

UNIVERSITY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2019 at 10.30 am, in FW015, Fullwood House, Park Campus.**

**Membership:**

Mr Peter Bungard	✓
Ms Phoebe Crook	✓
Mr Paul Davies	✓
Ms Nicola de longh (Chair)	✓
Mr Chris Fung (from C.19.116)	✓
Mr Dai Jones	A
Mr Martin Jones	✓
Mr Stephen Marston	✓
Mr Allen Mawby (from C.19.116)	✓
Mr Stephen Maycock	✓
Dr Andrew Misiura	✓
Ms Imaani Mitchell	✓
Mrs Karen Morgan	✓
Ms Mehjabeen Patrick	✓
Mr Daniel Ramsay	✓
Mrs Pam Sissons	✓
The Rt Revd Robert Springett (from C.19.116)	✓
Mr Angus Taylor	A

**Board Apprentice:**

Ms Sophie Perret	✓
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**In attendance:**

Ms Andrea Chalk (for C.19.152)	Academic Registrar
Professor David James	Dean (Academic Development)
Mr James Seymour (for C.19.144) Student Recruitment)	Director (Communications, Marketing, and
Dr Richard O'Doherty	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Mrs Camille Stallard	Chief Financial Officer
Dr Matthew Andrews (Officer)	University Secretary and Registrar
Mrs Penny Gravestock (Minutes)	Assistant Secretary to Council

**C.19.135 Prayer**

Mrs Karen Morgan opened the meeting with a prayer.

**C.19.136 Welcome and Apologies**

Received: apologies for absence from Mr Dai Jones and Mr Angus Taylor, and for late arrival from Mr Allen Mawby.

**C.19.137 Business of the Agenda**

Noted: that as there had been no requests to unstar any items on the agenda, papers C/100/19 to C/115/19 would be taken as approved or noted as stated.

**C.19.138 Declarations of Interest**

Received: declarations of interest from:

- a. Mr Martin Jones for agenda item C.19.146 regarding South Gloucestershire and Stroud College, due to his membership of its board;
- b. Dr Andrew Misiura for the update on industrial relations within the Vice-Chancellor's Report.

**C.19.139 Minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2019**

Resolved: the minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting held on 1 October 2019.

**C.19.140 CONFIDENTIAL: Matters Arising (C/86/19)**

[C.19.114.3] *Matters Arising: CONFIDENTIAL: SGS/WISE Campus*

Noted: that an update would be considered under agenda item C.19.146.

**C.19.141 Chair's Business**

Noted:

- a. that since the last meeting on 1 October 2019, there had been one use of the Company Seal: for a contract with MIH Contractors and Ridge Consultants on 7 October 2019;
- b. there had been no decisions made by circulation nor any exercise of delegation.

**C.19.142 CONFIDENTIAL: Vice-Chancellor's Report (C/87/19)**

C.19.142.1 Received and noted: a paper updating Council on major developments affecting the University since the meeting held on 1 October 2019. The following were highlighted:

- a. the letter sent to all vice-chancellors by the Secretary of State at the Department for Education asking for a review fire safety procedures and safeguards across residential, teaching and research accommodation. It was reported that the University had undertaken a review and that its estate was in a good position with no buildings higher than four stories and none using the cladding that had been involved in the fires at Grenfell Tower and University of Bolton;
- b. the upcoming election, noting that manifestos had not yet been published but that the outcomes of the Augar review were still being considered carefully;
- c. the staff briefings held in October 2019 addressing the University's goals and discussions on what made it a good place to work. It was noted that the University Management Forum had discussed the points raised and that they would be followed up;
- d. the de-merger of the School of Business and Technology to create two separate schools and the timescale for the appointment of a new Head of School;
- e. an update on industrial relations;
- f. the Vice-Chancellor's recent trip to develop overseas partnerships as part of a Universities UK delegation.

C.19.142.2 Resolved: Council:

- a. discussed the developments set out in the paper;
- b. agreed that the outcome of the recent review of the School of Business and Technology would be circulated to members.

