

BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 20 MARCH 2019  
11:00 AM - 3:00 PM IN CSH15

**Present**

Mr David Babb  
 Dr Stephen Critchley  
 Mrs Jackie Croft  
 Mr Craig Ferguson  
 Professor Scott Fleming  
 Mr Richard Hallsworth  
 Professor David Head (Vice Chair)  
 Mr Stephen Lawrence  
 AVM Gavin Mackay  
 Dr Sacha Mason  
 The Revd Dr Sally Myers  
 Revd Canon Professor Peter Neil  
 The Right Rev Dr Nigel Peyton  
 Ms Bethanne Robinson  
 Mr Alan Stacey  
 Mr Bob Walder (Chair)

**In attendance**

Mr Jonathan Batty, Director of Marketing, Recruitment & Communications (for item 12)  
 Mr Josh Blanchard, Students' Union Vice-President  
 Mr Stephen Deville, Chief Operating Officer  
 Ms Stephanie Gilluly, Registrar (Clerk)  
 Revd Peter Green, Dean of Chapel (for item 11)  
 Mrs Rachel Harvey, Director of Strategy & Planning (for item 20)  
 Mr Barrie Shipley, Director of Finance (for item 5)  
 Mrs Emma Whiteley, Governance Officer (Minuting)

**1. Welcome**

1.1 The Chair welcomed all in attendance to the fourth University Council meeting of the 2018/19 academic year.

**2. The University Prayer**

2.1 PN led the University Prayer.

**Action**

### 3. Apologies

3.1 Apologies for absence were RECEIVED from Rev David Dadswell.

### 4. Declarations of interest

4.1 There were no declarations of interest received.

*Barrie Shipley joined the meeting.*

### 5. Change Management – CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

5.1 SD PRESENTED an outline of the proposal to Council. He outlined the sector and BGU specific context in respect of changes to university finances, income levels and student numbers. SD HIGHLIGHTED the increasing emphasis on tuition fees and the request from Council for a surplus to enable investment in the estate a provision of services to students. SD NOTED that, currently, the University is predicting a deficit position for the next three years and there is a need to do things differently to build investment for the future.

5.2 SD NOTED that the University had instigated recruitment controls, reduced overtime payments and reviewed current and future budgets with the relevant budget holders. However, officers recognised that still more needs to be done. The following actions were presented to Council for consideration:

- cap on 2019/20 budgets;
- continued recruitment control and non-replacement of certain roles through natural turnover;
- reduced capital expenditure;
- seeking additional income opportunities;
- voluntary reduction in hours;
- purchase of additional holiday of up to two weeks (pro-rata where appropriate);
- Voluntary Leaver Scheme (VLS).

5.3 SD HIGHLIGHTED the risks noted in the paper and the communications undertaken to-date (including the Unions). SD NOTED the variances in the paperwork subsequent to the original conversations at FE&GP.

5.4 Members thanked SD & BS for the excellent presentation. Subsequent discussion included the following areas:

- the need for clarity, transparency and consistency in communication. It was felt that a clear briefing empowers people and helps them to understand what is being proposed;
- briefings should ensure that staff are told that the scheme is entirely voluntary and not linked to redundancy. The scheme is part of a package to enable BGU to be 'match fit' for the future;

- the use of comparator information and external advice to inform the proposals;
  - if this was the correct thing to be doing at this time - should the University wait on the outcome of the Augar review or re-balance the accounts through a review of depreciation;
  - the impact of staff – both in terms of potential loss of good staff and increased capacity issues for those who remain;
  - increased staffing is not accounted for solely by increases to academic staff – there has also been increases elsewhere to enable support for central services and creation of project teams;
  - impact of increases to senior salaries;
  - impact of proposed VLS scheme on student education and the requirement to protect the student experience when considering any VLS applications;
  - potential pressures on those who do not take VLS;
  - the situation with the pension pressures;
  - BGU is in a better position than some other institutions due to prudent management in the past.
- 5.5 Members considered the options presented to them and voted IN FAVOUR of implementation all options, including the VLS. It was NOTED that this may involve a re-balancing of the accounts in the short term if insufficient funds were generated to deal with any potential deficit. SD/BS
- Barrie Shipley left the meeting.*
- 6. Draft Strategy discussion**
- 6.1 SF PRESENTED the current position and direction of travel in regard to the revised University Strategy. Members DISCUSSED:
- the need to ensure the Strategy is written in accessible language;
  - progress on the Portfolio Review and how this may tie into the desire to diversify the student body;
  - the proposed timeline – including future consultation sessions.
- 6.2 Members NOTED the intent to approve the Strategy at the July Council meeting with the intention of launching it on Grosseteste Day, 9<sup>th</sup> October 2019. SF
- 6.3 It was AGREED that the presentation on the portfolio review shared with the Academic Advisory Group should be made available to all Council members. Governance Office

*Council broke for lunch with members of the School of Social Sciences from 1:00-1:30 pm in CSH14.*

*Bob Walder was not present for the following item.*

## **7. University Council Chair re-appointment**

- 7.1 DH referred to the minutes of the Governance & Nominations Committee, NOTING that they had considered the re-appointment of the University Council Chair at their last meeting and RECOMMENDED that Bob Walder be re-appointed for a further 3 years. Council ENDORSESED this recommendation, NOTING that they would be delighted for BW to continue. It was NOTED that BW had previously confirmed he would be willing to continue. Members noted BW's very valuable skill set.

*Bob Walder re-joined the meeting.*

- 7.2 DH informed BW of Council's ENDORSEMENT and BW accepted the role.

## **8. Minutes of the last meeting held on 22 November 2018 and the extraordinary meeting on 29 January 2019**

- 8.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2018 were APPROVED as a true record of the meeting and the Chair was authorised to sign them.
- 8.2 The minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 29 January 2019 were APPROVED as a true record of the meeting and the Chair was authorised to sign them.

### **Matters arising**

#### **8.2.1 Action table**

Council RECEIVED the matters arising action table produced by the Governance Office and NOTED the progress against actions. The following points were HIGHLIGHTED:

Minutes of 22 November 2018, Item 17 – Approval of the Articles of Association for Incorporation

SD CONFIRMED that the Privy Council had APPROVED the Articles of Association, however, we were still waiting on formal approval from the Charity Commission.

Minutes of 29 January 2019, Item 5 – Land Purchase

SD REPORTED that we were currently waiting on further information from the City Council.

### 8.2.1 Any other matters

There were no other matters discussed.

## 9. To receive the Vice-Chancellor's Report

9.1 PN PRESENTED his Report to Council, HIGHLIGHTING the following:

- Potential changes to fees;
- Professor Mary Stuart, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lincoln had agreed to come in and speak to us regarding the University Participation Programme;
- The University had submitted their Subject TEF for the pilot and the good team in place, looking after this, was NOTED. It would be challenging for the University and was being very closely monitored;
- BGU had been accepted to participate in the KEF pilot exercise and Dr Andrew Jackson, Head of Research was leading on this;
- The University had received funding for a project in China following the submission of a bid to the British Council;
- It was REPORTED that the LORIC project had gone extremely well and had met all targets. Its sustainability was now being considered as funding would be ending in June;
- The University had since been informed that the Data Futures Project had been postponed due to operational reasons;
- It was REPORTED that the Constance Stewart extension had recently won two awards for its design, which was both good for the architects and BGU. Two plaques were to be received for these awards.
- The new Director of Human Resources appointment, due to commence at the beginning of April was NOTED.
- The results of the 2018 staff survey were NOTED and these had been communicated to staff at the last Staff Forum on 5 March 2019. A good turnout was NOTED and the results were fairly positive. The external company, CAPITA, who had conducted the survey presented the results to staff. It was AGREED that the headline slides would be circulated to Council.

9.2 SL NOTED that international student numbers were nationally on the increase and raised the question of how well placed BGU was. Even ten students would make a significant amount of money and would also help with the diversity on campus. SF REPORTED that the International Manager was fully aware of the situation and had tried a different approach to marketing. So far the signs were positive, with more interest generated.

