

BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

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

TUESDAY 5 NOVEMBER 2019
10:00 AM IN HARDY SEMINAR ROOM 1

Present:

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

In attendance:

Mr Jonathan Batty, Director of Marketing, Recruitment & Communications (item 7 only)
Dr Rob Boast, Executive Dean of Learning & Teaching and Student Engagement (item 9.1 only)
Mr Jonathan Cheeseman, Director of Human Resources
Mr Alan Foster, Students' Union President 2018/19 (item 8 only)
Professor Scott Fleming, Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Ms Stephanie Gilluly, Registrar & Secretary (Clerk)
Mr Steve Hurley, Chief of Finance & Operations
Ms Suzanne Kane, Director of Estates & Facilities
Ms Abigail Rogers, Students' Union Chief Executive Officer, (item 8 only)
Mrs Emma Whiteley, Governance Officer (Minuting)

Action

1. Welcome

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the first FE&GP Committee meeting of the current academic year.

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.

4. Terms of Reference

- 4.1

The Terms of Reference were NOTED and APPROVED by University Council at its meeting on 9 October 2019. It was NOTED that they were in the new format and included Instrument and Article changes.

5. Minutes of the last meeting held on 6 June 2019

- 5.1 The minutes of the FE&GP Committee meeting held on 6 June 2019 were APPROVED as a true record of the meeting, and the Chair was authorised to sign them.

6. Matters arising

6.1 Action table

The action table was RECEIVED and progress against actions were NOTED. The explanation given by Stephen Deville on BGU not being in a position to progress on the HMRC Training Centre at Lawress Hall at the present time was NOTED by members.

6.2 Any other matters

There were no other matters arising.

Jonathan Batty joined the meeting.

7. To receive an update on student recruitment

- 7.1 Jonathan Batty attended to present the update on student recruitment NOTING that it had been a good year, being up 8 for applications, 29 for offers and 40 for accepts. Although conversions had increased last year, it had been a difficult year. It was also reported that it had been a good start to the current year with more enrolments than the previous year at 1108, leading to increased fee income. JB NOTED that the radius for PGCE students had increased by 0.6 miles from the 50-mile marketing radius and recruitment now undertook marketing nationally for allocated places. It was reported that applications were down slightly but that, hopefully, this would change. It was NOTED that the figures did not include PGT enrolment in February.
- 7.2 JB reported that we were 30 weeks into the 2020 recruitment cycle and, although slightly down for enquires, the booking on to, and attendance at, open days was up, which was a very positive sign. It was NOTED that those that attended open days were more likely to apply. The free Masters places for schools engaging with us was NOTED, with those students already contacting BGU and some coming to open days. JB reported that nationally recruitment was at the bottom of a demographic dip, with Lincolnshire usually about a year behind, however it was hoped that we could buck the trend for two years running.
- 7.3 The completion and enrolment rate for PGCE was very high with good feedback received from students. The recruitment of students from North London were highlighted. The Committee NOTED that JB had done an excellent job squeezing more out of the conversion rate and the Foundation programme had given a new energy to recruitment, however it was not possible to keep doing more with the same tools. It was NOTED that the portfolio broadening should have a regional

appeal, as well as the need to influence the student and the family and community. JB reported that a lot of the budget went on direct student recruitment, however we needed to build on the BGU brand.

- 7.4 It was NOTED that BGU was to investigate revising the curriculum to offer optional modules, which research shows is a key decision-making factor. Scholarship programmes were NOTED and the exploring of contracts with the armed forces was also NOTED. It was reported that Unit 4 had met with the Vice Chancellor's Executive Group. It was AGREED that JB would prepare a report for the Committee to HIGHLIGHT which courses were successful at recruiting and which were not. The Student Records System timeline was also NOTED.

JB

- 7.5 The Committee NOTED that the recruitment to the Foundation year programme was a success and it was hoped that 80% of students would continue. Writers had been commissioned from the business area to work on apprenticeship. It was NOTED that the requirements for skills tests had been removed for QTS courses from 2020 onwards. The change to the academic structure was NOTED, with the priority to push recruitment. JB reported that BGU was the highest in the country for conversion rate and had also shortlisted for a THE award on the 28 November.

