

BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

TUESDAY 22 MARCH 2016
1:45 PM IN HARDY TEACHING ROOM 2

Council members present:

Mr Roger Mosey (Chair)
Mr David Babb
Dr Kevin Brown
Mr David Clements
Bishop David Court
Ms Angela Crowe
Professor David Head
Dr Tony Hill
Mr Stephen Lawrence
Mr Graham Meeson
Professor Jayne Mitchell
Revd. Dr Sally Myers
Revd. Canon Professor Peter Neil
Miss Becca Smith
Dr Jim Smith
Mr Alan Stacey

In attendance:

Dr Anne Craven, Registrar and Secretary
Mr Stephen Deville, Director of Resources
Mr Gareth Hughes, Students' Union Vice President Voice Academic Affairs
Ms Alice Hynes, Consultant
Dr Grahame Killey, Planning and Performance Manager (for item 13 only)
Dr Ruth Sayers, Executive Dean, Learning, Teaching & International
Natalie Pickles (Minutes)

1 Welcome

The Chair welcomed Alan Stacey to his first Council meeting as the newly elected non-academic staff member. He also welcomed Alice Hynes who was in attendance as consultant engaged to look at council effectiveness.

2 The University Prayer

Rev'd. Canon Professor Peter Neil led the University Prayer.

3 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from :

Mrs Jackie Croft

Mrs Sandra Grattrick

Revd. Dr Peter Green, University Chaplain

AVM Gavin Mackay

Mrs Jasmit Phull

Professor David Rae, Executive Dean, Research & Knowledge Exchange

Professor Mark Thompson

Not in attendance were:

Mr Luke South

Rev'd Christopher Lowson

4 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Minutes of the last meeting held on 20 November 2015

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 November 2015 were APPROVED as a true record of the meeting. The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes.

6 Matters Arising

(i) Action Points

The action table from the previous meeting was RECEIVED and the progress against each item was noted.

(ii) Any other matters

There were no other matters raised.

7 Vice Chancellor's Report

Council RECEIVED the Vice Chancellor's report for information and the Vice Chancellor drew particular attention to the following items:

- a. The achievements of the QAA HER and Ofsted inspection had given the University a very solid footing for moving forward. However, the Vice Chancellor wanted to note that the sector was changing at a very fast pace and the University could not stand still. It was also NOTED that, whilst preparations for the two reviews had been a whole university effort, the Vice Chancellor gave particular credit and thanks to the Registrar and Secretary and to the Deputy Vice Chancellor respectively for their leadership and contribution to the processes.
- b. Previous issues with data had been addressed but the University needed to keep ahead of the continuously changing requirements related to data.

- c. The recent HEFCE Assurance Review (HAR; visit by HEFCE on 15th March 2016) which focused on accountability processes in governance and finance had been positive. Only very minor issues had been raised orally in discussions between the University and HEFCE, including; the make-up of Council and BGU's slight variation from the CUC Code (regarding the three Diocese of Lincoln appointed members) which needed to be addressed by the addition of one sentence on the University's Financial Statements; more focus required on value for money; a lack of diversity with council membership; and efficiency and adequacy relating to use of internal auditors. The final HAR report would arrive at the University later in 2016.
- d. Council NOTED that there was a large gap between November and March; possibilities for arranging another Council Meeting for that period were discussed.
- e. Recruitment remained one of the biggest challenges for BGU; a great deal of work had been done and was currently under way to address this.
- f. International – BGU was starting from a low base but now had the building blocks and infrastructure in place to increase numbers of international students.
- g. There had been a delay to the 120 Degree Apprenticeship places awarded to BGU owing to external changes taking place in the sector, but ongoing work to develop new Apprenticeship standards and related HE qualifications and assessment processes was continuing.

8 To receive and discuss an update on the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Higher Education Review (HER)

University Council RECEIVED updates on the QAA Higher Education Review including The Key Findings Letter of 4 February 2016; letter and attached draft report regarding the HER; and the University's Self Evaluation Document.

The Registrar and Secretary NOTED that the draft report was still CONFIDENTIAL as it was not the final report (which would be published by the QAA in April 2016). The following key elements were NOTED:

- a. The University met all standards.
- b. Just one recommendation was specified in the report which was to "define learning outcomes for named exit awards within programme specifications". Two more recent areas of work received affirmations from the QAA.
- c. 4 features of good practice were highlighted :-
 - BGU's integrated, institution-wide academic and pastoral support for students that supports the development of their academic, personal and professional potential (Quality Code Expectation B4);
 - the strategic embedding of the 'Students Creating Change' scheme across schools and professional services, which engages students in the quality assurance and enhancement of learning opportunities (Expectations B5, B3 and Enhancement);
 - the comprehensive and integrated annual monitoring process, which engages students and enhances their learning opportunities (Expectations B8, B5 and Enhancement); and
 - the extensive, systematic and sustained provision of student employability opportunities, accompanied by detailed University-wide support

(Expectation B4).

