

Approved Minutes

Present

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

In attendance

Ms Laura Butler	Student Engagement Officer	LB
Mr Joe Lynch	Deputy President, Marjon Student Union	JL
Mrs Sarah McAdam (Item 4)	Director of School of Arts and Humanities	SM
Rev'd Michelle Parkman	University Chaplain	MP
Mrs Jessamie Thomas	Governance Officer (note taker)	JT
Mrs Jackie Westerman	Co-opted Member	JW

In attendance (SMT members)

Prof Michelle Jones	Deputy Vice-Chancellor	MJ
Prof Ian Luke (Items 1-5)	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic)	IL
Mrs Katy Willis (Item 8)	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Success)	KW
Mr Stephen Plant	University Secretary & Registrar	SP
Mrs Lucy Pengelly (Item 7)	Director of People & Organisational Development	LP
Mr John Bailey (Items 2 & 6)	Director of Estates	JB

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. Joe Lynch, Dep President of Marjon Student Union (MSU) who had been invited to attend this, and future Board meetings, as an observer was welcomed to the meeting.

Approved Minutes

- 1.2 Apologies were received from Alex Hawtin and Jacynth Ivey MBE.
- 1.3 Written declarations of interest were included in Part B. No additional declarations were made. GR noted that the Register included SMT declarations.
- 1.4 GR asked if colleagues wished to 'unstar' any items in Part B; none were identified.
- 1.5 GR put on record at the outset the Board's gratitude to the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Rob Warner, to all members of SMT and to all staff for their tremendous work in such challenging times.
- 2. Report from Vice Chancellor**
- 2.1 The report from RW was received. The report incorporated the Covid-19 Response Update, Salix Bid Update from Director of Estates, John Bailey and Financial Update from Director of Finance & IT, Simon Arthurs.
- 2.2 RW noted the ongoing forward planning, notwithstanding current pandemic-related challenges. Marjon's recruitment was on track, in line with the Growth Plan.
- 2.3 RW acknowledged the work of staff, particularly the Student Support team, and MSU, in supporting students through the challenges of the pandemic and highlighted the support available.
Rev'd Prof Gina Radford joined the meeting.
- 2.4 RW summarised Nursing/Allied Health opportunities which Marjon was well-placed to explore. This would be discussed further at item 6. Governor support would be invited as this developed.
- 2.5 The Financial Update was received. RW highlighted Senior Management Team's (SMT) tight control of expenditure which was essential to mitigate the Covid-19 related losses, risks and costs. A balanced budget had been set and RW reminded colleagues of the University's approach of using annual income to pay annual costs rather than drawing on cash reserves. SA had briefed Finance & Resources and Audit Committees on the position on a regular basis. The Consolidated Financial Statements for 2019/20 would be scrutinised by both committees the following week, and the final audited position brought to the Board for approval in December. This reflected Office for Students (OfS) and Companies House filing deadline extensions. The Board was satisfied with this approach.
- 2.6 RW highlighted the University's significant digital transformation and the great work of staff in facilitating this. He requested governors' support in driving this forwards. It was noted that for some the shift had precipitated retirement plans, hence an increase in the voluntary severance budget.
- 2.7 RW anticipated that most Professional Services staff would elect to work from home for part of the week. Space considerations were therefore being re-assessed to generate greater capacity for students. RW confirmed that hot-desking (post Covid) was likely and that increased digitisation would bring greater efficiencies.
- 2.8 RW noted that a larger shop for students, staff and the community, was under consideration. Amazon lockers would be introduced on campus shortly.
- 2.9 The Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund (Salix) Bid update was received and would be discussed at item 6. RW emphasised Marjon's commitment to energy efficiency and a reduction in carbon emissions. The outcome of an estates condition and replacement survey

Approved Minutes

would be brought to the Board. Communications with Plymouth City Council would continue regarding planning and decarbonisation.

