monitoring Statement that had been completed online. It was noted that most of the questions were very routine and straight forward with the answers speaking for themselves. It was also reported that there were fewer 'yes' answers than there used to be and they had done their best to be direct. Governors were content to approve the AMS that had already been through the FE&GP Committee.

(ii) Financial returns

The Director of Resources reported that a copy of the annual accounts had been to the FE&GP Committee and in terms of results it had been a good year with a 16% surplus. It was noted that the sector as a whole was expected to show a healthy surplus this year in preparation for the years ahead. Staffing costs were currently 49%, with the target being 60% or less. Governors were happy to approve.

(iii) Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan was received noting that a link to the glossy version including pictures would be sent once it was complete.

14. KPIs

The Deputy Principal reported on the key performance indicator dashboard that governors had received. The major changes were the amber/red indicators going down for recruitment and the upward movement for financial health indicators. It was reported that the Ethos indicator would be complete by the end of the year and the Head of Research was looking at the Research target.

15. Agenda suggestions for future meetings

16. Any other business

Richard Corn was welcomed back as the professional support governor for a second term.

17. RESERVED BUSINESS

18. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the University Council would take place on Thursday 14th March 2013 at 2:00 pm.

Signed  Date 14 - 3 - 13