Jonathan Batty left the meeting.

Alan Foster and Abigail Rogers joined the meeting.

8. Students Union

8.1 To receive an update from the Students' Union (SU)

- 8.1.1 Alan Foster presented his report to the Committee NOTING that the SU now operating the bar. Any profit was used by the SU and any loss was subsidised by the SU. It was NOTED that they were currently making a £100 a week loss following Fresher's Week. It was reported that they were currently working with Marketing on plans to further engage students. It was NOTED that the bar was staffed by RedMed, one of the SU partners, however the SU was largely staffed and ran by volunteers, who have a key role in the success of the bar, AF was the appointed staff lead. AF reported a positive buzz around the SU, engaging with around 12,000 students. Market research and in depth analysis of those attending events was NOTED, ensuring that events were wanted by the students. The coffee machines, making 35p per cup, and the meal deals offered in the SU were NOTED. The support of BG (Lincoln) Ltd. by giving them the vending machines was highlighted. It was reported that the offerings were different to those offered on campus by BG (Lincoln) Ltd. It was also NOTED that merchandise had been expanded and that there had been a change in the supplier of the hoodies.
- 8.1.2 AF NOTED that a motion had been put forward to restructure key staff support members for each lead in the SU. A group collaborative structure would be put in place, providing the SU with a focus on development, volunteering and engagement. It was HIGHLIGHTED that the work of the activities team has a core link to the results of the National Student Survey and more support was required for them. AF would provide a proper business plan to accompany the restructure.

AF

8.2 SU Block Grant

- 8.2.1 Abigail Rogers presented the paper which outlined the Students' Union staffing structure, NOTING the reduced expenditure on staff and a FTE of 4.75, this reduced to 4.56 when the sport administration post was taken off. It was reported that Newman had an FTE of 5.6. The report also looked at other comparisons. It was reported that the intern post was funded by one of the SU trustees for one year.
- 8.2.2 AR reported that the financials were yet to be done, however the SU were not yet in profit with the meal deals and demand was difficult to judge. The Committee thanked AR for a very comprehensive report, NOTING that it was good to see the SU getting to grips with a situation that was not easy to manage. Members wished the SU every success, NOTING that although it had been challenging, students were more engaged.

Alan Foster and Abigail Rogers left the meeting.

Rob Boast joined the meeting.

9. Finance

9.1 Financial Forecasts and Budget

- 9.1.1 The Chair welcomed Steve Hurley to his first full FE&GP Committee meeting and NOTED that University Council had referred approval of the financial forecasts and budget to the Committee. The financial forecasts and budget were presented to the Committee and it was NOTED that all increased costs had been pushed through. The University had ended the year with a lower deficit than had been forecast previously. This was a result of three specific organisational schemes; the Voluntary Leavers Scheme, the restructure of the Schools and the departure of the Chief Operating Officer.
- 9.1.2 It was NOTED that the financial forecasts included assumptions for student recruitment that were realistic and conservative, focussing on the success of the Foundation programme. A potential £13 million deficit had been reduced to £6.2 million, generating cash 4-5 years before capital spends. Out of the three options for recruitment targets presented, the prudent option was preferred.
- 9.1.3 Rob Boast reported on his involvement with the modelling, noting that the portfolio had been broken down into different areas; single honours/joint honours combinations and single honours in single figures, seeking to grow minimum student cohort numbers to 10, then 12, and so on, building up a critical mass and then accumulating 25 extra students per year. It was REPORTED that the Foundation Year appeared to be successful with 50 students initially recruited. It was anticipated that 40 students would be recruited in 2019/20. MA's were growing modestly and the current portfolio allowed for organic growth. The models did assume that not all programmes would hit recruitment targets and the key was the Foundation year. Members NOTED that it would be interesting to see how

the Foundation programme progressed and how many students went on to stay at BGU.