- 2.10 RW provided an update on the Studio School, which is expected to be made available to the University rent-free for one year from January 2021. RW also noted the opportunities that the return of the PAHC building to the University would present. RW explained the potential of both buildings in terms of location, capacity and use.
- 2.11 RW noted that the 'mothballed' Plymouth City Airport site adjacent to the campus would see its current planning restrictions lifted in 2024.
- 2.12 With regard to Covid-19, RW updated the Board on the planning underway to ensure students could travel home safely for Christmas. Marjon's hybrid model would facilitate teaching beyond the last planned face to face date (9 December). Advice from the Government was awaited regarding teacher training placement end of term dates. The University would continue to support students staying on campus during the Christmas period. RW would inform the Board as soon as Government instructions regarding the return to campus were announced.
- 2.13 RW updated the Board regarding the rapid flow test centre which Marjon was establishing on campus to help detect cases of Covid-19 and assist the safe return home of students. He catalogued the challenges which staff had dealt with in order to set this up.
- 2.14 GR confirmed that he and RW held regular discussions and would keep the Board informed of all key developments. GR confirmed that there may be occasions when approval of a matter by email would be appropriate, but assured colleagues that any governor could request a virtual meeting instead.

3. Student Feedback: UK Engagement Survey (UKES); Postgraduate Taught Experience Surveys (PTES); National Student Survey (NSS)

- 3.1 The report was received. GR invited Prof Ian Luke, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) to summarise.
- 3.2 IL noted that overall UKES satisfaction was well above sector average. The question of how assurance could be taken from a low response rate was discussed. IL explained that its timing had been challenging (due to Covid-19); despite this, responses had been of value for planning purposes. IL highlighted key outcomes and the agreed focus areas for 2020-21.
- 3.3 The outcomes of PTES were noted. Overall satisfaction was 92%, placing Marjon 3rd out of 68 institutions and 1st for teaching and assessment. Teaching and education programmes were 1st in every category bar one. IL noted that responses across all eight categories were above sector which reflected the work which had gone into addressing previous years' feedback. IL also flagged relatively weaker areas and steps being taken to address this feedback.
- 3.4 In response to a question from the Board, IL confirmed that the PTES response rate reflected, in part, log-in issues. IL confirmed ways in which uptake would be promoted going forwards. IL noted that receiving student feedback on Marjon's new hybrid learning model would be particularly useful.
- 3.5 IL summarised the positive NSS results, including best ever results for Health and Wellbeing and above or matching sector outcomes in 21 out of 27 areas. Students who had completed

Approved Minutes

one year reported overall satisfaction of 91% and the same satisfaction percentage was recorded by students with dyslexia, dyspraxia and ADHD. Where outcomes were lower, IL confirmed there would be discussions around how to embed improvements.

- 3.6 IL provided context to two factors which had impacted on results, which the Board accepted as anomalous, one of which related to collaborative rather than core provision. Were these to be isolated from the data, general student satisfaction would be nearly 87%.
- 3.7 GR thanked IL for his report and update.

Annual KPIs Report

- 3.8 The report and accompanying Excel spreadsheet were received. GR invited SP to summarise.
- 3.9 SP noted the purpose, context and section summaries of the report (Centred on Student Success; Building a Vibrant Future; Ensuring Sustainability) and highlighted key outcomes in each area.
- 3.10 SP confirmed that the University remained registered with OfS with no reportable events. In terms of financial robustness, the 30 days' OfS liquidity requirement had been exceeded considerably throughout.
- 3.11 SP went through the KPIs in detail. The Board noted an improved position regarding graduate outcomes and was appraised of the support that the Futures platform provided to students. SP confirmed that reporting at subject and programme level was aligned with the EDI Strategy and IL confirmed this area would be developed further and an overall snapshot programme review, including costings, would take place in the spring.
- 3.12 The strength of the student recruitment position, particularly when benchmarked against Cathedral Group, was noted, which was commended given the demographic dip.
- 3.13 SP noted that there was more that attracted students to Marjon than traditional league tables and the Board commended the effectiveness of the messaging of Marjon's narrative and culture.
- 3.14 RW reminded colleagues of the strong outcomes of the last staff survey and felt it would be a significant milestone if this were maintained in the next, given the challenges of Covid-19.
- 3.15 SP flagged up the governance KPIs and the Board agreed these had been effectively met and looked forward to Governance & Nominations Committee reviewing the CUC HE Code of Governance 2020 and to liaising with VH regarding the CUC HE Senior Staff Remuneration Code.
- 3.16 The Board commended SP on the thoroughness of the reporting and SMT on the strong set of results. They agreed this had been an encouraging year particularly given the context. It was agreed that a rag-rated one page dashboard summary would be useful in future. **ACTION: SP**
- 3.17 It was noted that updated financial KPIs would be provided once the audited accounts were received. An updated paper would be brought to the next BoG meeting for approval. **ACTION: JT**

A 10 minute comfort break was taken at this point.

