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Friday 23rd March 2018, 10.00-13.00 - Room W210

APPROVED Minutes

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**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
Ms Michele Shoebridge	Independent Governor	MS
Mrs Emma van der Lugt	Independent governor	EvdL

**In Attendance:**

Rev'd Michelle Parkman	University Chaplain	MP
Mr Rhys Roberts	SU Deputy President	RR
Mrs Unity Stuart	Clerk to the Board of Governors	US

**In Attendance for Item 3 only**

Dr Emily Beaumont	Director Plymouth Marjon Business School	EB
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**In Attendance for Item 4 only**

Mrs Katy Willis	Director of Marketing and Student Experience	KW
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**In Attendance for Item 5 only**

Mr Stephen Plant	Registrar	SP
Dr Ian Luke	Dean, Faculty of Education, Enterprise & Culture	IL

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**PU welcomed MP and SC to their first meeting of the Board.**

**1. Prayers**

1.1 MP led prayers

**2. Apologies & Declaration of Conflict of Interests**

2.1 Apologies were received from Mr Richard Bayly and Mr John Searson.

2.2 No interests were declared.

**3. E-Board Minutes – matters brought forward**

3.1 PU thanked the Board for their engagement with the e-meeting and noted that the process, protocols and systems in place for the e-meeting will be reviewed to improve the process further.

3.2 An action log had been produced following the meeting and governors indicated they were content that this required no further discussion at this stage.

#### **4. Business School Plan**

4.1 EB joined the meeting and outlined the work undertaken with the Marjon Business School since she joined the University in November 2017. This included outlining the vision and mission of the business school with a focus on equipping Marjon students with entrepreneurial competencies and behaviours.

4.2 EB outlined the plans for the Business School hub, the current team in place and the programmes on offer including undergraduate, postgraduate and apprenticeship provision. She also noted the research and publications undertaken so far, the various funding grants applied for and detailed external engagement. Finally, EB indicated plans for the future and took questions from the Board.

4.3 Following some queries, EB indicated that the Business School Services will be available for all Marjon students and Alumni, not just business students. Some other courses will utilise Business modules or offer combined honours to encourage wider engagement. In terms of business support, EB confirmed that a distinct service has been designed and the combination of Academics with business experience is rare.

4.4 EB provided some clarification regarding potential developments in Cornwall and identified some collaboration already in place with leaders in the Cornwall business community.

4.5 EB responded to some concerns regarding reliance on EU funding following Brexit, indicating that the intention is to apply for as much as possible pre-Brexit and post-Brexit this will need to be revisited.

4.6 EB responded to a query regarding research and entering the REF, indicating that more publications have already been achieved and more are planned for the future.

4.7 EB noted that the Young Farmers community may also represent a collaborative opportunity.

4.8 EB noted that although the Business School is newly formed, the focus of the programmes on offer is clear and EB feels confident that the School is already prominent. RW added that UCAS has confirmed that Business is currently the undergraduate subject with the highest level of applications in the UK, and more students apply for Business programmes than Sport and Education put together so the opportunity is certainly there.

4.9 CE recommended the inclusion of Dorset in the work of the Business School and EB indicated the intention to also work in that area in the long term.

4.10 EB also indicated that female leadership will be a focus of the Business School, that there will be a focus on the digital capabilities for students both on campus and offsite and outlined the recruitment targets for 2018/19. Work placements and ‘real world’ engagement with businesses will also be embedded into the programmes. It was also noted that business and entrepreneurial skills will be embedded in other programmes in an integrated way rather than an optional or add-on.

4.11 Finally, CK supported EB’s emphasis that the programmes should remain particularly focused to maintain high quality.

***EB left the meeting.***

## **5. To receive and consider a report on Student Recruitment**

5.1 KW joined the meeting and provided an outline on recruitment figures, with an increase in applicants compared with the previous year. She also noted:

- a) Some reductions in PGCE and School Direct places (but performing more strongly than the sector) which continue to be marketed.
- b) Targeted online marketing underway
- c) Applicant days continue to be popular and interview days are also underway.
- d) Increase in applicants from outside the South West
- e) A significant increase from younger applicants.

5.2 There was some discussion of what has led to increased recruitment including campus developments, adverts, prospectus improvements, and the new programmes.

