

BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

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

TUESDAY 10 JUNE 2014
1:00 PM IN ROOM 103, SKINNER BUILDING

Present

Mr David Babb (Chair)
Dr Kevin Brown
Rev. Professor Peter Neil
Dr Jim Smith

In attendance

Mr Stephen Deville, Director of Resources
Mr Rob Jones, Director of Enterprise
Mr Graham Killey, Planning & Performance Manager (up to item 10)
Ms Hâf Merrifield, Deputy Vice Chancellor: Strategy & Performance
Professor Jayne Mitchell, Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic
Mr Nick Roberts, Student's Union Vice President (for item 6)
Mr Fred Robson, Head of Estates (for item 10)
Ms Abigail Rogers, Students' Union Manager (for item 6)
Mrs Katie Skilton, Clerk to University Council
Ms Emma Smeaton, Governance Officer

Action

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed members to the extended meeting of FE&GP Committee in which additional time was allowed for a substantive discussion on the University Strategy.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Professor Mark Thompson.

The Head of HR and the Finance Manager would normally be in attendance but were unavailable, the Director of Resources would report in their absence. The Director Enterprise would be in attendance for the full meeting.

3. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minutes of the last meeting held 25 February 2014

The minutes of the last meeting held on 25 February 2014 were APPROVED as a true record of the meeting and the Chair was authorised to sign them with the inclusion of one grammatical amendment:

Minute 8(ii) Finance – Limited Company Update

Bullet point one – the word 'preforming' would be corrected to 'performing'.

5. Matters arising

(i) Action points

Members RECEIVED and REVIEWED the action points table. It was NOTED that the newly appointed Planning & Performance Manager would action item 5(i) as part of the wider review of the financial KPIs.

(ii) Any other matters

The Vice Chancellor presented members with a brief update on the data issue, NOTING that the Audit Committee would be looking at this in detail at their next meeting.

6. Students' Union

(i) Draft budget

The Committee RECEIVED the SU draft budget.

The following was NOTED:

- The small surplus due to increased income generated through sales.
- Though there was slight concern that the salaries grant would remain the same which may lead to increased costs, the following year would provide greater opportunity to generate further income through sale of merchandise.
- The pay increase for both the President and Vice President was attributed to the removal of accommodation included as standard on the remuneration package.

The SU Draft Budget was APPROVED by the Committee.

(ii) Governance update

The Deputy Vice Chancellor: Strategy & Performance provided an update on the arrangements required for the Students' Union to become a registered independent charity. It was REPORTED that the employment issue with regard to the transfer of pensions was still on-going and would be picked up when the staff involved had the capacity to do so.

7. Fees

Members RECEIVED the report on tuition fees for the next academic year and APPROVED the recommendations NOTING that the University's Access Agreement for 2015/16 had been provisionally submitted to the Office for Fair Access on the basis of the report. It was NOTED that the budget submitted to the Committee had assumed the proposed fee increase of £9k.

8. Strategy & budget

(i) University Strategy

The Vice Chancellor presented the narrative and detailed work on the Strategy. The paper presented to the Committee represented a year's work of consultations, discussions and away days, all having an input in the process.

The Following points were NOTED:

- At the last Council meeting in March it was decided to proceed with the proposed Strategy, provided a draft budget and scenarios were prepared; these were now available to the Committee.
- Since the last report to Council, the change to the student number control led to the decision to target full-time undergraduate students rather than part time and mature students.
- Page five of the report detailed consideration of cultural and behavioural change and a change plan had been included alongside the implementation plan.

Thanks were formally recorded to those involved in the preparing of the Strategy. The Committee AGREED that clear direction from the Senior Leadership Team would be required for the implementation stage of the Strategy particularly considering the requirement for the portfolio to be in place for September.

The Committee ENDORSED the proposed Strategy and RECOMMENDED it to the University Council for approval.

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(ii) Budget & financial forecasts

Members RECEIVED the budget for 2014/15 and the proposed financial forecasts. The Director of Resources highlighted the significant changes that were explained in the notes provided to the Committee and the following points were NOTED:

- Student number predictions, fees, 25:1 staff/student ratio and staff pay inflation were all included in the figures.
- The figures assumed the fee cap of £9k was lifted in 2017/18 and thereafter and onwards a 2% inflation increase was incorporated year on year.
- The period which predicted a significant reduction of net liquidity days would likely be managed via a short term loan. If and when this situation materialised however, discussion would take place to determine the best course of action with regard to borrowing.
- Investment would be made to increase administrative staff by 40% comparable with the student increase.
- The use of the £3m reserves would be discussed as a future agenda item. This discussion would include strategy on investment.

**Future
agenda item**

The budget and financial forecasts were ENDORSED by the FE&GP Committee and RECOMMENDED to the University Council.

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The complete Strategy as received by the Committee with an accompanying covering note would be provided to the Council and the Chair of the FE&GP Committee would be invited to draw attention to the issues that had been discussed during the meeting. Scenarios showing the variables would be presented to the University Council at the meeting but would not be circulated in paper form.

(iii) Limited Company

The Committee RECEIVED the Managing Director's report on the budget which had been discussed and endorsed by the Limited Company Board on 4 June. The Director of Enterprise REPORTED the following:

- Henry Ruddock and Head of HR, Alison Smith had been appointed as new Board members.
- The predicted budgets now showed the Limited Company transitioning to small profit slightly later than originally predicted in 2016/17. This was partly attributed to the original budget predictions being based on assumptions before the new accommodation and catering facilities had been completed.

- By 6 months into the next academic year, it should be clear whether the predictions were on target.

Kevin Brown, who was also a BG (Lincoln) Ltd. Director, expressed the Board's appreciation of the efforts made NOTING much of the success was dependent on the start of the new academic year. The budget was ENDORSED by the Committee.

9. Employment

(i) HR staffing report

The staffing report from HR was RECEIVED and the following points NOTED:

- The percentage of casual and fixed term staff was slightly higher than usual.
- Staff turnover remained relatively low.
- Sickness absence remained steady.
- The ageing profile of staff. It was NOTED that this should be kept under review in terms of succession planning.

(ii) Targets

This item would be carried forward to the next meeting of FE&GP in October.

(iii) Key HR issues – appraisal review

The Director of Resources REPORTED the key findings of the Appraisal Review which are already being implemented during the current cycle:

- HR is now ensuring all staff have an appraisal and following this up.
- Sessions are being provided for line managers and appraisers on how they use the process.
- Appraisals will become a more rounded process rather than a one off event.

10. Estates & University services

(i) Building works update

Members RECEIVED an update on building works and expenditure against budget for major capital items. The Head of Estates provided further updates since the submission of the report to the Committee:

**Next
meeting**

- The contractor for the scheme to upgrade the accommodation in Constance Stewart Hall was replaced by Gelder Group who were being used for another development on campus.
- Castle Construction from Scarborough had been appointed for the roof works in Constance Stewart Hall and would commence the two week project on 23 June.
- The actual spend on the Enterprise offices had increased to £82k.
- The order for the CSH shower and bed upgrades had been placed making the total commitment including the Enterprise offices to just under £200k.

The Committee NOTED the excellent general appearance of the campus and thanked the Head of Estates and his team for their hard work.

11. Student recruitment update

The Committee RECEIVED an update on student recruitment by the Deputy Vice Chancellor: Strategy & Performance, who REPORTED the following:

- The projected target in the Strategy for BA programmes was 550, to date the number stood at 478.
- Numbers for Primary PGCE were lower than the predicted target. BGU had been actively advertising teacher education to increase interest in the programme.
- Since the Committee had received the report, the decision to rest the Visual Arts programme had been taken. All applicants had been contacted.
- Final student number predictions for the 2014/15 academic year were difficult during such a turbulent environment.

The Committee NOTED the continued efforts of the Admissions, Recruitment and Marketing teams.

12. Agenda suggestions

- Investment Policy to go to the February FE&GP meeting as the next meeting in October will be primarily concerned with signing off the accounts;
- New financial memorandum update;
- Staff appraisal update;
- Health and Safety Report.

**January
meeting**

13. Any other business

The Director of Enterprise gave an update on fundraising and REPORTED that the Fundraising Manager post had been made redundant with the post holder leaving BGU at the end of July.

The Deputy Vice Chancellor: Strategy & Performance REPORTED that the University had successfully defended an employment tribunal claim which went to a full hearing and was found in favour of BGU.

14. Key items for the University Council

- Strategy;
- Budget;
- Council members would be asked to take a decision to appoint members as part of the Sponsorship Board under Chair's business.

15. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Finance, Employment & General Purposes Committee would take place Tuesday 28 October at 2:00 pm.

Signed  Date 28/10/14

