

BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

MONDAY 5 JULY 2021
VIA MS TEAMS

Present

Revd. Sonia Barron (SB)
Miss Erin Bell (EB)
Dr Stephen Critchley (SC)
Miss Jessica Darnell (JD)
Mr Richard Hallsworth (RH)
Professor David Head (DH)
Miss Kaylee Hempenstall (KH)
Professor Marianne Howarth (MH) *(from item 5)*
Revd. Dr Sarah Lawrence (SaL) *(from item 6 to 14)*
Mr Stephen Lawrence (StL)
Mr Walter Leschenko (WL)
AVM Gavin Mackay (GM)
Dr Sacha Mason (SM)
Revd. Canon Professor Peter Neil (PN)
The Right Revd. Dr Nigel Peyton (NP)
Mr Bob Walder (Chair) (BW)

In attendance

Ms Kelly Fisher (KF), Head of Quality & Regulatory Compliance
Professor Scott Fleming (SF), Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Ms Stephanie Gilluly (SG), Registrar & University Secretary (Clerk)
Mr Stephen Hinds (SH), Chief Operating Officer
Mrs Suzanne Kane (SK), Director of Facilities and Estates *(for item 5)*
Mr James Welbourn (JWe), Governance Manager (minuting)
Mr James Wilson (JWi), Director of Finance *(for items 5 and 9)*

Action

1. **Welcome**
 - 1.1 The Chair, Mr Bob Walder (BW) welcomed all members to the final University Council meeting of the 2020/21 academic year and extended a particular welcome to Jessica Darnell and Kaylee Hempenstall who were attending their first meeting as Professional Services Representative and elected Student Representative respectively.
2. **The University Prayer**
 - 2.1 The Vice-Chancellor, Revd. Canon Professor Peter Neil (PN) led the University Prayer.
3. **Apologies**
 - 3.1 Apologies for absence were RECEIVED from Mrs Jackie Croft. Revd. Dr Sarah Lawrence had notified the Chair in advance that she would join at 1:30pm. No further apologies were received.
4. **Declarations of interest**
 - 4.1 BW declared an interest related to item 14.2 as he was the representative for the Students' Union Trustee Board.
 - 4.2 WL declared that he was a member of the Audit Committee for the TEC Partnership in Grimsby. There had been no conflicts of interest with his role on BGU Council to date, but NOTED that he would inform members at BGU straightaway if future conflicts occurred.

Professor Marianne Howarth, Suzanne Kane and James Wilson joined the meeting.

5. *The following item of business is redacted under Section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act – Commercial Interests*

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SH



Council adjourned for lunch from 12:20 – 13:30. James Wilson and Suzanne Kane left the meeting.

6. Minutes of the meetings held on 2 February 2021 and 24 March 2021

- 6.1 The minutes of the University Council meeting held on 24 March 2021 and the away day held on 2 February 2021 were CONFIRMED as a true and accurate record of the meeting and the Chair was AUTHORISED to sign them.

Rev. Dr Sarah Lawrence joined the meeting.

7. Matters arising

7.1. Action table

- 7.1.1 The action table and progress against actions were NOTED.

7.2 Chair's Actions and Decisions in writing for noting

- 7.2.1 The Chair's Action and decisions in writing were NOTED.
- 7.2.2 BW CONFIRMED that letters of thanks had been written to Sally Myers and David Babb along with a gift for each sent on behalf of University Council. BW also CONFIRMED that David Dadswell had been sent a gift; a letter of thanks was in the process of being drafted and would be sent in due course.

7.3 Any other matters

- 7.3.1 No other business was raised.

8. To receive the Vice-Chancellor's report – including risk and performance, monitoring of actions against the Business Plan, safeguarding, health and safety and student recruitment. Specific updates on Crosstrend House, BG (Lincoln) Ltd., the Riseholme development and the Student Record System (SRS) were included.

- 8.1 The Vice-Chancellor, Peter Neil (PN) PRESENTED his report, and started by HIGHLIGHTING the plan out of Covid formulated by the government and how it had impacted on graduation. It has been hoped that BGU would be able to run an in-person graduation, but sadly the decision had been taken, following guidance from the Department of Health, GuildHE and others, to provide a virtual graduation. In the main this was due to the rapid rise in Covid-19 cases in Lincoln.
- 8.2 PN CONFIRMED that names of graduates would be read out at the virtual ceremony; he had also spoken to the Dean of Lincoln about having a celebration event in Lincoln Cathedral later in the year.

