

## UNIVERSITY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE

## UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2019 at 4.30 pm, in FW015, Fullwood House, Park Campus.

**Membership:**

Mr Peter Bungard	✓
Ms Phoebe Crook	✓
Mr Paul Davies	✓
Ms Nicola de longh (Chair)	✓
Mr Chris Fung	✓
Mr Dai Jones	✓
Mr Martin Jones	✓
Mr Stephen Marston	✓
Mr Allen Mawby	✓
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	✓
Mr Angus Taylor	A

**Board Apprentice:**

Ms Sophie Perret	✓
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**In attendance:**

Professor David James	Dean (Academic Development)
Dr Amanda Pill (for C.19.121-124)	Director (Quality Enhancement)
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

*Prior to the start of the meeting, Members and those in attendance stood for one minute to remember and honour Professor Julian Crampton, former Chair of Council, who had died on 26 June 2019.*

**C.19.108 Prayer**

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

Ms Nicola de longh left the meeting.

**C.19.109 Appointment of Chair of Council (C/69/19)**

This item was discussed under Confidential Business.

Ms Nicola de longh returned to the meeting.

**C.19.110 Welcome and Apologies**

C.19.110.1 Received: apologies for absence from Mr Angus Taylor. It was noted that Mr Chris Fung would be attending the meeting via telephone.

C.19.110.2 Noted: that it was the first meeting for Ms Sophie Perret, the new Board Apprentice, and Council welcomed her.

**C.19.111 Business of the Agenda**

Noted: that as there had been no requests to unstar any items on the agenda, papers C/82/19 to C/85/19 would be taken as approved or noted as stated.

**C.19.112 Declarations of Interest**

Received: declarations of interest from:

- a. Mr Martin Jones for the verbal update to be given under Matters Arising regarding South Gloucestershire and Stroud College, due to his membership of its board;

- b. Mr Dai Jones and Dr Andrew Misiura for the update on industrial relations within the Vice-Chancellor's Report.

**C.19.113 Minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2019**

Resolved: the minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting held on 25 June 2019.

**C.19.114 CONFIDENTIAL: Matters Arising (C/70/19)**

C.19.114.1 [C.19.95] *Access and Participation Plan*

Noted: that a final version of the Access and Participation Plan was submitted to the Office for Students (OfS) and, in line with experience at other institutions, the University was asked to make a number of revisions. It was reported that formal notification of approval had been received on 20 September 2019, and the approved version was presented with the Vice-Chancellor's report under agenda item C.19.116.

C.19.114.2 [C.19.87.1.01] *CONFIDENTIAL: Matters Arising: Financial and Operating Performance Report*  
This was considered under Confidential Business.

C.19.114.3 [C.19.87.2] *CONFIDENTIAL: SGS/WISE Campus*  
This was considered under Confidential Business.

**C.19.115 Chair's Business**

Noted:

- a. that since the last meeting on 26 June 2019, there had been no uses of the Company Seal, nor any exercise of delegation. It was reported however, that there had been one decision made by circulation regarding the extension of the current loan with HSBC which had been emailed to Members of 23 July 2019. It was reported that Council had approved the revised terms of the bank offer for the loan extension, providing an additional 12 month period for the higher education sector to stabilise;
- b. that the recent meeting of Finance and General Purposes Committee had been cancelled due to the number of apologies for absence received which would have made it inquorate. Members were reminded of the importance of meeting attendance.

**C.19.116 CONFIDENTIAL: Vice-Chancellor's Report (C/71/19)**

C.19.116.1 Received and noted: a paper updating Council on major developments affecting the University since the meeting held in June 2019. The following were highlighted:

- a. the recent Cabinet reshuffle which had resulted in the appointment of a new Universities Minister, and their priorities for the sector, particularly related to widening participation, Value for Money for students, and concerns regarding the use of 'conditional unconditional' offers;
- b. the University's work to prevent grade inflation;
- c. uncertainties around the future model for the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF), but noting that it was likely to applied at subject level;
- d. the latest position on student numbers;
- e. the final version of the Access and Participation Plan as approved by the Office for Students (OfS), noting the provisional decision regarding a requirement for enhanced monitoring of the measures the University had put in place to address attainment gaps between underrepresented students and their peers, particularly for BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) students;
- f. the University's key priorities for 2019/20;
- g. recent research and business engagement funding successes, noting the risk of losing access to European Union funding;
- h. an update on staff appointments at the University.

