

**Approved Minutes**

**Present**

Mr Graham Raikes MBE (Chair)	Independent Governor	GR
Mrs Emma van der Lugt (Deputy Chair)	Independent Governor	EvdL
Prof Rob Warner	Vice-Chancellor	RW
Dr Sue Cooper	Academic Staff Governor	SC
Mr Stephen Criddle OBE	Independent Governor	StC
Mrs Kate Doodson	Independent Governor	KD
Miss Lauren Edwards	Student Governor	LE
Mr Matt Evans	Independent Governor	ME
Mr Alex Hawtin	Independent Governor	AH
Ms Victoria Holbrook	Independent Governor	VH
Prof Patricia Hind	Independent Governor	PH
Mrs Jacynth Ivey MBE	Independent Governor	JI
Rt Rev'd Nick McKinnel	Independent Governor	NM
Mrs Ruth Mounstephen	Independent Governor	RM
Prof Rev'd Gina Radford	Independent Governor	GiR
Mr John Searson	Independent Governor	JS
Prof Gary Shum	Academic Staff Governor	GS
Mrs Lynn Tamsett-White	Professional Services Staff Governor	LTW

**In attendance**

Mr Simon Arthurs	Director of Finance	SA
Prof Michelle Jones	Deputy Vice-Chancellor	MJ
Prof Ian Luke	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic)	IL
Rev'd Michelle Parkman	University Chaplain	MP
Mr Stephen Plant	University Secretary & Registrar	SP
Mrs Jessamie Thomas	Governance Officer (note taker)	JT
Mrs Jackie Westerman	Co-opted Member	JW

**For items 1-3**

Mrs Katy Willis	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Success)	KW
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**For item 4**

Mrs Gillian Golders	Director of School, Marjon Teacher Education Partnership	GG
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**1. Welcome, Apologies & Declaration of Conflicts of Interests**

- 1.1 The Chair, Graham Raikes, welcomed colleagues. At GR's invitation, University Chaplain, Rev'd Michelle Parkman, opened the meeting with a prayer.
- 1.2 The Register of Interests for 2020-21 had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Chair invited the Board to review this. Matt Evans' standing declaration was noted; no new

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interests were declared. The interests would be published within the Governors' Handbook 2020-21 and uploaded to the governance section of the website once the new accessibility-compatible website had been launched.

1.3 GR reminded colleagues of online meeting protocol (as per guidance which had been circulated).

1.4 GR asked if colleagues wished to 'unstar' any items in Part B; none were identified.

#### **2. Report from Vice Chancellor, including Student Recruitment**

2.1 The report from the Vice-Chancellor, Prof Rob Warner, was received. The report incorporated a Student Recruitment Update from Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Success), Katy Willis. RW summarised the latest student recruitment position, noting strengths in a number of areas. RW noted key factors underpinning this steady growth trend. Given the challenges faced by the sector in the context of a global pandemic since March 2020, GR on behalf of the Board warmly commended the leadership and staff of Marjon for safeguarding the safety of students and staff while building upon the growth trend in recruitment and also Marjon's reputation, rooted in its core values.

2.2 RW updated the Board on ongoing discussions with the Department for Education (DfE) regarding the potential return of the Studio School to Marjon use, this being a building located on the campus.

2.3 RW noted the ongoing review of allocation of space on campus, in line with shifting work patterns and potential growth in student numbers.

2.4 RW highlighted the positive forward direction of the REF and KEF.

2.5 RW summarised the University's financial position. He reminded the Board of the tight financial controls which had been introduced the previous year. Notwithstanding a £1m loss of income directly attributable to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic (loss of rental income from accommodation and associated income streams), RW described the financial performance as very positive resulting in a modest deficit. Further detail would be provided by Director of Finance, Simon Arthurs, at item 8 and the final audited position presented to the Board in November.