Governance

- 8.3 Members were UPDATED on progress on finding a new Chancellor for BGU. The intention had been to have a formal handover ceremony from the current Chancellor to the new; unfortunately, Dame Judith Mayhew Jonas could not be present at the virtual graduation but PN NOTED that it was important to recognise the input of the outgoing Chancellor. PN OUTLINED to Council that Dame Judith had offered to remain Chancellor until July 2022, but that as her tenure was almost at an end, University Council would need to consider granting an extension to her term as Chancellor.

BW AGREED that this was the only proper and appropriate way to handle this situation, and subsequently University Council APPROVED the extension of Dame Judith Mayhew Jonas' term of office as Chancellor until the end of July 2022 due to the cancellation of this year's in person graduation ceremony.

- 8.4 PN reflected back to the March meeting of University Council where it was NOTED that BGU would be discontinuing the Endpoint Assessment Office. Steps had now been taken to close this office; the Business Plan originally presented was looking to generate £1.75 million but sadly to date no income had been raised. PN EXPLAINED that this project had not proceeded as expected due to several factors:

- The original Business Plan was optimistic about its projections, but unfortunately the climate had changed significantly.
- The project was subjected to an OFQUAL approval process which was currently undergoing its own post-mortem.
- The apprenticeship agenda was constantly changing.

BW REQUESTED a note back to University Council in the Autumn to describe lessons that had been learned throughout this project.

PN

- 8.5 PN had obtained the first draft of the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) review issued in the summer. There would be a short consultation period followed by a government response. PN had been asked to speak at the Westminster Forum, a conference open to all involved in teacher education. PN INFORMED members that the danger of not becoming a 'lead provider' was great and BGU needed to respond positively.

- 8.6 BGU were focussing on the skills agenda and sectoral development. A Memorandum of Understanding was being signed with LAGAT in Lincoln on 6 July; it was hoped that this arrangement would become more formal in the future.

- 8.7 In summing up his report, PH HIGHLIGHTED some other areas of note for members:

- The Universities and Colleges Employers Association Pay Award was being disputed by Unions.
- Student recruitment numbers were looking promising.
- Data and leagues tables were an area that could benefit from clarification from BGU's Data team. Tom Loya (TL), a consultant currently

<p>working in that team could provide some insight into the challenges for BGU in this area at the October meeting of University Council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There had been changes to the leadership structure within BGU and it now had a University Executive Group (UEG) which superseded its previous incarnation, SEG. This contained the Vice-Chancellor, The Chief Operating Officer, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar & University Secretary. <p>8.8 PN NOTED that the Professional Services Review was looking at what processes were used and whether they could be adapted to improve institutional efficiency. The first phase of this work should commence in September 2021. The work would link very closely with the Student Record System.</p> <p>8.9 BW thanked PN for his report, and it was noted and ACCEPTED.</p>	<p>Governance</p>
<p><i>James Wilson re-joined the meeting.</i></p>	
<p>9. Financial Overview</p>	
<p>9.1 BW welcomed James Wilson (JWi), Director of Finance back to the meeting and he was INVITED to present his Financial Overview report, which included the 2021/2022 Budget and a five-year financial plan.</p>	
<p>9.2 JWi introduced the report, and HIGHLIGHTED the following points to members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The University was required to submit a Budget and 5-year plan to the Office for Students (OfS). Updated student numbers would be available in September/October time; however, it was predicted that these numbers would be in line with what was within the Budget. • BGU's Strategy emphasised the importance of sustainability, and Finance was a key part of this. Financial stability for the University would include generating an operating surplus, and the overall aim of the 5-year financial plan was to start generating operating surpluses swiftly. The next financial year was predicted to result in an operating loss, but shortly after this would move to a surplus. • Financial growth would be dependent on increased income and awareness of costs' • The Budget before members did not reflect the impact of the decision on Lawress Hall. There was a general provision of £500,000 for capital; this would need to be worked on in light of the ongoing Lawress Hall situation. • In the financial year 2015/2016 the total income that BGU received was £20.4m. The forecast income for 2020/2021 was £23.1m, an increase of 13% across these five years. However, staffing numbers had increased from 275 to 360 over the same period, and the costs of staffing were a high percentage of total running costs. JWi NOTED to members that BGU needed to be driven towards increasing income whilst containing costs. Next year's Budget made some assumptions about increased student numbers, and the belief was that they would be achieved. • JWi NOTED that section 4 of the report contained the 2020/2021 Business Plan. It was ADVISED that it was not sustainable to have a 	

