

Approved Minutes

Present:

Mr Peter Upton (Chair)	Independent Governor	PU
Prof Rob Warner	Vice-Chancellor	RW
Mr Mike Baker	Academic Staff Governor	MB
Dr Sue Brownlow	Independent Governor	SB
Dr Sue Cooper	Academic Staff Governor	SC
Rev'd Preb Cate Edmonds	Independent Governor	CE
Ms Claire Gibson	Independent Governor	CG
Prof Patricia Hind	Independent Governor	PH
Prof Chris King	Independent Governor	CK
Mr Elias McGill	Student Governor (SU President)	EM
The Rt Rev'd Nick McKinnel	Independent Governor	NM
Mrs Diana Naylor	Professional Services Staff Governor	DN
Mr Graham Raikes	Independent Governor	GR
Mr Rhys Roberts	Student Governor	RR
Mr John Searson	Independent Governor	JS
Ms Michele Shoebridge	Independent Governor	MS
Mrs Emma van der Lugt	Independent governor	EvdL

In Attendance:

Ms Laura Butler	Deputy President MSU	LB
Mr Elias McGill	Immediate Past President MSU	EM
Rev'd Michelle Parkman	University Chaplain	MP
Mrs Unity Stuart	Clerk to the Board of Governors	US

In Attendance for Item 9 only

Mr Rich Watson	Director of Finance & Facilities	RW
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In Attendance for Item 6 only

Mrs Katy Willis	Director of Marketing and Student Experience	KW
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In Attendance for Items 5 and 7 only

Dr Ian Luke	Executive Dean	IL
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PU welcomed LB to her first meeting of the Board and RR in his new role as MSU President.

1. Prayers

1.1 MP led prayers.

2. Apologies & Declaration of Conflict of Interests

2.1 No apologies were received. No conflicts of interest declared.

3. E-Board Minutes – matters brought forward

3.1 PU had circulated the minutes of the e-meeting in advance and indicated that the last of the e-meetings will take place in September at which point the efficacy of these meetings will be reviewed.

3.2 It was noted that the minutes of recent Board meetings have not yet been published on the website and US agreed to action. The minutes of e-meetings will also need to be published on the website.

4. The Marjon Strategy

4.1 PU noted his intention to split the Board into small groups for discussion to ensure that governors are content with the Strategy and identify whether any further work is needed prior to approval.

4.2 RW outlined the context of the Strategy which had begun initially with a focused conversation with HEFCE who requested an outline of some key milestones, including improving performance and stabilising the financial situation. Following the implementation of the short term recovery plan, HEFCE (now OfS) confirmed they were content that the University was in a secure position.

4.3 RW also provided a brief update on critical issues, an outline of key milestones and the refreshed KPIs as outlined in the report. Following recent work undertaken by SMT regarding KPIs, a fuller paper would then be submitted to the September Board meeting.

4.4 RW further highlighted some key points within the strategy document relating to planned developments with partnerships, the civic contribution and the curriculum.

The revised SMT structure was also outlined including planned dates for recruitment to the various roles.

4.5 At this point the Board split into groups led by Committee Chairs to discuss further.

4.6 The Board reconvened and Chairs of committees provided a summary of the group discussions.

4.7 Generally the comments indicated that the Growth Plan is heading in the right direction but is lacking further detail in some areas including on research. The groups also noted the realism and positivity of the strategy.

4.8 It was noted that Torbay may also be an area of opportunity and international links could be considered further. Further plans for engagement with both the Royal Navy and the Anglican community were also suggested for inclusion.

4.9 The optimal size of the institution was discussed as was the potential for further alliances with local businesses and the community.

4.10 It was also suggested that staff and student engagement with the proposed Strategy would be valuable and a consultation would be required. A 'catchy' strapline for the Strategy was also suggested to add impact.

- 4.11 Finally further clarification was sought surrounding the staffing structure with the suggestion that support with change management might be helpful. RW agreed to discuss this further under his VCs report at item 11.
- 4.12 **ACTION** RW agreed to reflect on these comments and submit a revised version to the Board in September.

5. Learning & Teaching

- 5.1 IL joined the meeting at this point and provided a summary of his paper.
- 5.2 He reported that employability and retention continue to be addressed and an AdvanceHE facilitated event focusing on this is due to take place shortly.
- 5.3 IL noted the new Structure for Schools within the Faculty has been confirmed and circulated and Job Descriptions emphasise the need for proactivity within the schools. RW further highlighted some improvements such as Performance management and PDRs.
- 5.4 There has been a review of the Peer Observation procedure, a new Peer review Procedure has been developed and will be piloted in 2018-19.
- 5.5 Improvements in staff and student engagement were noted and personal development tutoring continues to be developed further.
- 5.6 There will be a Learning, Teaching & Research Development Day on 12th September, involving mandatory activities for all colleagues, including PDT developments, Futures online, the upgraded VLE, research and student support procedures.
- 5.7 Following queries regarding performance management, RB reported that the Finance & Resources Committee have received positive reports regarding the revived PDR system.
- 5.8 GDPR was briefly discussed and student pathways was also raised. IL agreed the pathways for students are important noting some projects in place to support level 4 entrants particularly.
- 5.9 The Board acknowledged that the processes, polices, and work underway all seems positive and noted that the growth plan is certainly achievable. IL left the meeting.

