

UNIVERSITY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 13 April 2021 at 11.30 am via Microsoft Teams.

Membership:

Ingrid Barker	✓
Luc Brown	✓
Peter Bungard	✓
Paul Crichard	✓
Nicola de longh (Chair)	✓
Chris Fung	✓
Steve Gardiner	A
Stephen Marston	✓
Steve Mawson (until C.21.41)	✓
Stephen Maycock	✓
Dr Andrew Misiura	✓
Imaani Mitchell	✓
Mehjabeen Patrick	✓
Daniel Ramsay	✓
Dr Adeela Shafi	✓
Pamela Sissons	✓
Elonka Soros	✓
David Soutter	✓
The Rt Revd Robert Springett	✓
Dr Peter Warry	✓

Board Apprentices:

Julia Hopkins	✓
Sophie Perret	✓

In attendance:

Andrea Chalk (for C.21.41)	Academic Registrar
Anna Hay (for C.21.40)	Head of Student Wellbeing
Professor David James	Dean (Academic Development)
Jess Lawson (for C.21.36 and 39)	Head of Planning
Dr Graham Parton (for C.21.38)	Head of School (Education and Humanities)
Camille Stallard	Chief Financial Officer
Julie Walkling (Observing)	Incoming External Member of Council
Dr Matthew Andrews (Officer)	University Secretary and Registrar
Penny Gravestock (Minutes)	Assistant Secretary to Council

C.21.28 Prayer

Dr Andrew Misiura opened the meeting with a prayer.

C.21.29 Welcome and Apologies

Received: apologies for absence from Steve Gardiner and for early departure from Steve Mawson.

C.21.30 Business of the Agenda

Noted: that there had been no requests to unstar any items on the agenda and that therefore it would be assumed that papers C/29/21 – C/31/21 had been noted as stated

C.21.31 Declarations of Interest

Noted: that there were no declarations of interest.

C.21.32 Minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2021

Resolved: the minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting held on 2 February 2021.

C.21.33 Matters Arising (C/19/21)

[C.21.07] *Matters Arising: CONFIDENTIAL: Vice-Chancellor's Report*

Noted: that an update on the review of Humanities would be considered under agenda item C.21.38.

C.21.34 Chair's Business (C/20/21)

C.21.34.1 Received and noted: the Chair's report, outlining key meetings and focus areas since 2 February 2021.

C.21.34.2 Received: updates from each of the Committee Chairs on key discussions held at recent meetings:

- a. Remuneration and HR Committee, 24 February 2021;
- b. Governance and Nominations Committee, 26 February 2021;
- c. Audit Committee, 12 March 2021;
- d. Finance and General Purposes Committee, 16 March 2021;
- e. Chairs' Group, 26 March 2021.

C.21.34.3 Noted: that since the last meeting on 2 February 2021, there had been two decisions made by circulation:

- a. the appointment of Professor Jacqueline Labbe as the University's next Deputy Vice-Chancellor from 1 June 2021;
- b. the appointment of the Rt Revd Robert Springett as Vice-Chair of Council from 1 August 2021.

It was noted that the Company Seal had been used as follows:

- a. for the dissolution of the Joint Venture with INTO (on 11 February 2021);
- b. documents related to the purchase of the Debenhams building (on 4 March 2021).

C.21.35 Students' Union Update (C/21/21)

Received and noted: the Students' Union (SU) update, noting in particular:

- a. the recent letter from the National Union of Students, Universities UK and Student Minds, asking the Government to agree a date for all students to return to campus;
- b. the increase seen in student queries regarding rent rebates;
- c. discussions being held with the University regarding potential space within the Debenhams building;
- d. work with the University on the latest Access and Participation Plan submission, noting the production of a 'student-friendly' version;
- e. the plans to develop an advice service as part of the offer for students.

C.21.36 CONFIDENTIAL: Vice-Chancellor's Report (C/22/21)

C.21.36.1 Received and noted: a paper updating Council on major developments affecting the University since the meeting held on 2 February 2021. The following were highlighted:

- a. an update on the University's response to the pandemic, noting in particular:
 - the proportion of students back on campus and the uncertainty around when the remainder could return;
 - ongoing social distancing and testing available on each campus;
 - plans to make campus facilities available to students on a more extended basis over the summer;
 - plans for the return to work for staff;
 - the need to prepare new students for University life and being away from home;
- b. anticipated announcements related to Government Higher Education policy;
- c. the University's work to submit bids to different funding programmes, such as the Levelling Up and Community Renewal Funds;
- d. confirmation of the submission for the Research Excellence Framework. Council thanked the Dean (Academic Development) and his team for their work;
- e. the recent Knowledge Exchange Framework exercise results, and the University's performance compared with peer institutions;
- f. the University's performance in relation to its Access and Participation Plan targets.

C.21.36.2 This item was considered under Confidential Business:

C.21.37 CONFIDENTIAL: February Financial Performance Report (C/23/21)

This item was discussed under Confidential Business.