2.6 RW reminded the Board that the PAHC building loan would be fully repaid in 2021, and its tenancy would expire in summer 2022. Discussions were underway regarding the position thereafter and RW updated the Board on potential directions this could take in line with Marjon's growth plan.

2.7 RW noted that Marjon was well-placed to extend its contribution across the region. He explained initiatives which were under consideration, which would see training delivered locally via flexible models to meet the needs of local people, employers and the community. The Board supported this, recognising opportunities to be innovative and make the most of the digital shift.

*Alex Hawtin left the meeting for a brief period*

2.8 Board members discussed opportunities for partnership and shared insights from their own fields.

2.9 A potential opportunity, given the proximity of Marjon to Derriford Hospital would lie in health and social care and the significant experience amongst Board members in public

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health settings was appreciated. RW and GR confirmed that the Board would be kept fully up to date regarding any developments and Board involvement would be encouraged at all stages, perhaps via a Health and Social Care Sub-Committee.

- 2.10 RW presented a significant update regarding the recently approved Campus Development Plan: an invitation to bid for Salix grant funding. RW emphasised the University's commitment to energy efficiency and a reduction in carbon emissions and confirmed that he had instructed the Director of Estates and Infrastructure to explore this opportunity as a priority.
- 2.11 The Board noted that not all 'green' initiatives could be pursued currently, for example car-sharing was not being advocated, due to the potential spread of Covid-19 in this way. Electric bicycles were a good option for an urban commute, a staff incentive scheme was available.
- 2.12 RW noted, to provide assurance to the Board, measures being taken to keep students and staff safe on campus and prevent the spread of Covid-19, for example the introduction of the Marjon 'test and trace' app, which had been tested rigorously, and had been successfully launched (ahead of the NHS app, due in approximately one week's time). Q&As on the Covid response would follow item 8.
- 2.13 The Board discussed the implications of current government advice regarding quarantine and keeping students safe in specific 'households' and the importance of conveying clear social distancing messages to students.
- 2.14 GR noted that there would be an opportunity for Q&A regarding Covid-19 following item 8.  
*Rt Rev'd Nick McKinnel joined the meeting.*

### **3. Report from Student Union President**

- 3.1 The report from Staff Governor and Marjon Student Union (MSU) President, Miss Lauren Edwards, was received. GR invited LE to summarise and share insights into her role so far.
- 3.2 LE thanked RW for having attended the MSU Board of Trustees' meeting and looked forward to contributing to a strengthening of MSU governance (supported by a full complement of student trustees/officers) via a new partnership agreement with the University. It was noted that an Annual General Meeting of MSU was scheduled for October 2020, and dates set for subsequent years.
- 3.3 LE updated the BoG on the activities which she and Deputy SU President, Mr Joe Lynch, had undertaken since their appointment in July 2020, and the challenges posed by Covid-19 which were being addressed in order to provide an enjoyable but Covid-secure experience for students.
- 3.4 It was noted that, in line with feedback provided by governors in the Board Effectiveness Survey, the strategic involvement of the Student Governor would be an area of focus and was being supported, via AdvanceHE Student Governor training, virtual meetings with the Chair and Governance Officer and email/Teams liaison. RW, members of SMT, the Chair and Governance Officer commended LE on her approach and impact. The Board asked that thanks be conveyed to Joe Lynch and noted that they would be pleased to welcome him as an observer to future BoG meetings. **ACTION: JT.**

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#### **4. Teaching & Learning Update**