- d. As a result of the outcome, the University can continue to display the quality QAA mark and will be able to take part in the TEF Level 1.
- e. An action plan was being developed for publicising the official results both internally and externally.
- f. Council NOTED their congratulations to BGU in achieving this result and thanked the University for the considerable amount of work that had been put in. The Vice Chancellor CONFIRMED that some of Council's appreciative comments regarding the result had been presented to staff at a Staff Council meeting.

9 Ofsted

Council RECEIVED the final report and letter confirming the outcome of the Ofsted Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Inspection of BGU ITE Partnership in 2015 (Stage 1: 15 June 2015, Stage 2: 30 November 2015).

The Deputy Vice Chancellor highlighted key areas:

- a. The overall effectiveness of the ITE education provider (BGU Partnership) is good in Early Years initial teacher training (ITT) and in Primary and Secondary, but requires improvement in Further Education.
- b. There was insufficient time between phase 1 and phase 2 to show the impact of the changes that BGU had made, which had been the major reason for the recommendation for improvement in Further Education.
- c. ITE in FE will be subject to re-inspection this academic year; at the earliest from 11th April. BGU is confident that once the re-inspection has taken place, the action plans will have addressed the concerns and a similarly good rating will be given for the whole of BGU provision.

In discussing the Ofsted result, Council NOTED the following:

- a. It takes years to build up relationships with schools and partners, particularly when there is great responsibility but no authority or power over schools. In this context, it was pleasing to see strong partnerships being reported on by Ofsted, notably in their reviews on tracking and management structure.
- b. A revised structure on the academic side in BGU's School of Teacher Development will enable feedback to be passed through the University's structures more effectively and ensure continuous improvement in teacher training QA processes at the University. BGU was very clear that a quality culture wasn't just about assurance but about building enhancement processes strongly all the way through the University's structures, business planning and other processes.
- c. The Deputy Vice Chancellor has shared the Ofsted outcome with BGU's schools and partners. In addition to this, schools and partners are all invited to the BGU partnership conference.
- d. A news release had been issued regarding the Ofsted result. BGU would also be broadcasting the final result after April to maximise PR exposure; the communication methods would include use of the website and Open Days.
- e. Council thanked and congratulated the University for all its hard work in achieving the Ofsted result.

10 To receive an update from the Chair

There was no business to report.

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

Council RECEIVED the paper providing an update from the SU. The SU President highlighted the following :

- a. The SU elections had recently been completed and although a record number of students had voted (20%) the SU would be looking to improve this for the next elections, possibly via on-line voting, as the percentage turnout could be higher. The new SU Executive would commence office on 1 July, which would entail a month's overlap for handover.
- b. Some successful events had recently taken place, in particular the Cathedral Cup football match between students of BGU and the University of Lincoln. 1300 supporters had turned up on the day to watch the game.
- c. The first draft of the BGSU Strategy would be ready for the next sabbatical officers.
- d. Taking on the role of supporting students with complaints and appeals within the university had been a very positive endeavour for the SU; however, they had identified a need for an appropriate 'safe space' where meetings could take place. Plans were now in place to convert the SU Executive Meeting room into an office space for the staff team, which would free up the current adjacent office downstairs as a safe space for students.

12 To consider for approval proposals for measuring Council Effectiveness

Alice Hynes introduced herself to members of Council, explaining that she had many years of experience in undertaking the role of clerk to a variety of different Councils and Boards and 25 years in senior management roles within different universities, including the role of Chief Executive Officer at GuildHE. Alice would be undertaking a Council Effectiveness Review, looking to build upon, in a positive way, what Uniac had completed. Alice would be reporting back to Council in June with conclusions for their consideration.

Council AGREED that they were very keen to see the next phase of the Council Effectiveness Review underway.

It was AGREED that Alice Hynes would keep the Council updated on what her review would be looking at and what she would be measuring.

Alice Hynes

13 To discuss issues of Strategic Planning

The Chair welcomed the Planning and Performance Manager (PPM) who was in attendance to present this agenda item.

- (i) Key Performance Indicators

The PPM referred members to the Key Performance Indicator Dashboard and NOTED the following:-

- The recruitment indicator had been flagged as amber/red mainly due to Undergraduate Applications numbers being down on predictions. A great deal of work was being done by the University converting these to offers.
- KPIs directly related to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and Research Degree Awarding Powers will be developed.

(ii) Risk Register

Council RECEIVED the University's latest Risk Register. Updated text since the previous report was highlighted in red with significant changes in the arrows for Net Risk Score highlighted in purple.

