

BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

THURSDAY 13 MARCH 2014
1:45 PM IN HARDY TEACHING ROOM 1

Council members present:

Mr David Babb
Dr Kevin Brown
The Very Rev'd Philip Buckler
Mr Jamie Caress
Mr David Clements
Mr Richard Corn
Mrs Sandra Gratrack
Dr Tony Hill
Ms Hâf Merrifield
Professor Jayne Mitchell
Mr Roger Mosey (Chair)
Rev'd Sally Myers
Rev Professor Peter Neil
Mrs Jasmit Phull
Dr Jim Smith
Mrs Bridget Starling
Mr James Turner

In attendance:

Mr Nigel Appleton, Dean of School of Teacher Development
Mr Stephen Deville, Director of Resources
Mr Nick Roberts, Students' Union Vice President 2013/14
Ms Emma Smeaton, Officer to the University Council
Ms Katie White, Clerk to the University Council

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed Professor Jayne Mitchell, the new Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic to the University and to her first University Council meeting.

The Chair also thanked Council members who had attended additional meetings at the University which included; the FE&GP Strategy meeting, the audit tender presentations and the extraordinary Governance & Nominations Committee meeting.

Action

2. The University Prayer

Rev. Professor Peter Neil led the University Prayer.

3. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Bishop Christopher Lowson, Mr Graham Meeson, Professor Mark Thompson and Mrs Lucy Wood.

5. Minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2013

The minutes of the last meeting held on 20 November 2013 were APPROVED as a true record of the meeting and the Chair was authorised to sign them.

6. Matters arising

There were no matters arising other than those covered on the agenda.

7. Vice Chancellor's business

(i) Vice Chancellor's report

Council RECEIVED the Vice Chancellor's report. The Vice Chancellor presented this to members highlighting the following points:

- Wider context;
- Staffing;
- Staff engagement;
- Student engagement;
- National Student Survey;
- Research;
- Recruitment.

In addition to the report a table showing the sector results for the correlation between socio-economic class and non-continuation was circulated and members noted that BGU ranked very highly in maintaining students from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

8. Chair's items

(i) Council member appointments

The Vice Chair reported the outcome of the interviews for new Council members held the previous day. Council ENDORSED the recruitment of the new members recommended by the Governance & Nominations Committee and noted that the new appointments would supplement the excellent expertise of University Council.

9. Strategy

The Deputy Vice Chancellor presented her paper on the propositions for the University Strategy that had previously been presented to the extended FE&GP Committee on 25 February to which all Council members were invited.

Council noted the progress of the Strategy and ENDORSED the propositions set out in the paper. It was AGREED that the Vice Chancellor would have the authority to commit additional financial resources during the current and next financial year up to a maximum of £400k across the two years with regular reporting to the FE&GP Committee on how the funds were being allocated. For clarification it was noted that the £400k was not the full cost of implementing the whole Strategy.

10. Students' Union

(i) President's report

The Students' Union President presented his report to Council.

(ii) Governance update

An update on governance was also given by the Students' Union President.

11. Student recruitment

The Deputy Vice Chancellor presented her paper on student recruitment which outlined the current position on recruitment and the challenges given the significant changes within the sector.

It was reported that 20-30 students were necessary to make a course viable in terms of paying for itself but in order for a course to run double figures were required. Council NOTED the current state of progress regarding recruitment and the continued effort, particularly with regard to conversion activity.

12. Key performance indicators

The Deputy Vice Chancellor presented the Key Performance Indicators to the Council. Ex BG student, Jade Etherington's success in the winter Paralympics winning 3 silver medals and one bronze medal was highlighted under the 'media profile' indicator. This had resulted in a lot of media attention with articles featuring BG staff member quotes. It was reported that colleagues were now used to having a more proactive PR operation in place.

13. BG (Lincoln) Ltd.

- (i) Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Directors – 3 December 2013

Members RECEIVED the minutes of the last meeting of the Board of Directors held on 3 December 2013.

- (ii) Agenda for meeting of the Board of Directors – 26 March 2014

Council RECEIVED the agenda for the next meeting of the Board of Directors to be held on 26 March 2014. It was AGREED that future meetings would be held before University Council.

14. Instruments & Articles

The Clerk to University Council presented the papers detailing the amendments to the Instruments and Articles of Government which included tracked changed versions of both the Instruments and Articles and clean versions. A Schedule of Amendments for the Instrument of Government was also included. It was REPORTED that the Privy Council had approved all amendments previously endorsed by the Council but queried one paragraph which referred to amendment of the Articles. The Privy Council proposed that the wording currently used in the Instruments was mirrored in the Articles.

Council RECEIVED and APPROVED the amendments and the clean versions of the Instruments of Government and the Articles of Government. A formal resolution would be made to the Privy Council.

KW

15. Key items from sub-committees

- (i) Governance & Nominations Committee

The minutes of the extraordinary Governance and Nominations Committee meeting held earlier in the day would be submitted to the next meeting of Council. A verbal update was provided to members.

(a) Recruitment of new Council members

The recruitment of Council members was reported earlier in the meeting. It was NOTED that the main Governance and Nominations Committee that was to take place in February did not take place due to quoracy issues, therefore there were no other items to report.

(ii) Audit Committee

The minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 4 March 2014 were TABLED. The Chair of the Audit Committee REPORTED:

(a) Internal audit reports

Two reports had been presented to the Audit Committee both with very good outcomes. A third report was held back which related to Student Data as there were some issues that the University wanted to discuss with the Auditors. These issues were discussed in detail during the Committee meeting and the full report and action plan would be taken to the next meeting in June.

(b) External audit tender

The Committee had agreed that of the three companies invited to tender, Mazars would be invited to be the University's external auditors for the next three years. Council ENDORSED the decision of the Audit Committee with an appointment date of 14 March 2014.

(iii) FE&GP Committee

The minutes of the FE&GP Committee meeting held on 25 February 2014 were RECEIVED. The Chair of the Committee REPORTED:

(a) BG (Lincoln) Ltd.

The Committee had received a further update on the Limited Company and it was NOTED that they would continue to keep this under close review.

(b) Maximum and minimum target range (financial KPIs)

The Committee had suggested that budget targets of 'less than' be amended to a banded target, stating 'no less than' and 'no more than' as its parameters as it was felt that the current target gave an inaccurate impression of the way in which budgets were expected to be used. The Director of Resources would report on this at the next Committee meeting.

SD

16. Senate

The minutes of the meetings of Senate held on 11 December 2013 and 19 February 2014 were RECEIVED. The Vice Chancellor NOTED the 2014 Honorary Graduates as:

- Ursula Lidbetter
- Tim Lomas
- Muriel Robinson

One University Fellowship would be presented to former Chair of University Council, Haydn Beeken. The Council ENDORSED these recommendations.

The Vice Chancellor asked the Council to consider the proposal to offer a professorship to Dr Mitchell based on the University's criteria, following endorsement by Senate. The Council APPROVED this proposal.

17. Chaplain's report

Council RECEIVED the Chaplain's report. The Vice Chancellor assured members that the Chaplain was doing a superb job on every level and enhanced the ethos of BGU.

18. Agenda suggestions for future meetings

- A presentation on KPIs;
- Refresh on the role of University Council members.

19. Any other business

It was NOTED that any Council papers no longer required by members could be returned to the Clerk to University Council or the Officer to University Council for secure destruction.

20. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the University Council would take place on Wednesday 25 June 2014 at 1:45 pm.

Signed Date