	<p>deficit on an ongoing basis. Realistic levels of income had been added to the Business Plan, whilst checking assumptions on student progression.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JWi ADVISED that there was an assumption that student fees would remain fixed. • More students would mean higher income and some extra costs. The report had been realistic about catering, and those services that were considered 'non-core' activities. The focus needed to be on teaching and teaching income. • Employer pension costs were 20% of pay, and the assumption was that these costs would increase slightly year on year. The BGU used both the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and the Teachers' Pension Scheme. The LGPS was well funded through employer contribution rates. • A vacancy rate of 1.5% had been assumed. • JWi REITERATED that ongoing financial monitoring would be key. There would be a Professional Services Review, alongside a Workload Allocation Model (WAM) that would help determine the best way of deciding costs. 	
9.3	Several members sought clarity on any updates to the Budget in the Autumn; it was determined that this was the overall Budget that was being considered for agreement.	
9.4	DH raised the references in the report to job posts that had been requested. PN ADVISED that BGU was living within the Budget, and that not every request for an additional post would be granted.	
9.5	In relation to new subject coming on stream, PN ADVISED that new courses would go to the Faculty, and then onto the Portfolio Management Group (PMG). At that stage, a Business Plan would be required to show investment, and then a decision would be taken on the Business Plan. Any new subjects submitted for consideration now would be taken on stream from 2022/2023 at the earliest.	
9.6	RH SUGGESTED that each term within the Budget should be defined so that timescales could be set, and he was content to discuss this with JWi before the next University Council meeting. This would connect into financial forecasting and reporting in general.	RH/JWi
9.7	StL HIGHLIGHTED the recruitment strategy and the need to be able to respond to key departures within the organisation. BW SUGGESTED that this be revisited in the Autumn and be an item for discussion.	Governance
9.8	JWi ADVISED that one of the aims of the Workload Allocation Model (WAM) was to determine whether the correct amount of time was being apportioned to teaching. The WAM was aimed at academics only. It was still the case that there was an unequal weighting towards professional services over academics.	
9.9	PN OUTLINED that large projects at BGU, including LORIC and LiNCHigher employed staff that were specific to those areas of work.	

- 9.10 BW REQUESTED that a note back to University Council members be sent when the study into available resources had been completed.
- 9.11 BW offered thanks to JWi for the Budget report, and University Council APPROVED the draft Budget for 2021/2022 along with the five-year financial plan based on current stated assumptions. It was NOTED that the 2021/2022 Budget and five-year financial plan would be updated with the latest recruitment data and adjustments would be presented to University Council prior to submission to the OfS.

PN??

James Wilson left the meeting.

10. To receive the Students' Union President's Development Report

- 10.1 EB presented her report to University Council and HIGHLIGHTED that the hope was to have a new and improved website up and running shortly, courtesy of a new digital platform.
- 10.2 From 12th April the Union Bar opened with outdoor seating only, and it was staffed by members of the SU alongside volunteers.
- 10.3 EB REPORTED that academic misconduct, not something that the SU President would ordinarily deal with, had been picked up by herself and this offered a great deal of insight into the student journey.
- 10.4 EB had been listening to and understanding student points of view on the cancelled in-person graduation. It had been key to try and calm the situation down and explain to students that their journey would not end with a virtual graduation.
- 10.5 University Council members thanked EB for her report and it was NOTED.

11. To receive the Chaplain's report

- 11.1 In the absence of the Chaplain, who was on annual leave, PN introduced the Chaplain's report by saying that the Chaplain had been very busy in recent months engaging externally with preaching, teaching and supporting the Bishop's Advisory Panel. He was also engaged locally with Inter-Faith in Lincoln. The Chaplain was braced for staff and students returning to campus.
- 11.2 Several members expressed their thanks and gratitude to the Chaplain for his report and in particular his work with supporting staff and students, and his befriending service. GM expressed a hope that the 'coffee and cake' sessions be reinstated when possible; PN ASSURED members that he had already been communicating with the Chaplain on this issue.
- 11.3 The Chaplain's report was NOTED.

12. OFS Data feedback

- 12.1 SG REPORTED to Council positive feedback following an OfS audit of data in 2018/2019. A further internal audit was planned by BGU in 2021, but the OfS had written to state that they do not require any further action from the University in follow up to the audit of 2018/2019 HESA student data.
- 12.2 The University had an internal action plan which would be presented at Audit Committee moving forwards.
- 12.3 University Council NOTED the correspondence from the OfS.
- 13. Annual Prevent reporting feedback**
- 13.1 University Council NOTED the assurance from the OfS.
- 14. Key items from sub-committees**
- 14.1 To note the Governance & Nominations Committee minutes of 10 June 2021**
- 14.1.1 Council RECEIVED and NOTED the Governance & Nominations Committee minutes of 10 June 2021 and:
- APPROVED the Riseholme Road Project Advisory Group terms of reference and membership.
 - APPROVED the Byelaw on the appointment of the Chair of Council.
 - NOTED the appointments of Professional Services representatives.
 - NOTED the progress on the Chancellor selection process.
- 14.2 To note the FE & GP Committee minutes of 26 May 2021 and the Extraordinary meeting held on 24 June 2021**
- 14.2.1 Council RECEIVED and NOTED the FE & GP Committee minutes of 26 May 2021 and the Extraordinary meeting held on 24 June 2021 and:
- AGREED that the Bullying, Sexual Misconduct and Harassment Policy be forwarded to Senate for their consideration.
 - NOTED the BGU contribution to the Students' Union Budget.
 - NOTED the 2021/2022 Budget that had been reported earlier in the agenda.
 - NOTED FE&GP's approval of the following policies under delegated powers:
 - Tuition Fee Register, Charges and Student Debt Policy.
 - Exit Interview Policy & Procedure.
 - Shared Parental Leave Policy.
 - Accommodation Debt Management Policy.
 - Accommodation Fees, Payments and Debt Recovery Procedure.
- 14.3 To note the Audit Committee minutes of 16 June 2021**