(ii) Business Planning 16/17

Council RECEIVED the report on Business Planning and Budget Setting for the 2016/17 academic year. The PPM NOTED the following:-

- Business plans were more focussed now, particularly as regards performance indicators and milestones.
- A Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) Away day would be taking place on 5 April to focus on the business plans and look at risks.
- A detailed review at programme level had been completed for student number projections.

Council DISCUSSED student recruitment and queried how, given that student application numbers were down, final numbers were still projected to be in line with the original numbers planned for (or slightly exceeding those).

The DVC and PPM explained that applications were down for undergraduate courses and this was comparable with the situation in benchmark institutions. However, the Data Team and HAMS (Heads of School, Admissions and Marketing) had developed more sophisticated models this year in order to look at numbers programme by programme. Further work had been done in the year to bring on additional and new subjects and to focus recruitment and marketing activity on those programmes that were known to be likely to have a better conversion rate, which would bring the headline count in line with the projections discussed above. The DVC confirmed that during the mid-year re-forecast HAMS, supported by the University's Senior Leadership Team, had built in commitment for additional resources to enable a focus on work to convert applications to enrolments.

The Deputy Chair of Council ENDORSED the key principles stated on page 4 of BGU's Business Planning Framework for 2016/17. It was also NOTED that widening participation was not mentioned within the plan. The PPM confirmed that, whilst this was not specifically shown, widening participation remained high on BGU's agenda and in fact should be captured within the plan, which he would amend.

David Head NOTED that the Risk Register would be enhanced if it were

Grahame Killey

accompanied by a similarly laid out statement of BGU's risk appetite or risk tolerance. If BGU was establishing a risk threshold then a risk framework document would be needed. DH AGREED to forward an example document.

David Head/
Grahame Killey

14 Prevent Strategy

University Council had RECEIVED the Prevent Statutory Duty Briefing document, BGU's Self-Assessment Return, BGU's Prevent Policy and BGU's Freedom of Speech Policy.

University Council welcomed Phil Davis, who gave a presentation on the Prevent strategy. Council NOTED and AGREED the following:

- a. The Freedom of Speech Policy had not previously been seen by Council.
- b. The next deadline for submission to HEFCE in respect of the Prevent Agenda was 1st April 2016. Following this a monitoring report would be due for submission in December 2016. It was CONFIRMED that Council would see this prior to it going to HEFCE.
- c. University Council AGREED that they were not in a position to approve either the Prevent Policy or Freedom of Speech Policy as there were some issues with the wording and they had not had time to fully read or review either policy.
- d. Council AGREED that both policies would be circulated to Council Members with a view to making suggested amends and getting approval via email, prior to the deadline for the first submission to HEFCE of 1st April 2016.
- e. Council NOTED that if it was to be accountable they needed to see such Policies in a timely fashion to enable due consideration of content, prior to any upcoming deadline. In this respect it was AGREED that Council should have clarity as to what policies it is responsible for and where authority for delegation had been given. It was therefore AGREED that a list of policies, with details of approving committees, would be brought to the next Council meeting.

Anne Craven/
Phil Davis/
Natalie Pickles

Anne Craven/
Phil Davis

Anne Craven

15 To receive and discuss a report on Student Recruitment

Council NOTED the following:

- It was encouraging to see an increase in applications for the newer courses.
- The results shown in the report were from January 2016. The Vice Chancellor reported that the current position with student numbers was now 12% down as opposed to the 15% shown indicated in the report. It was CONFIRMED that a report could be tabled at the next Council meeting showing up-to-the-minute figures.
- Council NOTED that it was essential for it, and also for the Sponsor Board, to keep a close eye on the student recruitment numbers.

Anne Craven

Council/
Sponsor Board

16 To receive and discuss a paper on Stakeholder Engagement

Council RECEIVED a paper outlining the rationale for BGU's developing a Stakeholder Engagement Strategy. The Executive Dean Research and Knowledge Exchange was absent from the meeting and therefore the Deputy Vice Chancellor presented this item.

The DVC reported that the document presented to Council would form the basis for stakeholder engagement strategy development. Terms of reference for a Stakeholder Engagement Committee were prepared, and progress reporting would take place via Senate and Council.

Council NOTED the importance of logging stakeholder relationships in an effective manner so as to spot opportunities as they arise – potentially via a Customer Relationship Management information system (which was referenced on page 3 of the “Developing a stakeholder engagement strategy” document) – whilst ensuring that best value was achieved in the acquisition and usage of any such system.

17 To Receive and Discuss Key Items from Sub-Committees

(i) Governance & Nominations Committee

Council RECEIVED the minutes of the Governance & Nominations Committee meeting held on 11th February 2016.

Council APPROVED the revised Schedule of delegation.

Council APPROVED the updated Statement of Primary responsibilities.

Council APPROVED the Byelaw related to the position of Chancellor of BGU.

Council NOTED the recipients of Honorary Awards.