C.19.116.2 Considered: whether there were opportunities to identify other funding sources from, for example regional businesses and charities. It was reported that these options were being investigated, but that bidding for funding from national research councils was highly competitive. It was noted that the reliance on European funding was common for new universities, and that there had not been any Government announcements made as to what would replace those funds.

C.19.116.3 This item was considered under Confidential Business.

Mr Dai Jones and Dr Andrew Misiura left the meeting.

C.19.116.4 This item was considered under Confidential Business.

Mr Dai Jones and Dr Andrew Misiura returned to the meeting.

- C.19.116.5 Resolved: Council:
- a. discussed the developments set out in the paper;
  - b. formally accepted the OfS's provisional decision on the Access and Participation Plan, that allowed the University to confirm back to OfS that the Plan was considered to be final.

Council also congratulated the Sustainability team and other staff and students for the University's success in achieving first place in the People and Planet league table.

### **C.19.117 Students' Union Update: Operating Plan 2019/20 (C/72/19)**

C.19.117.1 Received and noted: the Students' Union (SU) Operating Plan for 2019/20. The following were highlighted:

- a. the retention of five themes:
  - We will ensure you have the best time at University;
  - We will have a positive impact on your academic experience;
  - We will support you to develop your skills and be ready for working life;
  - We will create a stronger University of Gloucestershire student community;
  - We will communicate effectively with our stakeholders;
- b. the priority campaigns for the year, including raising money for Swindon and Gloucestershire Mind during RAG Week, the month-long De-Stressival, and preparations for the "Know Your Vote" campaign.

C.19.117.2 Considered:

- a. the confidence that the Plan would be achieved, noting that the activity had been delegated across the team and the work plan was similar to that undertaken in previous years;
- b. the work undertaken by the SU to lobby for cheaper food and drink on campus. It was reported that the Union had a role to listen to students' concerns, and to pass them on to the University. It was also noted that now the SU was running the bar at the Park, it allowed some influence in this area of activity. The Vice-Chancellor highlighted the influence the SU had, noting that the food offer had already changed;
- c. the work to reduce the barriers to students having an excellent experience, noting in particular the collaboration with the University in the reciprocal mentoring scheme for BAME students;
- d. the need to ensure students understood the link between the SU and course- and subject-representatives.

### **C.19.118 Outcome of Mid-Term Review of University of Gloucestershire 2017-22 Strategic Plan (C/73/19)**

- C.19.118.1 Received: the final outcomes of the mid-term review of the University's Strategic Plan for 2017-2022. The Vice-Chancellor highlighted:
- a. the consultation exercise with staff;
  - b. the short summary produced of the key points of the Strategy;
  - c. the work to develop a University-wide programme to enable staff to reflect on the impact of the Securing a Sustainable Future programme, realign team and individual goals with the University's strategic direction, and lift morale through a renewed focus on the mission, goals, and achievements.

C.19.118.2 Considered: a suggestion to check the Strategy against the draft Local Industrial Strategy for Gloucestershire.

C.19.118.3 Resolved: Council approved the proposed outcomes of the mid-term review as set out in the paper.

**C.19.119 CONFIDENTIAL: 2018/19 Draft Financials and 2019/20 Budget Update (C/74/19)**  
This item was discussed under Confidential Business.

**C.19.120 CONFIDENTIAL: Council and Sub-Committee Membership (C/75/19)**  
This item was discussed under Confidential Business.

**C.19.121 Update on Implementation of the Academic Strategy (C/76/19)**

- C.19.121.1 Received and noted: the update on the implementation of the Academic Strategy for 2017-22, and the progress made across the four ambitions:
- Developing Attractive and Competitive Subjects;
  - Delivering Excellence in Learning and Teaching;
  - Ensuring Impact through Research and Practice;
  - Building an Engaging Approach to Enhancement.
- C.19.121.2 Considered:
- the imbalance between institutional market research and within School knowledge of the market in a subject area;
  - a suggestion to look at 'Hyper Island' as a different approach to project-based learning.

**C.19.122 NSS 2019: Results, Analysis and Next Steps (C/77/19)**

C.19.122.1 Received: the results and analysis from the 2019 National Student Survey (NSS). The Director (Quality Enhancement) noted in particular the decrease in overall satisfaction from 86 to 82% while the sector score rose to 84%, and the work undertaken by the University to address areas of concern.