**ACTION: Deputy Vice-Chancellor**

**C.19.143 Students' Union Update (C/88/19)**

C.19.143.1 Received and noted: the Students' Union update. The following were highlighted:

- a. the recent Experience Officer elections;
- b. student-facing campaigns;
- c. the Operating Plan update.

C.19.143.2 Considered: the recent staffing changes within the Students' Union, the various reasons behind the changes, and the timeline for appointing replacements. Council noted in particular the background and imminent arrival of the new Chief Executive Officer.

**C.19.144 Communications, Marketing and Student Recruitment Update (C/89/19)**

C.19.144.1 Received: an update outlining developments across the Department of Communications, Marketing and Student Recruitment (CMSR) during 2019/20 and for the 20/21 entry campaign. The Director (CMSR) highlighted:

- a. the main priorities identified to increase the applicant pool;
- b. the University's strong conversion performance;
- c. planned campaigns, including those for postgraduate provision and apprenticeships;
- d. activity to review how the University engaged with local feeder institutions;
- e. the new agent strategy and other opportunities in international markets;
- f. the University's digital presence and the website project to make it more intuitive, responsive and interactive.

C.19.144.2 Considered:

- a. the need to widen the University's geographic reach, noting plans to extend activity in the Midlands, Wales and the M4 corridor;
- b. the opportunity to develop the student accommodation message to the local market to highlight the advantage of living on campus, and the need to offer engaging on and off campus activities;
- c. the opportunity for the University to challenge its recruitment culture to ensure it connected with the right markets;
- d. the role of CMSR to work with academic colleagues, encouraging less reliance on email and more on face-to-face interaction;
- e. the Communications Strategy, noting the importance of LinkedIn in the apprenticeship market;
- f. plans to replace the printed prospectus for the 2021 cycle with a more enhanced digital version and targeted material, which it was hoped

would tie in with the University's reputation for sustainability and help it to be different from others in the sector;

- g. that resource had been reallocated away from the clearing process to support activity earlier in the cycle to support increasing the applicant pool and conversion which was thought would provide a better return on investment;
- h. plans for the 2021 campaign "Who Cares", and a concern raised that the use of the phrase "Trigger" could be problematic due to its usual reference to serious issues, and it was acknowledged that the tone of the campaign was very important;
- i. that the new campaign was already being incorporated into the University's sustainability activity.

C.19.144.3 Noted: the review of 2019 activities and the new developments in CMSR for 2020/2021.

**C.19.145 CONFIDENTIAL: Major Project Implementation: Review and Lessons Learned (C/90/19)**

This item was discussed under Confidential Business.

**C.19.146 CONFIDENTIAL: University of Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire and Stroud (SGS) College: Draft Bilateral Agreement (C/91/19)**

This item was discussed under Confidential Business.

**C.19.147 Annual Financial Statements for y/e 31 July 2019 (C/92/19)**

C.19.147.1 Received: the University's financial statements presenting the results for the year ended 31 July 2019. The report comprised:

- a. key financial highlights for the year, noting the operating surplus of £2.7M, excluding the INTO Joint Venture;
- b. the full financial statements, including the Operational Financial Review. It was reported that there continued to be sector and media interest in senior staff pay, and that Audit Committee had particularly reviewed the Corporate Governance section;
- c. an assessment of Going Concern for the University;
- d. the Bank Covenants compliance schedule;
- e. a letter of representation to the auditors acknowledging the responsibilities of Council in respect of the financial statements and disclosure of information.

C.19.147.2 Considered: a query raised regarding Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) and Church of England pension liabilities, and the number of staff within each scheme.

C.19.147.3 Received: Council approved:

- a. the consolidated Financial Statements for the University of Gloucestershire for the year ended 31 July 2019 which had previously been considered by the Audit and Finance and General Purposes Committees;
- b. the Letter of Representation to the auditors for the year ended 31 July 2019.

**C.19.148 External Audit Findings Report (C/93/19)**

C.19.148.1 Received: the external auditors' findings report from Grant Thornton, highlighting the key issues affecting the results of the University and the preparation of the financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2019. An unqualified audit opinion was issued on the financial statements (with no new internal control deficiencies identified).

C.19.148.2 Considered: the one internal control deficiency raised the previous year related to the description on journals which remained outstanding due to systems constraints and the expense that would be required to address it.