The Chair of Governance & Nominations reported on vacancies:

- a. Jasmit Phull will finish as Council Member on 31 December 2016
- b. Sandra Gratrix is due to finish on 31 October 2016 (she will not be staying for a second term)
- c. G&N will be looking for a HE representative to replace Mark Thompson who will finish on 31 August 2016

The Chair advised Council to continue this discussion on vacancies at the same time as discussing a new Chair appointment after his leaving the meeting.

(ii) FE&GP Committee

- a. Council RECEIVED the minutes of the FE&GP Committee meeting held on 24 February 2016.
- b. Council NOTED the update on the mid-year finances.
- c. Update on the BGU Estate *Restricted Business* was NOTED.
- d. The update on building works and Phase 2 of Concert Stewart Hall (CSH) was NOTED.

(iii) Sponsor Board Committee

Council RECEIVED the minutes of the Sponsor Board Committee meeting held on 25 February 2016.

Council RECEIVED and NOTED the key items from Sponsor Board. The two action requests from Sponsor Board, presented in the Sponsor Board Chair's paper to the Council, were AGREED. Council recorded its congratulations on the significant achievements by BGU in the recent external reviews and also evidenced in the accreditation of the Single Honours and Joint Honours courses in Psychology by the British Psychological Society. Council also ENDORSED the University's commitment to developing its research profile and the steps being taken to achieve this, NOTING that research effort and achievements were likely to prove crucial to the University's continued success.

(iv) Audit Committee

Council RECEIVED the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 8 March 2016.

(vi) Remuneration Committee

Council RECEIVED the Summary Minutes Reports of the meetings held on 24 June 2015 and 20 November 2015.

Council NOTED that the Remuneration Committee meeting planned for 22nd March 2016 had been cancelled as there had been no business to discuss.

18 To receive & discuss the key items from Senate

(i) Minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2016

Council RECEIVED the minutes of the Senate meeting held on 16 December 2015. The Vice Chancellor referred members to page 3 of the minutes showing that the University's retention rate was at 97%, which was above the sector average.

(ii) Annual Report on the Academic Health of the Institution

Council RECEIVED the Annual Report on the Academic Health of the Institution.

Council AGREED that it would be useful to expand the academic research information within this report next time round.

Jayne Mitchell

19 To receive & discuss the Chaplain's Report

Council RECEIVED a written report from the Chaplain.

20 To note the draft minutes of the BG (Lincoln) Board Meeting

Restricted Business

21 To receive and consider agenda suggestions for the next meeting

Nothing reported.

22 Any Other Business

Nothing reported.

23 To discuss & approve the proposed method of appointing a Chair for University Council

The current Chair of Council, Roger Mosey, left the meeting for this item. Tony Hill, Deputy Chair, led the meeting.

Before discussing the upcoming vacancy related to the position of the Chair of Council, the Chair of Governance & Nominations, David Head, updated Committee members on other vacancies:

a. Council member vacancy with specific skills in finance

- It was confirmed that this was now a full council member position, to also be part of the Audit Committee.
- An advertisement had been placed which had been unsuccessful in attracting candidates with the right skills.
- The University had subsequently 'headhunted' for a suitable candidate via local Accountancy firms, resulting in one interested party who had the necessary skills and who had been to the University for an informal chat with the Chair of G&N, Chair of Audit, and Registrar and Secretary.
- University Council AGREED to progress the application received, noting the skills gap.

Anne Craven/
David Head

In respect of the other two vacancies (Sandra Gratrack who finishes on 13 October 2016 and Jasmit Phull who finishes on 31 December 2016), Council AGREED there were probably sufficient numbers of Council members in place to delay the appointments so as to allow the new Chair to take them forward.

[Post meeting note: it was also established that Jim Smith will complete his first term on 13 October 2016 which may or may not create a further vacancy depending on whether he accepts a second term as a Council Member.]

Matthew Pitts

b. Chair of Council Appointment

Chair of G&N confirmed that the Committee had looked at the existing documentation and updated it significantly. This included, amongst other things, re-writing texts regarding the Chair's role at the Matriculation Ceremony and other appropriate and relevant events; the Chair's deputising for the Chancellor on certain occasions; academic quality and strategic direction; as well as Council Effectiveness.

Council APPROVED the role description and associated documentation.

The Chair of G&N confirmed that Tony Hill, Deputy Chair, had agreed to act as Chair of Council during any gap between the current Chairs' departure and the appointment of the new Chair.

Council AGREED that the position of Chair should be open to external candidates and to internal Council members at the same time. It was also AGREED that the process should commence immediately and that three headhunters would be approached to assist with recruitment.

Chair G&N

Council AGREED that there should be student and/or Students' Union representation on the interview panel.

24 Date of Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 28 June 2016 at 1.45pm in Room 13. There will be a lunch prior to the meeting at 1.00pm in the John Tomlinson Suite.

X Signed  Date 