C.21.38 CONFIDENTIAL: Phase 2 Review of Humanities (C/24/21)

This item was discussed under Confidential Business.

C.21.39 Internationalization Strategy – March 2021 Update (C/25/21)

- C.21.39.1 Received: a report that provided an update on the third year of implementation of the Internationalization Strategy that had been approved in 2017, and an action plan showing activity completed since the previous report. The Head of Planning highlighted:
- the budgeted plans for further growth in international students;
 - the effect of the pandemic on student number forecasts for collaborative partners;
 - the 'hardship' funding made available for international students where possible;
 - increased support through the Helpzones and Student Services. In response to a query, it was noted that additional English language support would be available where necessary to enable international students to meet requirements;
 - the work underway to draft a 'Decolonising the Curriculum' framework.
- C.21.39.2 Noted: the actions taken and proposals for development of the next Internationalization Strategy.

C.21.40 Student Wellbeing Strategy 2018-23 (C/26/21)

- C.21.40.1 Received: a report on the progress made to date in implementing developments linked with the University's five-year Student Wellbeing Strategy. The report recognised the impact of the pandemic, both in terms of how the University had responded to support student wellbeing during the crisis, as well as outlining progress that had still been made towards the nine themes of the Strategy. It also outlined progress with regards to the Student Minds University Mental Health Charter.
- C.21.40.2 Considered: Council discussed the update report, including:
- the level of understanding from the student body regarding the effects of pandemic, but noting the areas where students were struggling;
 - the reduction seen in student engagement with University services that was not necessarily following trends reported in recent media reports. It was noted that the University was promoting its services, and helping students find support more locally to them if they were living away from the institution. It was also noted that the Students' Union had seen differences in the way students were seeking support, and the importance of ensuring effective communication was emphasised;
 - the effect of pandemic restrictions on younger students who had moved away from home for the first time, particularly when this would normally be the time in their lives when they were developing relationship building skills;
 - the support for new starters from September 2021;
 - whilst the University had not seen major variations in the level of requests for support from students with different protected characteristics, it was noted that the rapid changes required following the first lockdown in March 2021 had been particularly difficult for those with autism;
 - the introduction of a Nightline listening service to be run by students from 2021/22;
 - the introduction of the new role of a Director of Sport which would help develop mental wellbeing support through physical activity.
- C.21.40.3 Noted: the progress made, and to discuss this update report.

C.21.41 CONFIDENTIAL: Report on Annual Business Review of Academic Partnerships (C/27/21)

This item was discussed under Confidential Business.

C.21.42 Governance Effectiveness at the University of Gloucestershire: Action plan in response to the recommendations and suggestions (C/28/21)

- C.21.42.1 Received: an action plan in response to the Advance HE Review 'Governance effectiveness at the University of Gloucestershire' that built on discussions held by the Governance and Nominations Committee in December 2020 and February 2021. The University Secretary and Registrar reported on the outcomes of the recent tender exercise for a facilitator to support a series of workshops addressing Council's purpose and culture. Members were encouraged to participate when arrangements had been made.
- C.21.42.2 Considered: Council discussed:
- the importance of training and development being related directly to the University;
 - the need to ensure clarity for the potential role of a Senior Independent Governor;

- c. a concern that the suggestion to prioritise 'Strategic leadership experience in HE' to the list of Council Member skills could act as a barrier to recruitment from different groups of candidates.

C.21.42.3 Resolved: Council received and approved the response to the Advance HE Review as recommended by Governance and Nominations Committee.

C.21.43 CONFIDENTIAL: University of Gloucestershire Professional Services Limited: Recommendation for the appointment of Directors (C/32/21)

This item was discussed under Confidential Business.

C.21.44 CONFIDENTIAL: Update on Development of the Next Strategic Plan* (C/29/21)

This item was considered under Confidential Business.

C.21.45 Annual Sustainability Report 2019-2020* (C/30/21)

Noted: Council reviewed the Annual Sustainability Report and noted the improvement priorities it contained.

C.21.46 Council Schedule of Business (C/31/21)

Noted: the Schedule of Business. Council noted in particular that there would be a General Meeting held on 11 May 2021 to agree changes to the Articles of Association. It was hoped that the Annual Strategic Away Day, scheduled for 28 and 29 June 2021, would be held as a physical meeting at the Oxstalls Campus in Gloucester, subject to government guidelines.

C.21.47 Minutes from Council Committees*

Noted: that the minutes from the following meetings would be available from <https://connectglosac.sharepoint.com/sites/UniversityCommittees>:

- a. Remuneration and Human Resources Committee, 24 February 2021;
- b. Governance and Nominations Committee, 26 February 2021;
- c. Audit Committee, 12 March 2021;
- d. Finance and General Purposes Committee, 16 March 2021;
- e. Academic Board, 24 March 2021.

C.21.48 Any Other Business

Noted: that a separate session on the Annual Sustainability Report (paper C/30/21) would be held on 21 April 2021 at 5.15 pm (via Microsoft Teams).

C.21.49 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday, 11 May 2021, at 9.15 am.