C.19.148.3 Resolved: Council received and noted the Report, and recommended its submission to the Office for Students as part of the Annual Accountability Returns.

**C.19.149 CONFIDENTIAL: OfS Long-term Financial Forecast (C/94/19)**

This item was considered under Confidential Business.

**C.19.150 Internal Audit Report for 2018/19 (C/95/19)**

Received and noted: the Internal Audit Report from KPMG for 2018/19, which was required for submission to the Office for Students (OfS), and set out the opinion of 'significant assurance with minor improvements' on the adequacy and effectiveness of the University's framework of risk management, control, and governance, and 'adequate and effective

arrangements' for value for money.

**C.19.151 Audit Committee Annual Report 2018/19 (C/96/19)**

C.19.151.1 Received: the Audit Committee Annual Report for 2018/19 as presented by the Chair of the Committee.

C.19.151.2 Resolved: Council received and approved the Annual Report and agreed that it should be forwarded to the Office for Students.

**C.19.152 Annual Assurance Statement from Council (C/97/19)**

C.19.152.1 Received and noted: the annual assurance statement from Academic Board for 2018/19 and the associated action plan. This was presented to provide confirmation that the University's academic provision was in good health in terms of academic standards and quality. The Academic Registrar highlighted:

- a. themes emerging from the work of the University's external examiners, noting that no major concerns had been raised and that the University continued to work to improve their experience;
- b. a summary of the validation and school periodic review activity undertaken during the year;
- c. reflection on the third complete cycle of the Course Enhancement Review (CER), noting in particular the good level of engagement from all course leaders;
- d. a summary of 2018/19 student achievement at undergraduate and postgraduate levels (including the percentage of 'good' degrees) in comparison with sector data and identifying variations between schools and partnerships. It was noted that there had been a marked decrease in outcomes for Masters programmes, which was possibly due to changes in regulations;
- e. the action plan for 2018/19.

C.19.152.2 Considered:

- a. the University's apprenticeship provision and the outcomes of the Ofsted monitoring visit in May 2019. It was noted that the range of areas highlighted by Ofsted did not indicate any causes for concern and were mainly linked to systems and how students' learning could be evidenced;
- b. the number of recommendations rated as 'essential' made through the periodic review of the School of Business and Technology;

- c. the importance of correlating different data sets (such as CER and National Student Survey results);
- d. the work of the Alternative Assessment Working Group to review the University's position regarding an anonymous marking policy;
- e. the University's process to establish why a course may not be working, and the lessons that could be learned from that;
- f. work being undertaken to address the attainment gap for BAME students.

**C.19.153 Chairs' Group: Proposal to establish a continuing informal discussion group (C/98/19)**

C.19.153.1 Received: a proposal from Governance and Nominations Committee to establish a Chairs' Group as a small, informal discussion forum, to include the Chair and Vice-Chair of Council, all Chairs of sub-committees, and all members of the Executive. As part of this arrangement, it was proposed that the appointment of the Rt Revd Robert Springett as Chair of the Council and Foundation Standing Group should be brought forward to ensure a more even balance between Council and Executive in the membership of the new Group.

C.19.154.2 Resolved: Council approved the recommendation to establish a Chairs' Group, and to bring forward the transition date for the Chair of the Council and Foundation Standing Group to 27 November 2019.

**C.19.154 Compliance with Regulatory Deadlines (C/99/19)**

C.19.154.1 Noted: that the Chair of Council had received a letter from the Director of Competition and Registration at the Office for Students (OfS) regarding the University's compliance with regulatory deadlines. The letter noted that the University had been late in paying its annual fee to the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and that constituted a breach in the conditions of registration. The University Secretary and Registrar presented a paper outlining the circumstances of the late payment and action taken to prevent recurrence.

C.19.154.2 Considered: that a similar letter had been sent to 282 out of 384 registered providers, and that the nature and tone of the action taken by the OfS had caused considerable debate within the sector. Council Members raised concern regarding the proportionality of the response from the OfS, especially in light of the fact that 65% of registered providers had not paid the QAA invoice on time, but that there had been no acknowledgement of the need to improve practice by the OfS or QAA. This gave rise to

questions about whether the response from OfS was really efficient, effective and proportionate as required by its remit.