C.19.122.2 Considered: a particular concern raised about the consultation process with staff following the release of results and the risk of ignoring the positive aspects of the results by concentrating on the negative. It was noted that there needed to be considerable rebuilding of staff morale following the Securing a Sustainable Future programme, and that by discussing the paper under Open Business there was a risk that issues raised in the report could imply that staff professionalism was being questioned. It was felt important to emphasise that concerns regarding capability and performance related to a very small proportion of staff, and as such, the paper should have been considered under Confidential Business. In response, it was noted that:

- every year, areas of good practice were identified as well as those raising more concerns;
- the majority of staff acted with professionalism, but there was a need for a framework for practice;
- the consultation process had incorporated the circulation of a detailed paper to Schools, University Management Forum, and the Academic Affairs Committee, and that those discussions had driven the outcomes presented.

It was reported that, from a student point of view, there had been incidents of unprofessional behaviours by staff, and that it was important that the University addressed the issue. It was noted that the University's results appeared good, but that the University had dropped to below the sector average and the data set was a call for further improvement and enhancement. As such, it was important to take it seriously without losing sight of the good work being done. The following points were raised:

- that the response to the Value for Money question was disappointing. It was noted that the University wanted to understand better how students in the different subject communities viewed Value for Money, and that it would be useful to find out how other institutions were doing;
- that at the time the survey was underway, the University was in the middle of the Securing a Sustainable Future programme and that was unsettling for staff. It was noted that changes to institutional systems put staff under additional pressure;
- the variation in results seen between Schools and whether that reflected how change was handled in different areas;
- that Professional Services departments were not addressed in the report;
- a suggestion that it would be better to focus on a few key areas to be improved;
- that overall response rates to the Survey were good.

C.19.122.3 Resolved: Council discussed the outcomes, and considered the action agreed in response to the results.

**C.19.123 Annual Course Evaluation 2019: outcomes and analysis (C/78/19)**

C.19.123.1 Received: the outcomes of the fifth Annual Course Evaluation (ACE) survey, run from 25 March to 17 May 2019. It was reported that the ACE was an internal survey based on the NSS questions for Level 4 and 5 students, and that both satisfaction and response rate had improved on the previous year.

- C.19.123.2 Resolved: Council received the paper; and noted the ACE 2019 survey outcomes and the follow up activity required.
- C.19.124 Postgraduate Research Experience Report 2019 (C/79/19)**
- C.19.124.1 Received: the results from the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) for 2019. It was reported that the response rate had decreased significantly since the previous year, but that overall satisfaction had increased and all sections showed improvement.
- C.19.124.2 Noted: the contents and actions contained in the report.
- C.19.125 CONFIDENTIAL: INTO JV Partnership Project – Progress Report (C/80/19)**  
This item was discussed under Confidential Business.
- C.19.126 Risk Management**
- C.19.126.1 *Risk Management Policy (C/81a/19)*  
Resolved: Council approved the revised Risk Management Policy in line with the recommendations of the recent internal audit and the agreed management response.
- C.19.126.2 *Revised Risk Register and Action Plan 2019/20 (C/81b/19)*  
Resolved: Council considered and approved the Risk Register and Action Plan for 2019/20.
- C.19.127 Register of Council Members' Interests\* (C/82/19)**  
Resolved: Council:
- noted the declarations of interest received;
  - approved that an additional category be added to the return to reflect Member's interests in any organisation that was currently doing business with the University;
  - were asked to ensure that they submit as soon as possible any interests that would fall under this new category to the Secretariat.
- C.19.128 Brexit Preparations: update\* (C/83/19)**  
Noted: the update of what was known about the University's situation and Brexit in six key areas.
- C.19.129 Internal Audit Operational Plan 2019/20 and Audit Strategy 2022\* (C/84/19)**  
Noted: the internal audit plan for 2019/20.
- C.19.130 Council Schedule of Business\* (C/85/19)**  
Noted: the Schedule of Business.
- C.19.131 Minutes from Council Committees\***  
Noted: that the minutes from the following meetings would be available from <https://infonet.glos.ac.uk/departments/registry/committees/Pages/default.aspx>:
- Governance and Nominations Committee, 5 September 2019;
  - Audit Committee, 20 September 2019.
- C.19.132 Any Other Business**  
Noted: that members were asked to contact the University Secretary and Registrar if they were interested in participating in the Council Companion Scheme.
- C.19.133 Date of Next Meeting**  
Tuesday, 26 November 2019, **starting at 9.00 am** (FW015, Fullwood House, Park Campus).

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.19.134 RESERVED BUSINESS: Report from Remuneration and Human Resources Committee**  
This item was discussed under Reserved Business.