4. Teaching & Learning Update:

- 4.1 GR welcomed Mrs Sarah McAdam, Director of School of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, to the meeting. GR reminded colleagues that to build the Board's understanding of the depth

Approved Minutes

and breadth of Marjon's provision and to address Board Effectiveness Survey outcomes, Directors of Schools had been invited to speak to Board meetings through 2020-21 to convey Marjon's teaching and learning expertise, dedication to promoting academic quality and standards and to provide an overview of each School's activities. GR invited IL and SM to brief the Board.

- 4.2 IL summarised the information which had been presented to the Board on 13 November 2020 at the Introduction to Teaching and Learning session, a recording of which was available via JT. IL provided assurance around the University's hybrid model, which had been created in response to the pandemic and had brought many positives in terms of the number of staff trained, the digital upskilling of staff and synchronous/asynchronous learning to align better with the curriculum and provide flexibility in the face of changing Covid tiers. IL noted the acceleration of elements such as the virtual learning environment and timetabling software. IL noted that the sense of belonging and community remained pivotal and would be incorporated into a blended approach. A new curriculum model would be reviewed with every programme having some asynchronous learning built in.
- 4.3 SM shared a presentation showing an overview of the School's programmes and engagement.
- 4.4 The Arts encompassed performance-based programmes which sat mostly within the Marjon Arts Centre. SM flagged historical links and the legacy of Sir Lewis Casson, Marjon graduate, one of the founders of Equity. SM noted that Marjon students this year were awarded the regional Equity Cup.
- 4.5 SM highlighted Marjon's international links and how these were being explored.
- 4.6 SM flagged programme development areas and the validation process which would secure these.
- 4.7 With regard to Humanities, SM explained the function of The Workshop on the BBC Campus as a venue for key events, which welcomed local school and college students, was home to new online teaching resources and a place where students benefited from the expertise of Marjon staff and industry practitioners.
- 4.8 SM explained the value of The Doughnut online platform where students developed their journalistic output and the JAM Radio station, broadcasting student content.
- 4.9 With regard to Social Sciences, SM flagged growth in student recruitment particularly in Criminology and Forensics and detailed the calibre of the teaching team and planned developments.
- 4.10 SM flagged links with regional museums and the great collaborations underway regarding the loan of archived materials to the University.
- 4.11 SM summarised the Marjon Arts Outreach and Hire and how the space helped to build awareness of Marjon in the community and also facilitated valuable outreach and collaborations.
- 4.12 SM noted the strength of Marjon's relationship with the Barbican Theatre and the opportunities which were arising from this, acknowledging the great support of their new CEO.
- 4.13 SM noted the work of the Artist in Residence, from Plymouth College of Art, whose output was in response to Marjon's archive and who was working with Marjon's performance

Approved Minutes

students. Her first iteration of work would go to Illuminate Festival, and there would be an on-campus event.

- 4.14 SM flagged connections with Plymouth City Council, and RW's work to foment these.
- 4.15 SM acknowledged that despite the difficulties of Covid-19 one of the benefits had been the way working practices had changed and allowed Marjon to be at the heart of conversations with Plymouth Culture, listening to voices on the edge of the city not just in the city centre.
- 4.16 SM flagged the excitement around British Art Show 9 coming to Plymouth, widely acknowledged as the most important recurrent exhibition of contemporary art produced in this country. SM had submitted a proposal for Marjon students' involvement.
- 4.17 GR thanked SM for her update and invited questions from the Board.
- 4.18 RW thanked SM for the initiatives that she was driving forwards and the extraordinary opportunities which these presented for students and the community. Under SM's leadership RW was confident that Marjon had the potential to become a centre for arts and culture, which was very exciting.
- 4.19 The Board commended the connections and strategic partnerships that SM was forging across the city and its cultural landscape. SM noted that securing funding would be important to maximise the potential of these.
- 4.20 GR thanked SM for her dynamic overview and the insights and depth which she was bringing to her role. GR affirmed the support of the Board. RW invited any Board members interested in being part of an occasional advisory arts group to contact JT. **ACTION: All**
- 4.21 The **Annual Assurance Report (Quality)** was received. GR thanked SP for his comprehensive report. SP noted that it had underpinned the Introduction to Teaching and Learning (13 November 2020) and demonstrated the University's commitment to the continuous improvement of all of its activities.
- 4.22 The **Student Engagement in Academic Committees** report was received. GR invited IL to summarise. IL noted that the report set out levels of student engagement and how the important principle of securing engagement not representation was achieved in practice. IL felt this was reflected in the data for staff/student partnerships which was well above sector. IL confirmed that Marjon had a 'You Said We Did' approach and went on to explain how a number of feedback mechanisms operated. The Board felt that the comprehensive student engagement approach would help to identify and mitigate some of the risks, particularly in the current climate