Governance  
Office

**10. To receive the Students' Union President's Report**

- 10.1 CF REPORTED that since the last University Council meeting work had continued on the SU Bye Laws to ensure that they were fit for purpose and up-to-date. All had now been confirmed by the Board of Trustees.
- 10.2 It was REPORTED that they had met with BG (Lincoln) Ltd. staff regarding events and they had been very supportive. NUS had been in to look at what was feasible with the SU space and were to come back with suggestions.
- 10.3 CF congratulated all the successful candidates on the recent elections. He also thanked and congratulated Josh Blanchard who had worked tirelessly on the process. There were candidates for every position which had never happened before, with four of the positions having more than one candidate. A slight technical issue was REPORTED with the online voting system meaning that one cohort of students had been unable to vote. Upon investigation it was found that this had affected only the position of Students' Union President. Following discussions with NUS the decision was taken to void the SUP election and order a re-vote. No campaigning took place during the re-vote and the same window of voting time was offered to students. 457 votes were recorded, in comparison to the initial 412 during the original vote and the outcome was that Alan Foster was the successful candidate. Alan would be taking over from CF at the end of June. It was REPORTED that diversity for the SU positions were almost 50/50.
- 10.4 CF NOTED the NUS National Conference to be held in Glasgow at the beginning of April, which was quite possibly the largest to date. CF would create a summary document on the event to circulate to members. BW thanked CF for his work in the SU.

CF

*Peter Green joined the meeting.*

**11. To receive the Chaplain's Report**

- 11.1 PG attended to PRESENT his Report to Council. He emphasised how busy it had been and as with the nature of the institution a lot of the Chaplaincy Team would be graduating this year so they would be recruiting new members. SL NOTED that the Disbursement Committee had been very happy to facilitate the Chapel Choir recently.
- 11.2 NP COMMENDED the hard work of the Chaplaincy Team and expressed concern for the Chaplain's health and wellbeing as a result of the workload. NP NOTED paragraph 7.36 of the Report, regarding Confirmation practices at BGU. He sought clarification around the alignment of these practices to those of the Diocese. NP offered to meet with PG outside the meeting to discuss this matter. BW NOTED that the issue was a very sensitive matter, which would be dealt with separately outside the meeting. BW thanked PG for all his work at BGU.

PG/NP

*Peter Green left the meeting.*

*Jonathan Batty joined the meeting.*

## 12. To receive an update on student recruitment

- 12.1 Jonathan Batty attended to PRESENT his update on student recruitment, NOTING the slightly improved position of being only one candidate down. There was a larger capped allocation for BA in Primary Education with more demand than there were places and typically those that failed to meet the requirements for this programme tended to filter into other programmes.
- 12.2 It was REPORTED that last year we offered four 'offer holder days' between February and April, however, this year we offered only three days between February and March with more people attending. The condensed timetable appeared to work better with more accepting the offers.
- 12.3 JB NOTED that the current week was the final week for high level conditional offers, after which they tended to filter off. Further growth in PGCE was hopeful to continue until the end of the year.
- 12.4 22% more visitors from within the 50 mile radius was REPORTED and although a higher volume of people were enquiring about programmes there was no information as to why they were not applying. People were making less clicks on the website, staying on the one page that contained all the module information. A live chat feature had also been added.
- 12.5 JB NOTED that the student experience was that of a small campus which targeting a niche group of students. It was also NOTED that in order to get the right students we needed to offer the right programmes and the right student experience, both of which were in progress. It was agreed that 90% of the portfolio was correct and if we were able to get people onto campus they were likely to apply.
- 12.6 Members NOTED the close work with schools within the 50 mile radius. JB REPORTED that it was hoped they would be able to encourage schools to work with us in order to get students onto campus, providing them with a budget to do so. It was felt that it would be better to work with schools rather than on an individual level. BW thank JB for the very useful information provided.

*Jonathan Batty left the meeting.*

## 13. Office for Students

- 13.1
- Annual Assurance Return response
- SG REPORTED that a formal response from the OfS had not yet been received.
- 13.2
- Access and Participation Plan
- Members NOTED the timescale and method for approval of the Access and Participation Plan. It was REPORTED that the deadline for submission to the OfS was 1 July 2019 and it was the intention to submit on 25 June

2019. As these dates were outside the Council cycle it was PROPOSED that a discussion around the Plan took place at the Academic Advisory Group to then be taken to the FE&GP Committee for sign off on 6 June 2019. This proposal was ENDORSED and Council would be notified via email.

SG

**14. To note Company Status update**

14.1 SD provided a verbal update on the University’s legal status change, NOTING that the Privy Council had approved the Instrument and Articles of Government. It was NOTED that we were waiting for the timeline of production of the new scheme and would continue to push for this, however, we were continuing to progress with the regulations of the new company. SD HIGHLIGHTED to members that as Trustees they would become Director of the new company and were encouraged to complete the request for information, confirming that BGU email addresses could be used. It was NOTED that the new company would come into effect from 1 August 2019 and details of the Students’ Union predecessors would be required.

SD/CF

14.2 SD REPORTED that he and the Director of Finance would be visiting Joanna Forbes at Shakespeare Martineau to get all the information of what is required before 1 July 2019. There was a 90-day consultation on the TUPE transfer and correspondence to staff would be coordinated, highlighting to them that it was more of a technical point. It was AGREED that SD would provide a detailed report to Council following the meeting with Joanna.

SD

**15. To note Honorary awards**

15.1 The Chair NOTED the following update from the Honorary Awards Committee:

Honorary Graduates

- Ross Edgely had accepted and would be attending Graduation.

Fellowships

- Barbara Murphy had accepted and would be attending Graduation.
- Rev Canon Alex Whitehead had accepted but would not be attending Graduation and would be looking at Matriculation.

Distinguished Fellowships

- Lizzie Jordan had accepted and would be attending Graduation.

PN also NOTED that a further three individuals had been contacted and once they had replied it would be communicated to Council.

**16. BG (Lincoln) Ltd.****16.1 To note the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting and minutes of the AGM held on 5 February 2019**

SD PRESENTED the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting and minutes of the Annual General Meeting NOTING that technically they were still unapproved as there had not been another meeting of the BG (Lincoln) Ltd. Board since, however it was important for Council to note them. It was REPORTED that financially the Company was in a better place than it was this time last year and would be looking at how they operated, ensuring that it did not intrude on the student experience. There was a £125k subsidiary in place at the current time, however it looked as though all of it would not be required.

**Key items from sub-committees****17. To note the Governance & Nominations Committee minutes of 6 February 2019**

17.1 Member RECEIVED and NOTED the minutes of the Governance & Nominations Committee meeting held on 6 February 2019.

17.2 University Council recruitment was NOTED, confirming that the Diocese had confirmed their appointment and once the governance work had been done this would be communicated to Council. It was REPORTED that to date, five applications to join Council had been received and SG would meet with BW for an informal selection process to take forward to the Governance & Nominations Committee. It was NOTED that the gender balance of applicants was fairly equal, however there was still the skills matrix for consideration. It was also NOTED that a number of the applicants came from a HE background. SM HIGHLIGHTED that it would be good practice to get the gender balance of Council to at least one third of female representation.

SG/  
Governance  
Office

**17.2.1 Governance Effectiveness review update**

The Governance Effectiveness Review was NOTED.

**18. To note the FE&GP Committee minutes of 20 February 2019**

18.1 Member RECEIVED and NOTED the minutes of the FE&GP Committee meeting held on 20 February 2019.

**18.1.1 Freedom of Speech Policy**

Council APPROVED the updated Freedom of Speech Policy based on FE&GP Committee's recommendations.

**18.2.1 Gender Pay Gap Report**

Council APPROVED the Gender Pay Gap Report based on the Committee's approval.

SM NOTED the Gender Pay Gap Report and raised the issue of whether the recruitment process was good practice and whether there was a policy for setting pay scales. Equal pay was positively NOTED, with the one pay scale was used, however, the University's top quartile was all male. SF NOTED that following the last meeting of the People and Inclusion Committee a long list of proposals had been made and there was ambition to move things forward. Council NOTED that the report was very positive and was a public facing document.

**19. To note the Remuneration Committee minutes of 20 February 2019**

19.1 Member RECEIVED and NOTED the minutes of the Remuneration Committee meeting held on 20 February 2019. SC HIGHLIGHTED that the Deputy Vice-Chancellor's targets for this year were received and considered by the Committee.