6. Communication

- 6.1 KW joined the meeting at this point.
- 6.2 KW noted that following industry awards the previous night, the University had won the 'highly commended' award for University Prospectus and the Gold Award for best marketing team. The Board congratulated KW and her team.
- 6.3 KW noted the four areas of communication outlined in the paper to be discussed; staff, student, external and alumni.
- 6.4 A number of improvements in communications were noted including improvements to staff meetings, staff updates, and the introduction of the Balance programme.
- 6.5 KW indicated that student engagement remains high due to the small size of the institution. Other strengths and weaknesses were identified and KW outlined the plans in place to address these.
- 6.6 KW noted that further information about the student body would be helpful including a greater understanding of student's lives, experiences and beliefs for example.
- 6.7 Improvement in communications with Alumni was also noted and although more works needs to be done, this is going in a positive direction.
- 6.8 The wider communication strategy was queried and KW noted that twice yearly an update on strategy would be produced and disseminated including updates on KPIs. Staff meetings

would offer the opportunity for feedback and discussion on this and would include more interactive and group work sessions.

6.9 KW was asked to consider whether the plans are achievable or ambitious enough and if they require more focus on external engagement. KW agreed to give this some more thought.

This would be revisited at the Board Away Day including the results of the consultation.

6.10 KW left the meeting.

7. Subject Level TEF

7.1 IL re-joined the meeting. He indicated that there had not been any significant developments with the TEF since the last meeting of the Board. The paper provided in advance of the meeting outlined the TEF measurements and the pilots currently taking place.

7.2 IL noted that due to the three year rolling data there may be some legacy data which could negatively impact the results.

7.3 IL further outlined the areas in which the University remains strong and other areas which will require further work. Secondly the opportunity to include a qualitative narrative will help support the applications.

7.4 Regional differences in graduate employability were discussed and it was noted this does not appear to be a common narrative from government. IL indicated there will be some opportunities to highlight this but will require an outline of interventions in place rather than simply an explanation of the regional context.

7.5 It was also noted that some subjects such as community or youth work are unlikely to result in well paid or graduate employment despite resulting in a significant contribution to the community and students achieving their career ambitions.

7.6 IL further confirmed that processes are in place to support students at every stage for progression to ensure they are able and supported.

7.7 IL left the meeting.

8. To receive reports from Committee Chairs

8.1 Governors had received written reports in advance of the meeting. Each Chair provided a brief verbal update regarding the work of the committees.

8.2 Audit Committee

EvdL reported that the committee had met recently to discuss any outstanding audit recommendations and approve the internal audit plan for the coming Academic year.

The recent loss of key staff in Finance had also been discussed with the Auditors including how to ensure year end work is completed.

EvdL Noted that the committee requires additional members and the Nominations committee would be discussing this at their meeting later that day.

8.3 Academic Standards & Student Experience Committee

MS noted that the remit of the committee had been recently discussed and that the business of the committee will be aligned to the work of Academic Board (now Senate) and the cycle of business to ensure no duplication. The Committee is keen to explore the possibility of carrying out one or two 'deep-dive mini-audits' per year into areas relevant to the student experience.

8.4 Finance & Resources Committee.

RB noted that the Finance & Resources Committee are pleased to share the positive news that the institution is in a stable financial position. However this continues to be dependent on student recruitment and resilience in this area will be important to ensure an ongoing trend.

Finalising the Barclays loan covenant agreement also remains an ongoing issue that the committee are aware of.

8.5 Governance & Nominations committee

PU reported that the committee is due to meet later in the day and will be interviewing two potential new governors. Following this any committee vacancies will also be considered.

8.6 Remuneration committee

PU reported that the SU President has been invited to join this committee and the next meeting will take place in September. PU noted that meetings of committee Chairs have also been taking place to discuss various issues.

9. **To receive an update on Estates Developments**

9.1 RiW joined the meeting at this point.

9.2 RW reported that upon appointment the Estates Director will be asked to finalise the Estates Strategy. RiW had completed the task of collating all estates policy documents into one document and this was the first step to drafting the Strategy. The revised draft will return to the Board following appointment.

9.3 RW noted the other documents provided related to the more minor quad developments for this year and no formal decisions are being sought today for that reason.

9.4 RW further provided some context, regarding suggestions for developing the quad and surrounding buildings and provided an approximate timeline for approval of the plans to ensure the works can be completed in time.

9.5 RiW noted the two options outlined in his report and noted that staff and students had seen these design options. Phase 1 and 2 options had been approved by SMT for procurement of the quad developments.