- 4.1 Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Prof Ian Luke, and Director of School, Prof Gill Golder, were welcomed to the meeting. In response to governor feedback in the Board Effectiveness Survey, GR had invited Directors of Schools to address Board meetings through 2020-21 to convey Marjon's teaching and learning expertise, dedication to promoting academic quality and standards and to give an overview of schools' activities.
- 4.2 IL summarised Marjon's approach to teaching and learning, emphasising curriculum and student engagement, the success of which was reflected in considerably above-sector National Student Survey (NSS) results in a number of categories. IL noted students' pivotal role in the University's academic structure, for example via the Student Engagement and Outcomes Panel (SEOP) chaired by the Student Engagement Officer, which was student-focused with reps from all year groups and which replicated the work of the University Board of Studies (UBoS), feeding into Senate and then on to the Board.
- 4.3 University Secretary and Registrar, Mr Stephen Plant, confirmed the University's preparedness to deliver hybrid learning and teaching. It was noted that the flexibility of the hybrid approach to learning and teaching was consistent with the DfE's requirement for a tiered approach in response to Covid. IL gave examples of what this had entailed, for example, facilitating staff and students' transition to digital learning and issuing a new pedagogical glossary. The intention was that this would be a genuine shift to a new way of teaching and learning.  
*AH rejoined the meeting*
- 4.4 IL flagged up the tremendous outcomes of the national postgraduate survey, notably 1<sup>st</sup> for education in the UK. Work which had been done to underpin this success would be replicated for undergraduate study.
- 4.5 GG, Director of Marjon Teacher Education Partnership (TEP), was introduced. She too noted her pride in the National Student Survey (NSS) results of Initial Teacher Training (ITT) provision, which for the third year running showed Marjon outpacing the sector in every category.
- 4.6 GG highlighted the geographical reach of the Marjon TEP. GG explained that high quality revalidated programmes adeptly reflected changes in policy direction and met trainees' needs as they entered the workplace. GG noted the effectiveness of the 'blended approach' of academic, personal and professional support.
- 4.7 Outcomes from the Ofsted student survey had been positive, even in such a challenging year, which reflected Marjon's immediate response in March to provide individual support. For those not in school, term three moved online and staff immediately adopted connected learning and could therefore commence this academic year with the new hybrid approach with confidence.
- 4.8 GG anticipated that the TEP would be Ofsted-inspected from January 2021, under a new framework. GG explained the judgements and indicators. Marjon had been involved in 'test and learn' phases for this framework. Strong outcomes were anticipated, including for Early Years (in its first inspection).

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- 4.9 GG noted that Marjon's work on strengthening Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) was recognised nationally and formed part of new guidance for Initial Teacher Training (ITT) from the DfE.
- 4.10 GG explained how the TEP had adapted to DfE policy changes in light of Covid, Ofsted and the reopening of schools. GG herself had been involved in one of the DfE's advisory groups.
- 4.11 GG noted the importance of using data to drive forward improvements: national available data; detailed improvement planning as a result of self-evaluation; internal and external monitoring and evaluation; trainee feedback. This included careful analysis of data from respondents with declared disabilities and consideration of how to respond to this feedback.
- 4.12 GG updated the Board on projects with which the School was involved, including Erasmus plus, Plymouth oracy, pedagogical innovations and the Early Careers Framework tender.
- 4.13 In response to a question about whether shifting recruitment patterns regarding student demographics or qualifications on entry compared with previous years had been identified and different needs were being addressed, GG confirmed they had and gave examples of the TEP response thus far, for example subject enhancement programmes and removal of skills test. GG noted that Marjon had attracted a high calibre of students, showing great resilience, which contributed to above sector norm retention levels.
- 4.14 RW noted the importance of GG's knowledge, networks and leadership and the Board joined in congratulating GG on having been promoted to Professor of Education as of 1 September 2020. GR asked GG to convey the Board's appreciation to all her staff, academic and administrative, for the great work of the Marjon TEP. GR thanked IL and GG for their extraordinary achievements and sector-leading work and for taking the time to convey this to the Board.

*John Searson left the meeting.*

*A 10 minute comfort break was taken at this point.*

#### **5. Annual Report on Chaplaincy**

- 5.1 The report was received. Rev'd Michelle Parkman, University Chaplain, was thanked for her report and the wide-ranging work put in by herself and colleague Rev Claire McIlroy to support the Marjon community. GR invited MP to share her experience of life back on campus as the new academic year commenced. Estates Manager and Staff Governor, Lynn Tamsett-White explained how the phased return of students to campus was being managed, with the focus on providing a safe, Covid-secure space aligned with government requirements. Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Michelle Jones, thanked MP, LTW, LE and staff 'on the ground' for their work in making the campus welcoming and safe.

