

BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LINCOLN

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
FINANCE, EMPLOYMENT & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 21st FEBRUARY 2012
2:00 PM IN ROOM 102, SKINNER BUILDING

Present

Professor John Fothergill
Mr Maximilian Manin
Professor Muriel Robinson
Mrs Pamela Taylor (Chair)

In attendance

Mr Stephen Deville, Director of Resources
Mr Steve Illidge, SU President 2011/12 (up to item 5)
Mr Stephen Kirby, Finance Manager
Ms Vicky Mays, Clerk to Governors
Mr Fred Robson, Head of Estates
Ms Alison Smith, Head of Human Resources
Mrs Emma Smeaton, Minuting Secretary

Action

1. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr John Rowland and Mrs Lucy Wood. It was also noted that Ms Hâf Merrifield would normally be in attendance but sent her apologies for this meeting.

3. Minutes of the last meeting held 3rd November 2011

The minutes of the meeting of the 3rd November 2011 were confirmed as a true record of the meeting and the Chair was authorised to sign them.

4. Matters arising

Members noted the TDA funding announcement and reported that numbers were currently looking encouraging for next year.

It was also noted that SLT were due to have discussions regarding the introduction of staff recruitment packages and would bring proposals back to FE&GP for discussion and consideration at a later date.

Future
FE&GP mtg.

5. Students' Union

(i) Proposed review

Members received the Students' Union Structure and proposed review of the Students' Union prepared by the Deputy Principal. The proposal was accepted and it was agreed that the review would be completed by the end of June. The President of the Students' Union requested that other examples of Students' Union governance in higher education institutions should be considered and external expertise such as the NUS should also be consulted.

(ii) Governance documents

Members also received the Students' Union governance document and noted that it would be helpful for a review group to conduct a further proof read and address the presentation issues, bringing any recommendations back to the Committee ahead of its next meeting on the 12th June 2012. The Committee agreed to delay the approval of the document until after the Students' Union review was completed. The SU President offered some ideas on why the document had taken a long time to complete.

SU/VM

The Chair thanked the Students' Union for all their work on the document so far.

6. Human Resources

(i) Staffing report from HR

The Head of HR talked members through the staffing report noting that there were still some appointments in the pipeline. The lower numbers for staffing in both Schools were noted and it was explained that this was due to delays in appointments. It was reported that staff turnover was lower than the national average, with a rate of 11.5% for the 2010-11 period, 4.9% exclusive of compulsory redundancies. Staff sickness was also lower than the national average and long term sickness was much improved.

Members noted that SLT would look at the age profile of employees, noting that appointments in the School of Teacher Development tend to be older than those in the School of Culture, Education and Innovation due to the career experience required.

SLT/VM

(ii) Summary of pay determination

Members received the paper which outlined the recommendations from SLT, suggesting that we do not withdraw from national negotiations but continue to keep this under review. It was also noted that the Director of Enterprise was looking into the possibility of moving some staff over to the trading company. HR would need to explore that there was an economical, technical or organisation reason for this. It was agreed that the UCEA consultation document would be uploaded to the governor area of the website. VM

(iii) Key HR issues

The Head of HR reported that there were no additional policies to note or approve but highlighted the following points:

- It was not yet clear of the potential impact of strike action on 4th March 2012 regarding pensions.
- It was noted that a very successful management development day had taken place at the end of July for all non-SLT management covering key areas and useful feedback had been received. Another day was to be scheduled for next term.
- HR were in the process of making some changes to the Re-grading Policy that was developed when the Pay Policy was put together in 2008. Delays in updating the policy had been due to the lack of local Union representatives and the need to consult regionally.
- Professor John Fothergill noted that the University of Leicester use Hay and that it would be useful to speak to someone in the HR department at Leicester.

7. Finance

(i) Mid year financial update and summary variance notes

The Director of Resources talked members through the figures and noted that the Director of Enterprise had a very clear brief to get the figures as close to the budget figure as possible. It was agreed that the Director of Enterprise would be asked to circulate context explaining the figures to governors prior to the next Governing Body meeting. The Committee noted that substantial improvements had been made to facilities during the year.

VM/RJ
SD

It was reported that the EDRF agency were currently withholding payment for money towards BG futures by claiming that we had not followed the European tendering process. BG had appealed this decision and is currently awaiting a response. Governors agreed that if the appeal was rejected then legal advice should be sought.

The Director of Resources noted that he, along with the Director of Enterprise and Head of Human Resources was due to visit the University of Essex to meet with the head of HR and the heads of commercial activity to see how switching over to a trading company had gone for them.

(ii) HEFCE financial forecast

It was noted that HEFCE had requested the submission of financial forecasts by the 20th June 2012 which fell after the next FE&GP meeting but before the Governing Body that would approve them. It was agreed that the Director of Resources would contact HEFCE to let them know that we could either submit a provisional forecast which would be subject to the approval of the Governing Body who were due to meet on 28th June or submit the approved forecast a week later following the approval of the Governing Body.

SD

(iii) Terrorism insurance

Members received a set papers outlining terrorism insurance for the University College, totalling a premium of just under £5k. It was agreed that the Director of Resources would read through the terms and conditions, raising any appropriate issues with the insurance company before agreeing to the policy.

SD

(iv) Consideration of future tuition fee increases

The Director of Resources reported on the new method of collecting of tuition fees. The full fee amount was currently collected on the 1st December. Under the new proposal 25% of the fee would be collected upon registration (non-refundable), 25% would be collected in the January and the remaining 50% in the May. Members raised the question of cash flow. The Director of Resources would set out the differences between the existing and new system.

SD

8. Estates & University College Services

(i) Building works update

- Update of expenditure against budget for major capital items

Members received a paper prepared by the Head of Estates, noting the number of schemes happening around campus including the new additions which are currently in the early stages of development. The Head of Estates reported that BGfutures had been shortlisted for a RICS Regional Award (East Midlands) under the Community Building category, taking place on the 27th March 2012, the PR representative had been informed.

- Library and Student Support progress

Members noted the ongoing progress and agreed that a tour of the new library would be arranged for the lunchtime before the Governing Body meeting on the 15th March.

Next GB/VM

- Main vehicle entrance and relocation of Reception

The Head of Estates presented plans to the Committee for the new reception area and plans for the main entrance. Members gave approval to proceed with both schemes to the tender stage.

(ii) Student Accommodation including Crosstrend House

The Head of Estates reported that BG had been approached by developers with a proposal for the University College regarding student accommodation. The proposal would be to renovate Crosstrend House (a large office block next to BBC Radio Lincolnshire on Newport) into student accommodation and offer us the opportunity to lease the building. They had already received the planning permission. The building would comprise of around 60 rooms, approximately 50 of which would have en-suite, generating £35-£40K per year for the University College. There would be no upfront cost to BG and the developers were looking for a long term lease of 21 years.

Members agreed that the proposal would be recommended to the Governing Body with plans being available for them to see at the pre-meeting lunch.

Next GB/VM

Members also discussed the re-development of Nelson and Wickham halls, noting that it would cost around £4.5 million to do the work but would mean that a further 54 rooms would be gained although some kitchen spaces would be lost. There was also an option to build an extra building on the back of CSH, creating the option to make more kitchen spaces. The Director of Resources reported that if we were to go ahead with all the plans the cost would be around £6 million. It was noted that we currently have £11-12 million in the bank and would require at least £4 million for liquidity. The option to knock Nelson and Wickham Halls down and start from scratch should also be explored as this would mean no VAT charge would be incurred.

Members agreed that remedial work to Nelson and Wickham was required immediately and further work would be reconsidered once we have student numbers for September 2012. It was agreed that the Committee would draw upon the expertise of Professor John Fothergill in this area and liaise with SLT on the Estates Strategy.

(iii) Naming of new Library building

It was noted that two possible names had been taken to SLT for consideration as the name of the Library, Student Support and IT building. The suggestions were:

The Arbour; and,
The Forum.

Members were not enthusiastic about either suggestion and it was agreed that the Principal would continue to gather further suggestions.

MR

9. Risk Register and Management

Members received the summary of institutional level top risks prepared by the Deputy Principal. It was agreed that the TDA risk would be put as a separate item on the Governing Body agenda. Members noted that the wording to the risk entitled 'BG makes incorrect strategic decisions' would be reconsidered.

GB

HM

10. Agenda suggestions

It was agreed that the Director of Enterprise would be asked to bring the plans for moving to a limited company to the next meeting on 12th June 2012 in preparation for them to then go to the Governing Body on 28th June 2012.

VM

11. Any other business

There was no any other business to discuss.

12. Key items for the Governing Body

- Student's Union review and governance documents;
- Campus tour on 15th March 2012;
- Crosstrend House plans;
- TDA risk;
- Enterprise Hub.

13. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Finance, Employment & General Purposes Committee would take place on Tuesday 12th June 2012 at 2:00 pm. Professor John Fothergill gave his apologies in advance for this meeting.

Signed 

Date 22.11.12