- 14.3.1 Council RECEIVED and NOTED the Audit Committee minutes of 16 June 2021 and:
- AGREED the Internal Audit Plan 2021-2022.
 - NOTED the update on Crosstrend House.
- 14.3.2 SC PRESENTED the updated Risk Management Policy, and INFORMED members that in March 2021 they APPROVED in principle a revised Risk Management Policy. Since that time SH had been appointed as Chief Operating Officer (COO) and he had reviewed the policy. The policy now included missed opportunities alongside risks. The report had been discussed at Audit Committee and RECOMMENDED to Council.
- Revd. Dr Sarah Lawrence left the meeting.*
- 14.3.3 SH PRESENTED some background information to members on risk management, and HIGHLIGHTED the following points:
- Risk management was traditionally about managing threats or risks and was performed every day when delivering services.
 - The new Risk Management Policy was designed to improve the ability to manage risks.
 - Opportunity risk management built on the traditional risk management approach by looking at not only what could go wrong, but also what could be achieved. It encouraged the University to be proactive and to take advantage of opportunities.
 - Opportunity risk management was designed to promote innovation.
 - Risks were given red, amber or green ratings. Actions would be identified and implemented to mitigate risks in the red category, and continual monitoring of amber risks would be necessary. Green risks attracted minimal effort and resources.
 - BGU initially had 11 risks classified as red, and 2 as amber. Following mitigation actions, this reduced to 2 red risks and 9 amber; the two red risks related to the achievement of student numbers not being in line with business plan projections, and the achievement of research income not being in line with the business plan projections.
 - Risk identification and monitoring would be undertaken by UEG and operational team meetings, and they would be reported quarterly to Audit Committee. The Risk Manager would co-ordinate updates on the strategic and operational risk registers and report to UEG. The Risk Manager would also provide training on risk management.
- 14.3.4 University Council APPROVED the Risk Management Policy.
- 14.4 To note the Chancellor Selection Panel minutes of 13 April 2021.

14.4.1	SG INFORMED members that there would be a Chancellor Selection Panel held on 15 July to discuss nominations made by the BGU community.	
14.4.2	Council RECEIVED and NOTED the Chancellor Selection Panel minutes of 13 April 2021.	
15.	Senate – an update on honorary awards	
15.1	PN INFORMED Council that there had recently been an online ceremony for those receiving honorary awards. A full list of awards would be circulated to the Chair of Council.	Governance
15.2	The update on honorary awards was RECEIVED and NOTED.	
16.	Agenda management and review	
16.1	This item was NOTED.	
17.	Any other business	
17.1	SF PRESENTED to members a report on Covid-19 statistics that had also been distributed to staff. The presentation HIGHLIGHTED that the rates of Covid-19 in Lincoln were increasing which was concerning. There had not been a positive BGU student test since June, and one member of staff tested positive in the past three months. It was expected that precautionary self-isolation would rise after the proposed easing in restrictions.	
17.2	SF NOTED that Covid testing on campus had reduced to around 5 people per day, but informed members that home test kits were now being issued.	
17.3	SF NOTED that the media coverage around BGU's virtual graduation had provoked a reaction online, but NOTED that not all comments had been negative, and some commenters had defended BGU's decision. SF extended thanks to EB in helping to manage the situation around graduation.	
17.4	All members were informed that they would be notified as to the date of Matriculation following this meeting. <i>All non-Council members, except for Kelly Fisher were asked to leave the meeting.</i>	Governance
18.	To note the Remuneration Committee minutes of 23 June 2021	
18.1	Members NOTED the Remuneration Committee minutes of 23 June 2021 and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> APPROVED and ENDORSED the proposals for remuneration. 	

19. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of University Council would take place on Wednesday 13 October 2021 at 11:00 am.

Signed Bob Walden Date 27 JAN 22

