

## UNIVERSITY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE

## UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2019 at 9.15 am, in FW015, Fullwood House, Park Campus, Cheltenham

**Academic Board Membership (for C.19.01):**

Dr Matthew Andrews	✓
Simon Bracken	X
Andrea Chalk	✓
Anne Dawson	✓
Lorraine Dixon	✓
Angela France	✓
Kelly Gillet	A
Prof David James	✓
David Last	A
Neil Leighton	✓
Nick Moore	A
Dr Richard O'Doherty	✓
Sarah Perryman	X
Amanda Pill	✓
Dr Matthew Reed	✓
Dr Emily Ryall	A
Dr Alex Ryan	✓
Richard Salkeld	A
Adeela Shafi	A
Carrie Wasley	✓

**University Council Membership:**

Madiha Azizi (also on Academic Board)	✓
Peter Bungard (from C.19.02)	✓
Matthew Burgess	A
Paul Davies	A
Nicola de longh	✓
Chris Fung	✓
Maisie Jerrim (also on Academic Board)	✓
Dai Jones (also on Academic Board)	A
Martin Jones	A
Stephen Marston (also on Academic Board)	✓
Allen Mawby	A
Stephen Maycock	✓
Dr Andrew Misiura (also on Academic Board)	✓
Karen Morgan (Chair)	✓
Mehjabeen Patrick	A
Daniel Ramsay	✓
Pamela Sissons	✓
The Rt Revd Robert Springett (until C.19.14.2)	✓
Angus Taylor	✓

**Board Apprentices:**

Prince Kamalaneson	A
Christine Walwyn	✓

**In attendance:**

Michael Checkley (for item C.19.20)	Sustainability Operations Manager
Ruth Davies (from C.19.02)	Director (Human Resources)
Stewart Dove (for items C.19.14-15)	Student Registrar
Christopher Goodland (for C.19.01)	Planning Manager
Professor David James	Dean (Academic Development)
Jess Lawson (for C.19.01)	Head of Planning
Tom Newman (for items C.19.14-15)	Chief Executive, Students' Union
Dr Richard O'Doherty	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Dr Amanda Pill (for items C.19.18-19)	Director (Quality Enhancement)
Dr Alex Ryan (for item C.19.20)	Director (Sustainability)
Camille Stallard	Director (Finance and Planning)
Duncan White	Executive Director (Estates Strategy)
Dr Matthew Andrews (Officer)	University Secretary and Registrar
Tanya Collins (Minutes) (for item C.19.01)	Head of Governance and Secretariat Services
Penny Gravestock (Minutes)	Assistant Secretary to Council

**C.19.01 Academic Portfolio Development**

C.19.01.1 Received: a presentation on development of the academic portfolio.

C.19.01.2 Considered the following questions during group workshop discussions:

- what we mean when we refer to the 'Academic Portfolio'?
- what indicators would you rely on in order to check the health of a course?
- in terms of identifying new subject communities or extensions to existing subject communities, and what would you look for to base your decisions on?

C.19.01.3 Noted:

- analysis undertaken since May last year which had informed present developments of the academic portfolio, up to most recent work undertaken before Christmas 2018;
- using HESA data about new entrants to HE nationally, the presentation explored the make-up of University of Gloucestershire provision in relation to sector and compactor norms, outlined congruities and gaps between the University's offering and take-up

nationally at a more granular subject level, and the current rationale for identifying potential areas for development, and the more detailed criteria for prioritising these.

C.19.01.4 Resolved: the Deputy Vice Chancellor thanked members of University Council and Academic Board for their participation and feedback.

**C.19.02 Prayer**

The Rt Revd Robert Springett opened the meeting with a prayer.