#### **6. Equality Report 2020**

- 6.1 The report was received. MJ restated Marjon's commitment to inclusivity, diversity and social justice. MJ noted that the report presented information from various sources, with different data sets.
- 6.2 SP confirmed that, as well as being guided by the newly issued CUC HE Code of Governance (September 2020) which referenced 'diversity of voice, attitude and experience', Marjon had

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signed up to a Social Mobility Pledge, which encouraged universities to put social mobility at the heart of their purpose. GR requested that the Executive review the CUC HE Code and confirm the University's alignment, via the Governance and Nominations Committee.

#### **ACTION: SP**

- 6.3 MJ noted progress against indicators, and highlighted areas being addressed through the action plan particularly around disability, BAME and LGBTQ+. GR thanked MJ and the team for their work and invited comments and questions.
- 6.4 The Board noted that while the action plan described a BAME attainment gap, it would be important not to use BAME as a 'catch-all' for different ethnic groups. It was suggested that disaggregating the data could allow analysis of the issues that particular ethnic groups may experience around the attainment gap rather than looking at BAME as a homogenous group. MJ agreed that this was an important point. Currently, due to low numbers, disaggregation was challenging. RW noted that small data sets are inevitably volatile but there may be alternative anonymised ways to assess outcomes.
- 6.5 IL was invited to provide feedback in consideration of whether the curriculum provided opportunities for learners to engage, and whether learning, teaching and assessment took account of diverse needs. IL noted that the University had become more sophisticated with data collection and analysis. On the operational side, IL noted the ongoing commitment to diversity, and noted for example periodic reviews which were incorporated into programmes as they developed.
- 6.6 Marjon's organisational capability and capacity around equality were discussed. As the People Strategy moved forward it would strengthen the organisational development plan. GR flagged up reference within the action plan to the Board of Governors' commitment.
- 6.7 Marjon's holistic approach to ED&I was commended. Setting an objective in the action plan around graduate outcomes and employability was suggested, given the government's focus on social mobility and the likelihood of the Office for Students (OfS) scrutinising these metrics going forwards. IL noted that this was the first year that internal, as well as external, data was available, which the Head of Careers and Employability was assessing so as to develop learners' skills, confidence and resilience.
- 6.8 It was noted that moving forward with the action plan could provide an opportunity to align objectives with local stakeholders and foster engagement with the city and region. MJ confirmed this was underway, for example via engagement with Plymouth and Devon Racial Equality Council.
- 6.9 SA noted that there would be a requirement to trial a note to the accounts this year to cover 'Access and Participation' spending. This would continue to be an important part of budget planning to ensure a continued focus on removing barriers to attending university.
- 6.10 GR thanked staff and Board colleagues for their commitment to this area. RW invited governors to email their questions in for further consideration. RW noted that as the reputation of Marjon grew, greater ethnic diversity would be expected. It would be important to get initiatives in place now to be able to fully support and enhance delivery in a changing landscape.

*Dr Sue Cooper left the meeting.*

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*The agenda was re-ordered to take item 8 before item 7.*