5. Report from Student Union President

- 5.1 The report from Student Governor and Marjon Student Union (MSU) President, Lauren Edwards, was received. GR invited LE to summarise. LE introduced MSU Deputy President, Joe Lynch and together they updated the Board on activities and scenarios since the last BoG meeting report.
- 5.2 LE noted that they had been incredibly busy, with social, networking and fundraising events organised, notwithstanding the challenges of Covid. Academic support for BAME students had been offered. The focus on strengthening MSU governance was proving successful, and

Approved Minutes

107 students had attended the MSU AGM. It was noted that the revised MSU constitution would come to the March BoG meeting. **ACTION: JT**

- 5.3 LE and JL flagged up concerns regarding student retention post-Christmas notwithstanding the support that MSU was offering, due to uncertainty around changing Covid-related restrictions and the financial advantages and security of staying at home. MSU had been working hard to strengthen engagement. Lynn Tamsett-White, Professional Services Governor and Estates Manager commended LE and JL on their tremendous work and shared her impression that students were really enjoying being on campus. LE confirmed that efforts were ongoing to communicate these positives widely, with the support of Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Success), Katy Willis.
- 5.4 It was noted that a recent ONS survey indicated that loneliness was at an all-time high particularly amongst 16-24 year olds, twice as high as for those over 70. LE and JL were asked how apparent this was in their roles and if there was any support they required from the Board to address this. LE confirmed that she and JL were working closely with individuals through difficult times, with the support of the Chaplaincy. It was to Marjon's advantage that it was a small University as most people were familiar with LE and JL and the MSU team. LE commented on the benefit of online events for those who were lonely or shy, as students could take part on their own or join relatively incognito. LE noted she and JL had not been immune to feeling overwhelmed at times and thanked the Board for their support and recognition of their work. JL explained his role in supporting Societies and how these had been promoted successfully through Covid, with increased membership compared with the previous year. JL had discussed with the Head of Student Support how to support students' mental health and wellbeing and have as many avenues open for communication as possible.
- 5.5 GR thanked LE and JL for their great work and their update and reiterated the Board's support.
- 6. To receive an update on partnership and funding opportunities**
- 6.1 GR invited Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Prof Michelle Jones, to update the Board on **Nursing and Allied Health**. MJ reiterated the opportunity in Nursing and Allied Health which RW had outlined earlier and summarised how this aligned with the Growth Plan. MJ reminded the Board of Marjon's 26 years' experience of Speech and Language Therapy training and a strong reputation from its Wellbeing Clinics. Developing this area would align with Marjon's civic commitment and regional priorities and should have a positive impact on graduate outcomes. It was also a significant part of Plymouth's post-Covid economic recovery plan, with health identified as one of the sector skills shortage areas and would fit with promoting social mobility and personalised learning.
- 6.2 The post-Covid context would see students retraining from one profession to another, mature students seeking flexible learning and Marjon's hybrid learning approach would suit this well. MJ noted the opportunity to offer something distinctive and innovative that would allow access to students who might feel lost at larger institutions. Similar universities had had success at initiating a Nursing/Allied Health provision and MJ concluded that there was a strong case for Marjon developing this area too.