**C.19.03 Chair of Council**

Noted: a verbal update from the University Secretary and Registrar, highlighting:

- a. the decision by Professor Julian Crampton to stand down from Council and the role of Chair as of 10 January 2019 due to his declining health, as previously reported via email. It was noted that the University was looking at appropriate ways to thank Professor Crampton for his work and support, including submitting a nomination for an honorary award, and naming the prizes for the highest performing undergraduate and postgraduate students after him, reflecting his commitment to academic excellence;
- b. that Mrs Karen Morgan had agreed to act as interim Chair of Council until a new, permanent Chair was appointed. It was noted that the planned timeline for the current recruitment round would mean that a proposal for role of Chair would be presented to Council at its away day on 26 March 2019;
- c. that the closing date for applications was 14 February 2019, and members were encouraged to advertise the role;
- d. that it had been decided to not use a recruitment firm for role at this time.

**C.19.04 Welcome and Apologies**

Received: apologies for absence from Mr Matthew Burgess, Mr Paul Davies, Mr Dai Jones, Mr Martin Jones, Mr Prince Kamalaneson, Mr Allen Mawby, and Ms Mehjabeen Patrick. Apologies for early departure were also received from the Rt Revd Robert Springett.

**C.19.05 Business of the Agenda**

C.19.05.1 Noted: that there were no requests to unstar any item and that therefore paper C/16/19 would be taken as approved as stated.

C.19.05.2 Resolved: that two papers (C/08/19 and C/09/19) would be considered earlier in the meeting, after agenda item C.19.11. It was noted that an updated Operating Plan from the Students' Union had been tabled.

**C.19.06 Declarations of Interest**

Noted: that no declarations of interest were made.

**C.19.07 Minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2018**

Resolved: the minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting held on 27 November 2018.

**C.19.08 Matters Arising (C/01/19)**

C.19.08.1 [C.18.153] *Council Schedule of Business*

Noted: that the Schedule of Business had been updated and that:

- a. the pre-meeting briefing on estate usage would now be presented to the meeting being held on 14 May 2019. There was a concern raised regarding the length of time before Council would receive the briefing session, but members were assured that the Finance and General Purposes Committee had received a report in January 2019 on the work underway to identify alternative income streams from the University's estate, noting that the activity was on track to meet the target set through the 'Securing a Sustainable Future' programme;
- b. a report regarding the South Gloucestershire and Stroud College project would be considered under agenda C.19.12.

C.19.08.2 [C.18.141.3] *CONFIDENTIAL: Relationship with South Gloucestershire and Stroud College*

This item was considered under Confidential Business.

**C.19.09 Chair's Business**

Noted: that, since the meeting on 27 November 2018, there had been no decisions made by circulation, nor any exercise of delegation. The Company Seal had been used once on 20 December 2018 for sub-contractor warranties between the University, Vinci Construction, and Walker Modular Ltd.

**C.19.10 CONFIDENTIAL: Vice-Chancellor's Report (C/02/19)**

C.19.10.1 Received and noted: a paper updating Council on major developments affecting the University since the meeting held in November 2018. The following were highlighted:

- a. the continued concern about the possible outcomes from the Augur review, which was due for completion in February 2019. It was unknown at that time whether the Government would want to respond to the outcomes immediately in light of other priorities, but it was reported that the University would continue its modelling and scenario planning in preparation;
- b. recent publicity regarding the use of unconditional offers for student recruitment. It was reported that the University had given UCAS a statement on its approach to unconditional offer making, that applicants liked the approach, and that internal evidence indicated that it had not affected entry level scores significantly and had led to better retention;
- c. proposals published from Research England for developing a 'Knowledge Exchange Framework' (KEF);
- d. the continuing debate regarding grade inflation, and the recommendations published by Universities UK in November 2018;
- e. that it was the last meeting for Ms Ruth Davies. Council thanked Ms Davies for her work and wished her well in her new role at Oxford Brookes University.

C.19.10.2 This was considered under Confidential Business.

C.19.10.3 This was considered under Confidential Business.

C.19.10.4 Considered:

- a. the recent media response to the increase in unconditional offers, and whether the approach led to the currency of the University being diminished. The Vice-Chancellor reported that the sector was getting a better understanding of the recruitment process and how it affected student behaviour. It was reported that the approach of using unconditional offers was becoming standard in some parts of the sector and that therefore to stop offering it could increase the risk that the University of lower potential acceptances. The importance of the approach to the widening participation agenda was highlighted;
- b. the effect of a potential reduction in maximum fee levels on the University. It was noted that further analysis would be included in the budget setting process for 2019/20.