#### **7. Report from Governance & Nominations Committee**

- 7.1 **Board Effectiveness** - the report was received. GR thanked Board members for their returns to the survey and for having taken the time to discuss Board effectiveness with him individually. GR reminded colleagues that they were always welcome to contact him about any matter.
- 7.2 GR highlighted how Board members' feedback was being addressed: the strategic contribution of the Student Governor was being supported and this would continue; providing more information on academic quality and standards would be addressed through the year, and had commenced with the presentation by IL and GG. Directors of Schools would be invited to address each BoG meeting this year. IL and SP would deliver an online introduction to teaching, learning and quality assurance. Papers would come to the next Board meeting on quality assurance and student engagement.
- 7.3 GR invited colleagues to consider the annual Board Effectiveness Statement. The statement was **APPROVED**. It would be uploaded to the governance area of the University website.  
**ACTION: JT**
- 7.4 **Board Membership & Succession Planning**  
*GR withdrew from the meeting for this item*  
The report was received. Deputy Chair of the Board, Mrs Emma van der Lugt, took the Chair. She noted the Governance & Nominations Committee's recommendation that the Board invite GR to continue for a second term as Chair of the Board, from 14 November 2021, and to 'reset the clock' so that his second term as a governor align with this, through to 13 November 2024.
- 7.5 EvdL noted the quantitative data to be found within the Board effectiveness report, endorsing GR's suitability and the qualitative experiences of Board members. EvdL summarised discussions she had held with members of SMT which endorsed GR's suitability. EvdL invited questions or comments.
- 7.6 RW noted that GR was extremely experienced in the sector, had extensive financial expertise and that his constructive but challenging engagement with senior management was much appreciated. RW's view was that GR continues to be a great asset to the Board.
- 7.7 There was further endorsement of GR's suitability from colleagues, who commended GR's inclusive approach, in line with values discussed earlier in the meeting, and felt he was an excellent Chair.
- 7.8 It was **AGREED** that GR be invited to serve as Chair of the Board for a second term and that his second term as a governor align with this. *GR returned to the meeting.*  
GR **AGREED** to serve as Chair for a second term, with his second term of office as a governor aligned with this, to 13 November 2024. GR was thanked for his tremendous dedication to the University.
- 7.9 The Board considered the Governance & Nominations Committee's recommendation that John Searson be appointed joint Deputy Chair of the Board, alongside EvdL. JS's experience was noted and GR highlighted the benefits of having such strength in Board leadership.

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Following discussion, JS's appointment was **AGREED** and in his absence JS was thanked for his commitment.

7.10 *Prof Patricia Hind withdrew from the meeting for this item.*

The Board considered the Governance & Nominations Committee's recommendation that PH be appointed Chair of Remuneration Committee (RemCom). GR noted that historically the Chair of the Board had chaired RemCom but this was no longer deemed good practice. EvdL had acted as interim Chair. PH's experience in HE was noted as was her chairing of the People & Organisational Development Sub-Committee. It was **AGREED** that PH be invited to serve as Chair of RemCom.

7.11 The Board also considered the Governance & Nominations Committee's recommendation that PH be appointed Deputy Chair of Finance & Resources Committee. PH's experience on this committee was noted, as was the support that her contribution would provide to the committee Chair. It was **AGREED** that PH be invited to serve as Deputy Chair of Finance & Resources Committee.

7.12 *PH returned to the meeting*

7.13 PH **AGREED** to serve as Chair of RemCom and Deputy Chair of Finance & Resources Committee. PH was thanked for her commitment and her continuing service to the Board.

7.14 **Governors' Handbook 2020-21** – GR invited Governance Officer, Jessamie Thomas, to summarise updates. JT explained that the Handbook provided guidance for Board members on their role, remit and the framework within which they operated. It underwent an annual review, with governor profiles, declarations of interest and roles being updated. The appendices had been reviewed in line with most recent versions or sector guidance, including the newly issued CUC HE Code of Governance, AdvanceHE induction documents and Charity Commission trustee guidance.

7.15 The Handbook included terms of reference for committees, as considered at committee level and at two Governance & Nominations Committee meetings. It was agreed that RemCom Terms of Reference should include clear reference to the CUC HE Senior Staff Remuneration Code (rather than 'the remuneration code') to which the committee was aligned. **ACTION: JT.** Subject to this addition, all terms of reference were **APPROVED**. Senate terms of reference were considered and **APPROVED**.