- 9.1.4 SH NOTED that the table was in the format that had to be submitted to the Office for Students (OfS) and would be presented to University Council on 27 November. The workbook was due for submission to the OfS by 2 December, allowing the OfS to come back with any questions before final sign off on 10 January. There would be a full new OfS template for University Council whose duty and responsibility it was to receive the information. SH would include an explanation on the assumptions.

SH

- 9.1.5 The Committee NOTED the letter from the OfS regarding the late payment of an invoice, which had in fact been sent to around 250 institutions. It was AGREED that a discussion at Council was required on this matter. Members NOTED that we were not alone in wanting clarity at board level from the OfS on their requirements. It was NOTED that a briefing paper would be put together around whether or not Council felt that the changes to the final account position from forecasts and the alterations to the financial forecasts were material and should be reported to the OfS.

Gov.
Office/
UC

SH/UC

- 9.1.6 The Committee APPROVED the financial forecasts and budget NOTING their confidence in the numbers generated. An infrastructure was in place and it was good to see that all parts of the institution were working together, with people taking ownership of their own budget.

Rob Boast left the meeting.

9.2 To receive an update on the Limited Company

- 9.2.1 Steve Hurley reported that the audited accounts were completed, with a loss of £98k against a budget of £100k recorded. In essence it was costing the University £100k each year to provide these services to students. Members AGREED that a separate discussion on this was required at the next meeting. It was NOTED that with SH's commercial experience the time would be useful to look into BG (Lincoln) Ltd. in detail.

Next mtg.

10. Estates

10.1 To receive a building works update

- 10.1.1 Suzanne Kane presented the building works update. The following points were highlighted:

- The presence of the assistance dogs living on campus was NOTED and the requirement of creating a dog spending facility meeting all necessary regulations.
- The work done on the Chapel floor was NOTED. The Rt Rev'd Dr Nigel Peyton expressed his gratitude for the prompt action undertaken to address this matter.

- 10.1.2 The Committee NOTED that maintenance on campus was second to none and it was a pleasurable experience walking around the grounds, which were also attractive to students.
- 10.1.3 Suzanne Kane (SK) reported on the progress to seek planning permission for the Riseholme Road development.
- 10.1.4 SK also reported on potential sports developments with Yarborough Leisure Centre and others. It was NOTED that it was likely that Sports England might lift the constraints on the playing field, allowing the University to extend the parking facility. There was also the option of selling part of the field for development, which might be explored. Members NOTED that Lincoln City Council generally wanted to support BGU.
- 10.1.5 Savills Capability Statement was RECEIVED and NOTED. SK expressed her desire to engage with Savills, NOTING that they had the expertise to move things forward. The Committee were happy to RECOMMEND to Council that Savills be appointed. SK reported that potentially our partnership with Yarborough Leisure Centre could be ready for next academic year, with our identity on the facility. The Committee NOTED the exciting and positive developments and wished SK well with the planning process.

10.2 Estates Policies:

10.2.1 • Adverse Weather Policy

The Adverse Weather Policy was RECEIVED and APPROVED to go to Council.

10.2.2 • Asbestos Policy

The Asbestos Policy was RECEIVED and APPROVED to go to Council.

10.2.3 • Contractor Management Policy

The Contractor Management Policy was RECEIVED and APPROVED to go to Council.

11. Employment

11.1 To receive the HR Workforce Report

- 11.1.1 Jonathan Cheeseman presented the HR Workforce Report, NOTING that the high staff turnover was due to the Voluntary Leavers Scheme. The online platform for exit interviews was also NOTED. It was reported that the new faculty structure had created three new opportunities for staff progression.
- 11.1.2 There was a significant increase in long term sickness due to mental health. It was reported that an Employee Assistance Programme would be