**C.19.11 CONFIDENTIAL: Reports from 'Securing a Sustainable Future' Council Sub-Group (C/03/19)**

This item was discussed under Confidential Business.

**C.19.12 CONFIDENTIAL: The Relationship between the University of Gloucestershire (UoG) and South Gloucestershire and Stroud College (SGS) (C/04/19)**

This item was discussed under Confidential Business.

**C.19.13 CONFIDENTIAL: Swindon Institute of Technology (C/05/19)**

This item was discussed under Confidential Business.

**C.19.14 Students' Union Governance Documents: Code of Practice and Operating Agreement (C/06/19)**

C.19.14.1 Considered: a tabled update of the Students' Union Operational Plan, which Council discussed prior to consideration of the governance documentation. It was reported that nominations for the 2019/20 full time officer elections had been opened. In response to a query, it was clarified that reference to an 'independent academic advice service' related to plans to appoint a member of Students' Union staff to support students through the academic appeal process which would enable continuity of knowledge, independent from the University.

C.19.14.2 Received: the Students' Union's Code of Practice and Operating Agreement with the University, both of which had been reviewed and agreed by the Union's Board of Trustees

prior to presentation to Council. It was reported that, going forward, these documents would be reviewed every two years.

C.19.14.3 Resolved: Council approved the Students' Union Code of Practice and Operating Agreement.

**C.19.15 Student Engagement 2018/19: Annual Report for Council (C/07/19)**

C.19.15.1 Received and noted: the annual report on student engagement for 2018/19, that included detail of the approaches adopted to achieve high quality participation in engagement activity, comments on developments to enhance existing approaches, and areas that the University was mindful of or wished to improve over the following year.

C.19.15.2 Considered:

- a. the formation of a working group to keep track of activity and progress throughout the year;
- b. the University's commitment within the Student Employability and Employment Strategy to ensure the incorporation of a compulsory work placement in every undergraduate course, noting how it compared with the rest of the sector. It was reported that there was a wide array of placement opportunities within the different subjects, and that it was important to make provision as equitable as possible across the institution. It was acknowledged that resource constraints may delay activity but that it remained a key commitment;
- c. the University's preparations for the launch of the Student Mental Health Charter in 2019, noting that guidelines had not yet been published;
- d. work at the University to maximise student retention. Members were reminded that an update paper would be considered at the meeting to be held in March 2019.

**C.19.16 CONFIDENTIAL: Financial & Operating Performance Report (C/08/19)**

This item was discussed under Confidential Business.

**C.19.17 CONFIDENTIAL: INTO Pathway JV: update on current year performance and emerging issues (C/09/19)**

This item was discussed under Confidential Business.

**C.19.18 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey 2018 Results and Intervention (C/10/19)**

C.19.18.1 Received: the outcomes of the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) for 2018 as presented to Academic Board together with an update for Council to outline changes to surveying arrangements for 2019. The Director (Quality Enhancement) highlighted:

- a. the low response rates;
- b. the drop in overall satisfaction rates compared with the previous year and the sector average;
- c. the varied student experience seen across the institution, with some courses showing as very strong but that there was a lack of consistency;
- d. the University's decision to be part of the pilot of the new Office for Students (OfS) survey for 2019.

C.19.18.2 Considered:

- a. the response rates and issues around staff and student engagement with the survey;
- b. the results achieved and the intervention that was underway;
- c. clarification around the process for getting the feedback, noting the additional complications for encouraging participation by postgraduate students;
- d. the hope that participation on the OfS survey would improve submission rates;
- e. that whilst the survey and associated analysis was a considerable amount of work, that it would enable the University to respond effectively to what students wanted from their courses;
- f. concerns raised around responses regarding teaching, noting the importance of identifying issues relating to a wider course team and school performance, rather than individuals.