7.16 It was noted that the Board Cycle of Business and the (revised) meeting schedule were included in the appendices. The schedule had been revised in order to move the BoG Strategy Day from November 2020 to March 2021, to provide a greater chance of convening in person in the context of Covid-19. GR also noted that the Lord Caradon lecture would be held virtually, on 12 November 2020.

7.17 The Board **APPROVED** the Handbook. The core document would be uploaded to the Marjon website, in accessible format in line with new legislation.

## **8. Financial Update**

8.1 **2019/20 Financial Year End – headline position** - The report was received. GR invited SA to summarise key points. SA reminded the Board that a breakeven budget had been set; due to



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Covid-19 there had been a loss of income; adept proactive management and carefully managed expenditure had resulted in a small projected year-end deficit.

- 8.2 Added to this would be debt finance and year-end technical adjustments, and a small VAT liability from the previous year. Questions and advice were forthcoming from the Board on the VAT issue.
- 8.3 SA noted that bad debt provision had increased slightly and explained the rationale for this.
- 8.4 SA noted that the overall position prior to technical adjustments would be a deficit under £100k.
- 8.5 An evaluation of the loss or gain on investments and for the pension liability would be made.
- 8.6 SA noted that the capital position had been carefully managed.
- 8.7 The final position would be presented for sign-off at the BoG meeting of 19 November 2020.
- 8.8 **Budget Update 2020-21 (Capital & Revenue)** – The report was received. SA summarised the prudent, risk-based approach which had been adopted for 2020-21. Income projections were cautious and the team had been careful with modelling. Income was broadly in line with projections and recruitment appeared positive. Ancillary income was being closely monitored. SA noted that cost assumptions still held true. Debt finance had been allowed for. Capital brought forward was not significant; SA would work closely with the Estates team particularly around the higher risk elements of the estate that needed to be covered off.
- 8.9 An allowance had been made for Covid spend, to promote the ongoing safety of students/staff.
- 8.10 SA's intention was to allocate more resources to digital transformation, which would generate efficiency savings in the longer term.
- 8.11 SA noted that the 'fishbone diagram' had been updated, which should provide reassurance of the position ahead of the annual budget sign-off in November. In summary, SA noted that the position was sound; there were reasons for optimism, but SA urged caution given the Covid and Brexit risks.
- 8.12 GR invited questions and comments. The Board commended SA on his approach. GR thanked SA for the strong position and for keeping the Board well-informed at all stages. SA's slides would be circulated for information following the meeting.  
*Following this item, the Board considered item 7.*
- 8.13 GR invited colleagues to ask RW/SMT questions regarding the leadership's response to the many Covid-related challenges which had arisen. RW answered questions to the Board's satisfaction and was thanked for his leadership in an ever-changing landscape. GR and the Board joined RW in commending MJ, LTW, LE and their teams for their adaptability in testing times and thanked them for their student-centred approach. RW confirmed that regular updates to the Board would continue.  
*The Staff Governors and Student Governor were thanked for their contributions and asked to withdraw from the meeting for Reserved Business.*  
**Reserved Business** – See RB minutes.

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#### **Close**

RW and GR thanked Board members and colleagues for their support and challenge. An informal, virtual, networking meeting for Board/SMT members would follow on from this meeting.

#### **Part B**

9. Minutes of Previous BoG Meeting (17 July 2020) - the minutes were received as an accurate record and **APPROVED** with no amendments.
10. Strategic Risk Register - the register was received and **APPROVED**.  
The following reports were received for information with no queries:
11. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting
12. People Update
13. Careers & Employability Report
14. OfS Record of Discussion
15. Public Health England action card
16. Minutes of Committees/Sub-Committees: Finance & Resources 03.07.2020 (M6) (approved); Finance & Resources 13.07.2020 (M7) (approved); Governance & Nominations 17.07.2020 (approved)
17. Staff Governor Appointments Guidance
18. Microsoft Teams Guidance
19. Meeting Dates 2020-21 (revised)