JC/

introduced in January. It was AGREED that a presentation on the programme would be produced for the next meeting.	Next mtg.
11.1.3 JC reported that a very positive meeting with the UCU representative had taken place and communication with staff during the school restructure had been received well. It was NOTED that the faculty was a stable as possible and had been reshaped in a positive way.	
11.2 Annual Diversity and Equality Report	
11.2.1 The Committee RECEIVED the 2017/18 Annual Diversity and Equality Report. JC reported talent management and succession planning for the future given the increasing age of staff was in place. Members AGREED that it was a very comprehensive and detailed Report, NOTING that it would go to Senate for them to look at the student detail.	
11.3 Performance and appraisal process	
11.3.1 JC circulated a paper on the Performance and Appraisal Process which outlined Performance Management, the current appraisal process, the new appraisal process, a timeline for implementation and the Performance Management Cycle. It was AGREED that a copy of this would be circulated electronically to members.	JC/ Gov. Office
11.3.2 It was NOTED that currently there was a poor return rate and the appraisal system was seen as more of a tick box exercise, however the new system would incorporate performance targets and a succession plan. JC REPORTED that implementation of the new system with iManage was estimated at £100k. It was also NOTED that smart objectives would be used in the HR Masterclasses.	
11.3.3 Members AGREED that the process looked appropriate and that JC would liaise with Committee member, Jackie Croft outside the meeting on the process. It was AGREED that the new system would be discussed with a view to being signed off at the next meeting in February, however there was reassurance that we were travelling in the right direction. Members thanked JC for an excellent job. It was hoped that we could achieve an 80-85% return rate this year, with the online facility enhancing the timeline and completion. It was also NOTED that the new system would deal more effectively with poor performance, providing good feedback and confidence. The Committee NOTED that they were happy to revisit in February for sign off, however, once the new process was ready it would be circulated to members.	Next mtg. JC/ Gov. Office
11.4 HR Policies	
11.4.1 • Pay and Reward Policy JC presented the Pay and Reward Policy which had been updated from 2008. It included stylistic changes and had gone through HERA to update the process. JC reported that he had met with UCU and BGU representatives, who were, in principle, happy with the Policy. It was NOTED that the Policy was logical and relatively straightforward to	

	administer. The Committee formally APPROVED the Policy, which would be noted to University Council.	UC
11.4.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market Pay Policy <p>The Committee RECEIVED the Market Pay Policy. JC REPORTED that the Policy provided opportunity where there were skills shortages and was consistent with other universities. The Committee formally APPROVED the Policy, which would be noted to University Council.</p>	UC
11.4.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance and Capability Policy <p>JC presented the Performance and Capability Policy, which he NOTED was being re-introduced. It was very simple clear guidance on how things work and outlined the three-strikes rule. The three annexes were also NOTED. The Committee formally APPROVED the Policy, which would be noted to University Council.</p>	UC
11.4.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relocation Expenses for New Staff Policy <p>The Committee RECEIVED the Relocation Expenses for New Staff Policy, NOTING that it had increased from £2.5k to £5k plus up to £3k for relocation which would be made clear. The Committee formally APPROVED the Policy, which would be noted to University Council.</p>	JC UC
11.4.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexible Working Policy <p>JC presented the Flexible Working Policy. The Committee NOTED that it was straightforward and easy to follow and set out the terms clearly. It was also AGREED that this was not an entitlement and respected business needs. The Committee formally APPROVED the Policy, which would be noted to University Council.</p>	UC
11.5	Confidential paper [redacted]	
12.	Agenda suggestions for future meetings	
12.1	Members AGREED the following items should be covered on its next agenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A discussion on BG (Lincoln) Ltd.; • OfS submissions; • A discussion on how the University pulled together all its good stories; • An update on financials; and • Performance Management. 	
13.	Agenda management & review	
13.1	Members were happy with the management of the meeting, which allowed for appropriate discussion. It was AGREED that three hours was a more realistic timescale for future FE&GP Committee meetings and this was ENDORSED for future meetings.	Gov. Office

14. Any other business

14.1 There was no other business to discuss.

15. Key items for University Council

15.1 It was NOTED that, in the absence of the Chair at the next University Council meeting, Gavin Mackay would HIGHLIGHT the following key items for University Council:

- Financial Forecasts and Budget
- Estates Partnership Agreement:
- Estates Policies;
- HR Policies.

16. Date of next meeting

16.1 The next meeting of the FE&GP Committee would take place on Wednesday 26 February 2019.

Signed



Date