**C.19.19 Postgraduate Research Experience Survey Results / Professional Doctorate and Masters of Research Experience Survey (C/11/19)**

C.19.19.1 Received: a paper setting out the context for the 2018 Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), its analysis and that of the Professional Doctorate and Masters of Research

Experience Survey (PDMRES), and responses to issues raised within the Research Degrees Committee Action Plan for 2018/19.

C.19.19.2 Noted: the contents and actions contained in the report.

### **C.19.20 Annual Sustainability Report 2017-2018 (C/12/19)**

C.19.20.1 Received: the second Annual Sustainability Report to Council, and noted the current improvement priorities. The Director (Sustainability) highlighted:

- the University's position in the People and Planet league;
- achievements in carbon reduction, despite the new estates developments;
- the increased range and diversity of student experience and curriculum projects featured within the report;
- work undertaken to analyse student opinion on sustainability as shown in the NUS skills survey.

C.19.20.2 Considered:

- the importance of the report for transparency and future engagement;
- the spread of activity across all schools in the University;
- the development of communication strategy around this area of activity, although it was noted that an institution's commitment to sustainability was not a factor for potential students, but that it did become more important after they arrived;
- the shift in the perceived importance of environmental factors to students;
- encouragement for Council members to request their meeting papers electronically.

Council welcomed and applauded the report.

### **C.19.21 Brexit and the University of Gloucestershire (C/13/19)**

C.19.21.1 Received: a report summarising the main areas of potential concern for the University following the country's withdrawal from the European Union (Brexit), and actions that had been taken to prepare. The assurance that European Union students would still be eligible for home fees in 2019/20 was noted, as was Universities UK's continued lobbying for the sector.

C.19.21.2 Considered: the report as it was presented for information and assurance that the University was attempting to manage and mitigate the uncertainties and risks of Brexit.

C.19.21.3 Resolved: that a statement should be published to assure students of the action being taken.  
**ACTION: University Secretary and Registrar**

### **C.19.22 Preparations for Council Away Day 2019 (C/14/19)**

C.19.22.1 Received and noted: an outline programme for Council's away day to be held on 26 March 2019. The University Secretary and Registrar noted the invitation to Nick Hillman from the Higher Education Policy Institute as the pre-dinner speaker and plans to allow time to respond to key issues such as the Augur Review and Brexit.

C.19.22.2 Considered: the preparations for the 2019 Away Day, and requested that any relevant data should be sent out in good time prior to the meeting to enable members to absorb the information.

### **C.19.23 Council Schedule of Business (C/15/19)**

Considered: the Schedule of Business, and made no changes. It was noted that consideration was still being given to how a briefing session on technical innovation would best be delivered.

### **C.19.24 Report from Governance and Nominations Committee\* (C/16/19)**

Resolved: Council approved:

- the proposed dates for 2020/21, noting in particular issues related to the timing of Remuneration and Human Resources Committee meetings and the Council away day in 2021;
- the proposed changes to the Council Code of Conduct, to include the Office for Students' nine indicators that a director may not be a 'fit and proper person';
- that Dr Andrew Misiura should join the Honorary Awards Committee as the Academic Staff Member of Council.

**C.19.25 Minutes from Council Committees and Academic Board\***

Noted: the minutes from the following meetings would be available from <https://infonet.glos.ac.uk/departments/registry/committees/Pages/default.aspx>

- a. Governance and Nominations Committee, 12 December 2018
- b. Academic Board, 19 December 2018
- c. Finance and General Purposes Committee, 22 January 2019

**C.19.26 Any Other Business**

No other business was raised.

**C.19.27 Date of Next Meeting**

Council Away Day: Tuesday, 26 March 2019, at C11, Berkeley Site

After the meeting, there was the opportunity for all External Members of Council to meet without any officers from the University being present.

**UNIVERSITY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

**UNIVERSITY COUNCIL**

**Action list for the meeting held 5 February 2019**

Minute number	Action	Responsibility
C.19.21.3	<i>Brexit and the University of Gloucestershire</i>	
C.19.21.3	<u>Resolved:</u> that a statement should be published to assure students of the action being taken.	University Secretary and Registrar