C.19.154.3 Resolved: Council:

- a. noted the situation described in the report that lead to the deadline for payment of the QAA fee being missed and the action that had been taken to prevent recurrence; and
- b. agreed that a record of the discussion should be submitted to the OfS as requested.

**C.19.155 Re-appointment of External Auditors\* (C/100/19)**

Resolved: Council approved the reappointment of Grant Thornton UK LLP as the Company's external auditors for 2019/20 and for remuneration to be agreed by the Audit Committee.

**C.19.156 PREVENT Strategy/Duty: Annual Report 2018/19\* (C/101/19)**

Resolved: Council noted the annual report which offered assurance over the Prevent-related activity that had taken place through 2018/19. It was also noted that the University had to submit an 'accountability & data return' to the Office for Students. Council acknowledged the data highlighted within the report, and agreed for the Chair of Council to sign the annual accountability statement.

**C.19.157 Modern Slavery Act 2015 - Annual Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement\* (C/102/19)**

Resolved: Council considered and approved the statement for publication, which would be signed by the Chair of Council.

**C.19.158 ITEM WITHDRAWN**

**C.19.159 Register of People with Significant Control\* (C/104/19)**

Resolved: Council confirmed that its Register of People with Significant Control as maintained with Companies House would remain the same.

**C.19.160 Internationalisation Strategy Update\* (C/105/19)**

Received and noted: Council received the paper and noted the progress against the internationalisation goals and the planned actions for 2019-20.

**C.19.161 Operating Plan and Institutional KPIs 2018/19 – End Year End Update\* (C/106/19)**

Received and noted: the end of year update of the Operating Plan and Institutional Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

**C.19.162 CONFIDENTIAL: Financial and Operating Performance Report\* (C/107/19)**

This item was considered under Confidential Business.

**C.19.163 CONFIDENTIAL: Annual Report of Academic Appeals, Student Complaints and Fitness to Practice 2018/19\* (C/108/19)**

This item was considered under Confidential Business.

**C.19.164 Library, Technology and Information Services Annual Report 2018/19\* (C/109/19)**

Received and noted: the annual report for 2018/19.

**C.19.165 CONFIDENTIAL: Annual Insurance Report - 2018/19\* (C/110/19)**

This item was considered under Confidential Business.

**C.19.166 CONFIDENTIAL: Procurement Annual Report - 2018/19\* (C/111/19)**

This item was considered under Confidential Business.

**C.19.167 2018-19 Annual Health and Safety Report\* (C/112/19)**

Received and noted: the annual report for 2018/19.

**C.19.168 Updated Register of Interests\* (C/113/19)**

Noted: the updated declarations of interest received. Members were reminded to ensure that they submitted as soon as possible any interests that would fall under the new category to the Secretariat.

**C.19.169 External Council Member Recruitment\* (C/114/19)**

Noted: members noted and were assured by progress in the recruitment of new External Members.

**C.19.170 Council Schedule of Business\* (C/115/19)**

Noted: the Schedule of Business.

**C.19.171 Minutes from Council Committees\***

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

- a. Remuneration and Human Resources Committee, 1 October 2019
- b. Academic Board, 23 October 2019
- c. Finance and General Purposes Committee, 29 October 2019
- d. Audit Committee, 1 November 2019

**C.19.172 Any Other Business**

No other business was raised.

**C.19.173 Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday, 4 February 2020, with the joint meeting with Academic Board starting at 9.15 am and the meeting at 11 am (FW015, Fullwood House, The Park, Cheltenham).

All staff and student members of Council (with the exception of the President of the Students' Union) and all those in attendance left the meeting.

**C.19.174 RESERVED BUSINESS: Report from Remuneration and Human Resources Committee (C/116/19)**

This item was discussed under Reserved Business.

UNIVERSITY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

Action list for the meeting held 26 November 2019

Minute number	<i>Action</i>	Responsibility
C.19.142	<i>Vice-Chancellor's Report</i>	
C.19.142.2	<u>Resolved:</u> Council:  b. agreed that the outcome of the recent review of the School of Business and Technology would be circulated to members.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor