

BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

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

WEDNESDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2018
11:00 AM IN HARDY SEMINAR ROOM 4

Present:

Mr David Babb (Chair)
Mrs Jackie Croft
Mr Stephen Lawrence
AVM Gavin Mackay
Rev Canon Professor Peter Neil
Rt Rev'd Dr Nigel Peyton

In attendance:

Mr Jonathan Batty, Director of Marketing, Recruitment & Communications (item 7 only)
Mr Stephen Deville, Chief Operating Officer
Mr Craig Ferguson, Students' Union President 2018/19 (item 8 only)
Ms Stephanie Gilluly, Registrar (Clerk) (excluding item 5.2 below)
Ms Suzanne Kane, Director of Estates & Facilities (items 10 & 11 only)
Mr Barrie Shipley, Director of Finance (from item 6 onwards)
Ms Emma Whiteley, Governance Officer (Minuting)
Mr Umar Zamman, Director of People and Organisational Development (from item 6 onwards)

1. Welcome

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the first FE&GP Committee meeting of the 2018/19 academic year.
- 1.2 Members NOTED that, whilst the University was still operating under the current Articles of Government, staff members should not be members of the FE&GP Committee. It was therefore NOTED that Alan Stacey was no longer a member of the Committee.

2. Apologies

- 2.1 There were no apologies for absence received.

3. Declarations of Interest

- 3.1 There were no new declarations of interest received.

Action

4. Terms of Reference

- 4.1 The Committee RECEIVED the revised Terms of Reference and formally ACCEPTED the minor revisions made.

5. Minutes of the last meeting held on 11 June 2018

- 5.1 The minutes of the FE&GP Committee meeting held on 11 June 2018 were APPROVED as a true record of the meeting and the Chair was authorised to sign them.

6. Matters arising

- 6.1 Action table

Members NOTED the progress of actions set out in the action table produced by the Governance Office.

- 6.2. Any other matters

There were no other matters arising.

7. To receive an update on student recruitment

- 7.1 Members received the paper prepared by the Director of Marketing, Recruitment & Communications, which was a regular update to the Committee, showing the current state of affairs in recruitment. The Committee welcomed JB to the meeting to present the paper. The following points were HIGHLIGHTED:

- 7.1.1 Open Day rates were high and, with two further dates scheduled, it was anticipated that the University would end up ahead of target.
- 7.1.2 It was NOTED that, with the current Student Records System, it was difficult to define those who were brand new students and those who were returning from a period of intercalation or transferring from other courses.
- 7.1.3 Targets were based on forecasts and more pessimistic planning was required.
- 7.1.4 JB REPORTED that over the past four years the majority of BGU's recruitment had been from within a 25 mile radius. It was anticipated that in 2019 the University would start to regain its old territory. It was NOTED that it was necessary to spend money to protect BGU's East-Midlands/ Yorkshire/ Humberside areas of recruitment.
- 7.1.5 98% of students at BGU come from working class backgrounds, with parents that have not been to university.
- 7.1.6 The need to market how BGU assists students was NOTED.

- 7.1.7 Members NOTED that the conversion rate was excellent and that processes continue to be streamlined.
- 7.1.8 Applications this year for UG and PGCE were up significantly. It was NOTED that, if we are up on applications by the 15th January, the University would generally be up on enrolments in September.
- 7.1.9 JB REPORTED that the University had received 5,397 enquiries last year compared to 10,908 this year.
- 7.1.10 It was AGREED that it was important to educate potential applicants about BGU as they may apply for higher level courses at a later date (e.g. PGCE courses).
- 7.1.11 The retention of the Schools & Colleges Liaison Officers was raised. UZ CONFIRMED that he would be looking at retention across the board.
- 7.1.12 Members NOTED the importance of the spend undertaken on Marketing and Recruitment. Members AGREED that spending money on recruitment was always a risk given the high level of competition in the sector.

UZ

7.2 The Committee thanked JB for his useful report.

8. Students' Union

8.1 To receive an update from the Students' Union

The Chair thanked the Students' Union President for his admirably brief and informative report. The following points were HIGHLIGHTED:

- 8.1.1 Fresher's week attendance records had exceeded all expectations, breaking records that had stood for years. CF REPORTED on the use of social media as a tool before students had been through the enrolment process.
- 8.1.2 The Committee congratulated the football team on winning the Cathedral Cup against the University of Lincoln.

9. Employment

9.1. To receive the Workforce Report

The Director of People & Organisational Development presented the key performance indicators in relation to its staff profile, turnover, sickness absence and cost as a percentage of income. The following points were NOTED:

- 9.1.1 UZ NOTED that initiatives were in place to support and monitor staff sickness absence.
- 9.1.2 With regards to diversity, the Committee were content the University was heading in the right direction.

9.1.3 It was NOTED that the Staff Survey had been issued to staff with a completion deadline of 14th December.

9.1.4 The higher age profile was NOTED, this was mainly down to staff having had education careers in schools prior to coming to BGU with a wider breath of experience. UZ NOTED that People and Organisational Development would be undertaking more work around succession planning.

9.2 To receive the Annual Equality and Diversity Report

UZ PRESENTED the Annual Equality and Diversity Report for 2016/17, NOTING the requirement to put this into the public domain. The slight increase in diversity of the institution was HIGHLIGHTED for 2016/17, however, there was a slight reduction for 2017/18. The Committee NOTED that this was due to us being a small institution where small number changes could easily affect figures.