**19.1.1 Annual Remuneration Report and Statement**

SC REPORTED that the Annual Remuneration Report and Statement had been prepared by SD in the absence of a Director of Human Resources. A remarkable job was done by SD and following detailed changes by the Committee the Annual Remuneration Report and Statement was presented to Council. It was NOTED that the University were obliged to put an Annual Remuneration Statement on the website. SC HIGHLIGHTED that it was the intention to align the Report and the Statement each year. Council APPROVED the Annual Remuneration Statement and Report and NOTED their thanks to Wendy Cundy, the independent member of the Committee who added much value.

*Rachel Harvey joined the meeting.*

**20. To note the Audit Committee minutes of 6 March 2019**

20.1 Members RECEIVED and NOTED the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 6 March 2019. Richard Hallsworth NOTED the discussion to take place at the next Audit Committee meeting on Value for Money and what we think we should measure ourselves on. The internal audit reviews and the Student Contention Report were also NOTED.

**20.1.1 (REDACTED)**

**20.2.1 KPIs**

Rachel Harvey presented the KPIs NOTING the two aspects; the first was the explanation that University Council had asked for on how it was produced and the second the performance report and dashboard that showed theme areas. Overall the University's position was fairly positive and a review would be done in a further six months. It was NOTED that they were not the annual KPIs but helped as we progressed through the academic year. Sustainability with regards to recruitment

and the student experience were NOTED. It was AGREED that Rachel Harvey would review the colours used in the dashboard to provide clarity.

Rachel Harvey

Richard Hallsworth NOTED that it would be helpful for Council members to receive and note the performance dashboard at the beginning of Council meetings going forward. The Vice-Chancellor stated it was his intention to cover this in his report. This was AGREED by Council.

Governance Office

**20.3.1 Risk Register**

Rachel Harvey presented the new report to Council that worked by exception and covered the risk profile with medium to high risks. The Student Records System and Data Capability were NOTED as the higher risks, however, some of the conversations over the previous few weeks would hopefully reduce these. JB had previously reported on student recruitment earlier on the agenda and the appointment of a Director of HR was again NOTED. Members AGREED that Partnerships and Reputational Risk should be brought into the Register.

Rachel Harvey

Council thanked Rachel Harvey for both the KPIs and the Risk Register.

*Rachel Harvey left the meeting.*

**21. Senate**

**20.1 To note the minutes of the Senate meetings held on 12 December 2018 and 6 March 2019**

The Senate minutes of the meetings held on 12 December 2018 and 6 March 2019 were RECEIVED and NOTED. PN NOTED that Council needed to be aware that a decision had been taken on minute 4.1 which related to standards.

**22. Academic Advisory Group**

22.1 As a link governor DH provided an update to Council on the Academic Advisory Group NOTING that it was not a formal committee, however, records of what was discussed as its two meetings in December and March were on the SharePoint area, available to all. The Governance Office would circulate an email to members with a link to the area.

Governance Office

22.2 DH REPORTED that TEF, the Academic Health of the Institutional Report, the portfolio review and degree classifications had been discussed. It was NOTED that the presentations would be uploaded to the SharePoint area. Members also NOTED that the University had provided a very BGU specific response to the consultation on degree classifications.

Governance Office

22.3 JC REPORTED that as link governor she was receiving monthly progress reports on metrics, timeline completion, cohort retention, observation workshops and KPI monitoring on apprenticeships. She would also be visiting some of the apprentices. Council thanked her for her work on this.

**23. Agenda management and review**

23.1 Members were content with the management of the meeting.

**24. Any other business**

24.1 Council NOTED that it was the last meeting for Craig Ferguson, Bethanney Robinson and Josh Blanchard. Members thanked them for their contribution to Council and wished them well for the future.

**25. Date of next meeting**

25.1 The next meeting of the University Council will be held on Wednesday 3 July 2019 between 11:00 am and 3:00 pm in the Skinner Building, Room 13, with lunch from 1:00-1:30 pm in the John Tomlinson Conference Room. The University Council training day would be held on Thursday 4 July 2019 in Hardy Seminar Room 1.

Signed ..... *R. Walden* ..... Date ..... *3rd July 2019* .....