9.6 CG noted that it was originally intended that the strategy would be approved at the meeting but more work is required before this can be done. However due to timings the Board have been kept up to date on this project which will be developing alongside this. The final strategy and proposal for a full project will be submitted at a later date.

9.7 RB noted as Chair of F&R committee, the strategy has come a long way. He emphasized that the quad and campus does need updating and will support recruitment and student experience. Student housing also needs to be addressed and any longer term developments with the Airport site will also need to be considered.

9.8 GR further noted the HEFCE report stating that campus developments are needed and governors are aware of this. It was suggested that the type of estates director employed will also need to be considered, for example someone with a Project Management background or someone more suited to support ongoing improvement works.

9.9 It was noted that Board approval for any work will be required before Christmas for work to begin on time.

9.10 **ACTION** It was agreed a business case will be submitted to the Board before Christmas for consideration and approval which allow time for amendments in time for work to start Easter 2019.

- 9.11 The proposed timeline and capacity for undertaking this project was also discussed briefly. It was agreed that there will be an ongoing requirement to ensure maintenance and fundamental improvement works are undertaken prior to or alongside new development projects.
- 9.12 **ACTION** PU proposed that Chairs of committees receive and consider the proposed timeline in more detail prior to board discussion and approval in the autumn.
- 9.13 RiW left the meeting at this point. PU on behalf of the Board thanked him for all of his work undertaken for the University including on the Estates Strategy

10. To receive the MSU President's report

- 10.1 EM provided a brief summary of activity with the MSU and student community.
- 10.2 After two years as President of MSU he was keen to share what he had learned with the Board.
- 10.3 Within the MSU team, finances remain difficult and more funding and staff are always needed, particularly in comparison with benchmark institutions.
- 10.4 Students often consider the SU a department of the University and while this can be helpful it can also be a hindrance as the SU needs to remain independent.
- 10.5 Furthermore, the SU would be willing and able to support other areas such as the Student Support team if further funding could be provided.
- 10.6 EM also noted that the Student voice and SU representation remains fundamental and not just a box ticking exercise.
- 10.7 EM noted that student engagement remains positive particularly relating to the Student awards. Some new partnership and sponsorship developments were also noted.
- 10.8 The concept of 'SU in the City' or in Mutley was also suggested as this might raise awareness of Marjon and offer a better service to students.
- 10.9 EM confirmed that a business plan and budget for increasing the MSU contribution could be produced and RR confirmed that their intention was to gauge feeling before spending time developing the plan.
- 10.10 RW confirmed he would be willing to consider this further but noted that the University was in a much more vulnerable position in the previous year so caution is still required. Increasing campus community also remains a preference over any offsite SU office. RW confirmed that an initial report should be submitted with an outline of the current and proposed financial position for consideration. It was noted that where additional expense is required then cuts may need to be made elsewhere.
- 10.11 **ACTION** RR agreed to prepare a paper on what the SU can contribute further to Marjon and the funding that would be required. This could then be considered by the VC and the Board would lend their support.
- 10.12 It was agreed the SU could be valuable partners in supporting both the growth plan and student experience with shared benefits. RR agreed to this and would be willing to provide various options.

11. To receive the Vice Chancellor's report

- 11.1 RW provided a brief summary of the report circulated in advance of the meeting.
- 11.2 RW outlined the key points including noting the increased recruitment figures and plans for improving the campus.

- 11.3 The Tribal analysis of staffing had been received by SMT and while more analysis of the data is required, a full report will be submitted to the next meeting of the Board.
- 11.4 The Board noted the many achievements identified in the report and RW provided some context both nationally and within the City.
- 11.5 It was suggested that more could be done on research, research income, the REF, learning & teaching.
- 11.6 **ACTION** RW agreed to provide a briefing paper on this for next meeting.
- 11.7 The Board thanked Rob for the progress seen in the last 18 months which included improvements financially, to university systems, staff morale, future plans, and clarity of direction for the future. PU also noted the work undertaken by professional staff, academics, the Student Union and management in achieving this.

12. AoB

12.1 PU thanked EM and DN for their work on the Board and wished them luck for the future.

Action Log

Minute	Action	Owner	Deadline
4.13	RW agreed to reflect on comments received surrounding the Growth Strategy and submit a revised version to the Board in September.	RW	Sept Board
9.10	It was agreed a business case for quad developments will be submitted to the Board before Christmas or consideration and approval which allow time for amendments in time for work to start Easter 2019.	RW	Sept and Nov Board
9.12	PU proposed that Chairs of committees receive and consider the proposed timeline in more detail prior to board discussion and approval in the autumn	RW/Chairs	Prior to Sept Board
10.11	RR agreed to prepare a paper on what the SU can contribute further to Marjon and the funding that would be required. This could then be considered by the Board to lend their support.	RR	Sept Board
11.6	RW agreed to provide a briefing paper on plans for research, research income, the REF, and learning & teaching for next meeting.	RW	Sept Board

Signed on behalf of the Board:

..... Chair of the Governing Body

..... Date