9.3 To receive the Performance and Appraisal Process

9.3.1 UZ PRESENTED the revised Performance and Appraisal process NOTING that the proposal submitted to the Committee would be subject to consultation. The proposed framework was based on setting very clear objectives, linked to KPIs. It was NOTED that the competency based guidelines that were intended to generate discussion and debate. The process was intended to be a positive reinforcement, which identified talent, created feedback and exchange by effective discussion. It was REPORTED that training would be robust to support the process. The delivery schedule was highlighted.

9.3.2 The Committee CONFIRMED that they were happy with the principles of the process, however it needed refining to enable people to receive good feedback. The importance of documentary evidence of support for individuals was NOTED. The Committee AGREED for the process to go out to consultation. It was also AGREED that UZ would look to introduce putting the process into the Excel system but would keep it basic for the first year of implementation.

9.3.3 UZ thanked the People & Organisational Development Team for putting the document together, NOTING that it was still work in progress and it would be interesting to see what came back from the consultation period. The timeline for implementation was NOTED to be from April 2019.

10. Estates

10.1. To receive a building works update

The Committee welcomed Suzanne Kane, Director of Estates & Facilities to the meeting. SK presented the building works update paper which monitored expenditure and commitment on capital estates projects and provided general estates information. The following points were HIGHLIGHTED:

10.1.1 SK NOTED the need for continual intervention with the landlord of Lord Tennyson House (Rasen Lane) and PROPOSED that the lease be

UZ

terminated. It was also NOTED that a visit from had highlighted issues, however, the landlord had since put things in order and a follow up visit did not require further action from Lincolnshire Fire & Rescue. The Committee SUPPORTED the decision to break the lease.

10.1.2 The new landlords of Crosstrend House were following up on the two outstanding items highlighted by Lincolnshire Fire & Rescue. It was NOTED that the new Health & Safety Officer was involved and would be meeting with the landlord on a monthly basis.

10.1.3 The shortfall created by Longdales Lodge was NOTED. It was PROPOSED that we entered into a contract with Cow Lettings who had a significant amount of student accommodation in the uphill area of Lincoln. They have a good reputation, with all the right accreditations and a positive relationship was already in place. The Committee AGREED that the benefits outweighed the risks and SUPPORTED the decision to work with Cow Lettings for 295 bedrooms.

10.2 To receive a land development update

10.2.1 SD REPORTED that the contract for the development at Riseholme Road was waiting to be signed. It was NOTED that following changes in relation to student recruitment numbers and the issue surrounding pensions, the University would be looking at a £1.4 million deficit this year, rising to £2.5 million next year if savings were not found or further income generated. The query was raised if the budget situation meant that Council needed to review the purchase the land before the contract was signed.

10.2.2 The Committee NOTED that if we signed the contract then we would still require planning permission with the first phase of the development having to take place within three years of planning permission being granted. It was RECOMMENDED that we went ahead with the purchase of the land, holding off going out for tender for the first phase of the development.

10.2.3 It was AGREED that a timeline would be drawn up. SD would develop a paper to take to Council, however, the Committee were CONTENT to recommend to Council that the purchase to go ahead, NOTING that strategically it was a good decision but that the University may need to investigate options to fund the relevant development.

Chair/UC

SD

11. Health & Safety

11.1 To receive the Health & Safety Report update

The Committee RECEIVED and APPROVED the Health & Safety Report update, NOTING that it was very detailed and thoroughly reported. It was NOTED that the new full-time Health & Safety Officer that was now in post.

11.2 To receive the Health & Safety Policy

The Committee also RECEIVED and APPROVED the Health & Safety Policy.

12. Pensions update

12.1 SD provided an update to members on potential issues facing the University as a result of changes to the Universities Superannuation Scheme. It was REPORTED that there had been some recommendations around valuation and methodology. A small number of staff at BGU are involved, however changes would involve a significant increase to the contribution of employers. It was NOTED that the University is likely to have to fund the additional costs attributable to it. Changes are likely to involve an increase to employer contributions and a decrease to employee contributions. This might mean that employees would opt to move over to the TPS scheme. Members AGREED this was a significant risk and could crystallise a deficit position. It was AGREED that SD should keep the Committee updated.

SD

13. Crime insurance

13.1 SD NOTED the annual renewal process for insurance and HIGHLIGHTED that currently we did not have any insurance against fraud. Insurers had been asked to provide quotes and the following figures were NOTED:

- For £1 million cover - £6k plus VAT
- For £5 million cover - £11k plus VAT

13.2 The Committee AGREED that although the risk was relatively low it would be foolish to dismiss it completely. It was AGREED that it would be useful to get the auditor's view on the matter before making a decision and AGREED to revisit the decisions at a later date.

Future
FE&GP mtg.

14. Agenda suggestions for future meetings

14.1 In addition to those items usually covered the following items would be on the next agenda:

- Marketing – Stephen Lawrence
- Appraisal process
- Budget cost savings

Gov Office/
Next mtg.

15. Agenda management & review

Members were invited to comment on the effectiveness and the success or otherwise of the meeting, noting any issues for the future. All agreed it had been a very effective meeting.

16. Any other business

There was no other business to discuss.

17. Key items for University Council

- Appraisal process

Gov Office/

- Riseholme Road recommendation

Chair

18. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the FE&GP Committee would take place on Wednesday 20 February 2019 at 2:00 pm in CSH11.

Signed  Date 20/2/19