Approved Minutes

- 6.3 MJ flagged the next steps. A BoG advisory group was being established and MJ encouraged all Board members to be an advocate for these plans, to support the messaging and seek input from across the region as to how this should look. Marjon would work on a headline plan of timescales, estimated numbers and staffing needs. It was intended that a professional advisory group including service user experts would be set up so that from the outset patient voice would be a key element.
- 6.4 GR invited Director of Estates, John Bailey, to present an update on the University's **Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund (Salix) Bid**. JB confirmed that this was a 100% grant-funded scheme. £34,000 had been awarded to Marjon for the technical expertise required to prepare the bid, which JB felt was ambitious in scope. JB noted that about half of the £1b fund had been allocated hence the need to submit the bid quickly. JB highlighted the categories that Marjon's projects fell into, three of which were significant bids covering heating, solar and building fabric. It was a condition of the funding that all work be completed by the end of September 2021.
- 6.5 GR thanked JB for his paper and looked forward to receiving the finalised bid for Board oversight.
- 7. People Strategy**
- 7.1 The report was received. GR invited Director of People & Organisational Development, Lucy Pengelly to summarise key points. LP highlighted that this was the University's first People Strategy, an authentic piece of work encapsulating Marjon's values, culture and success of its people. LP went through its four key elements which were based on Marjon values. The action plan and KPIs would be analysed by the P&OD Sub-Committee. GR commended LP on the development of this Strategy.
- 7.2 It was suggested that EDI be woven into the Strategy more, and the People and EDI Strategies be more closely aligned. LP would review this. **ACTION: LP**. GR invited colleagues to pass any further comments to JT by 24 November, ahead of the P&OD Sub-Committee meeting on 26 November 2020. The full document would come back to the Board in due course. **ACTION: LP**
- 8. Marketing & Student Recruitment Strategy**
- 8.1 The report was received. At the invitation of GR, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Success), Katy Willis, summarised the Strategy which would cover the period 2021-2023. KW thanked VH, KD and RM for their early feedback. KW noted that her team was already implementing various elements of the Strategy. Given the pace of change in digital developments, the Strategy covered a relatively short time, 2021-2023, and might be updated to adapt to changing modes of delivery. The action plan would be a live document and updated as necessary.
- 8.2 In order to allow more time to consider the Strategy, GR proposed that it be an agenda item of EBoG 16 December 2020. This approach was **AGREED**.
- 9. Reserved Business – See RB minutes.**

Approved Minutes

Close

GR invited colleagues to consider whether any of the meeting's discussions impacted on the current risk register; none were identified.

In closing the main part of the meeting, GR thanked the Board for their support and challenge. He invited colleagues to join an informal networking meeting following Reserved Business. There would be an Extraordinary BoG meeting on Friday, 29 January, 2021, 16.00, Microsoft Teams.

Part B

The following reports were received and approved:

10. Minutes of Previous BoG Meeting (18 September 2020) - the minutes were received as an accurate record and **APPROVED** with no amendments.
11. Prevent Duty Monitoring Report – **APPROVED**. GR reminded colleagues that NM was the Board's Prevent lead. Board members were reminded of the request to complete online Prevent training. RW drew attention to a police authority statement regarding Neo-Nazism.
12. IHRA Antisemitism and Other Racism Statement – **APPROVED**. JT to upload to website.
ACTION: JT
13. Whistleblowing Report & Policy - **APPROVED**.
14. Health & Safety Policy Statement of Intent; Health & Safety Report - **APPROVED**.
15. Annual Report on Research and Knowledge Exchange including Annual Research Integrity Statement – **APPROVED**.

The following reports were received for information with no queries:

16. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting
17. Equality Impact Assessment (for Covid-19 Strategy)
18. Student Recruitment Update
19. Report on Retention/Monitoring and Evaluating Academic Provision – at GR's invitation, IL added that any reported differences had been at programme level rather than across the University.
20. HESA Student & Staff Record
21. Access & Participation Plan Update
22. Annual Report on International Activities – at GR's invitation, IL added Marjon had accelerated its relationships with potential collaborators, the main focus being on how these would benefit students. The aim was to incorporate international experiences into all programmes. GR noted that governor involvement in an International Advisory Group would be welcomed.
23. To note the minutes of committees/sub-committees:
 - Finance & Resources (M1) 04.09.2020 (approved)
 - Governance & Nominations (M1) 09.09.2020 (unapproved)
 - Audit (M1) 16.10.2020 (approved)
 - Senate 01.07.2020 (approved)
24. Meeting Dates & Events Calendar
25. Register of Interests (including SMT declarations)