5.3 ACTION KW agreed to consider the gender balance as part of any marketing

5.4 ACTION the Board requested a breakdown of target and actual recruitment figures by programme.

5.5 GDPR and unconditional offers remain areas of concern. RW noted that there is no correlation between the unconditional offers and retention data, since the retention data is from years before unconditional offers were introduced. Unconditional offers began at Marjon when a growing number of applicants withdrew before attending applicant days because they had already received an unconditional from the University of Plymouth. We will review their use carefully and advise the

Board further in due course.

5.6 NM noted the value in targeting schools in Plymouth which may be particularly deprived and KW noted the work already undertaken in this area including the NCOP project.

5.7 KW indicated the need to maintain marketing within a smaller budget allocation and finally that Open Day registrations are currently 150% up on last year.

***KW left the meeting.***

## **6. To receive and consider a report on retention, completion and good honours**

6.1 IL and SP joined the meeting. SP confirmed that following a realignment of regulations with sector standards, Marjon is now comparable with the sector benchmark in terms of good degree classifications. SP reported that the impact of this on league tables will be significant.

6.2 IL noted that retention and completion issues could impact the TEF rating if Marjon were to re-enter this year but can be improved upon in time for the next review.

6.3 MB queried the balance between retention and good honours and which is preferable. RW advised the need for improvement in both, since HEFCE advised him that Marjon has underperformed in the past against both metrics.

6.4 ACTION the Board requested internal and external Benchmarking data on withdrawals by subject, age range, gender and diversity for the next meeting and retention figures for new programmes.

6.5 CK noted that RWs comments on retention are important, if students do not complete their study, this indicates a failure of the University, not the student, and more needs to be done here.

6.6 RW summarised by noting that IL and SP have introduced major changes in University processes and the Academic teams have taken positive ownership, with demonstrable improvement in performance. There is more to achieve, but there has been a very positive uplift.

## **7. To receive reports from Committee Chairs**

7.1 Chairs of the Board sub-committees each provided a short update. RB had provided a written note in advance of the meeting. EvdL indicated that the Audit committee meeting had been postponed due to bad weather and will take place in April. One high recommendation had been

received from PwC which will be discussed at the next meeting.

7.2 MS noted that the Academic Committee is also due to meet in April and will include discussion on student engagement and mental health.

7.3 CG reported that HEFCE had provided some comments on the draft Estates Strategy and further engagement and consultation with staff and students will commence shortly. The final Strategy will be submitted to the Board for approval at the July meeting. A campus visit to Exeter University is also planned for 19<sup>th</sup> April and more may take place following this. A campus tour of Marjon is also planned for 30<sup>th</sup> May.

## **8. To receive the MSU President's report**

8.1 EM detailed the success of 'refreshers' and some new sponsorship achieved including a new pool table in the bar area. EM confirmed that RR had been successful in winning the Presidency and the Deputy position had been won by Laura Butler, a female postgraduate student. A review of the sabbatical officers and executive team will take place in April at the AGM.

8.2 RR provided an update on the Women in Leadership Conference which was successful and a repeat event is planned for the following year.

8.3 The SU has also introduced a 'Question of the Month' and this month's question represents an attempt to highlight that the SU can help with academic issues, not just social events and societies.

8.4 The Strategic Plan is complete and available and EM agreed to circulate this electronically. The new SU Board is now confirmed and a good gender balance is anticipated. Varsity was noted including the Charities involved with the total funds received being split 50/50. An LGBTQ+ event was held in collaboration with the Art College. EM noted the date of the May Ball and indicated that all governors are invited if they so wish.

8.5 RR informed the Board that the focus for his term in office will be on equality, diversity and sustainability. He noted that gender based violence has not previously been looked at as Student Support is normally the first point of call for students however he would be willing to consider fundraising and awareness-raising events surrounding this in future.

8.7 RW added to the SU report that in fact the women's teams had won Varsity and that the SU has taken the lead in having plastic straws and food containers phased out and having recyclable cups introduced in Starbucks.

## **9. To receive the Vice-Chancellor's report**

9.1 RR, EM, MB, SC and MP were asked to leave for a short time in order for a short Reserved Business session to take place.

9.2 Staff and students returned to the meeting and RW outlined the Key Milestones graphic which accompanied his report. This included lead in times for recruitment, conversion and entry, timelines for estates development work and windows of affordability. Also taking into account the dates in which the PAHC loan is paid and deadlines and results for NSS, TEF and REF.

9.3 RW noted that there is a significant potential for improvement for the NSS in 'feedback and marking' and programme level 'organisation and management' and includes issues such as changes to timetables. Projections for a planned deficit and surplus in future years were also outlined.

9.4 RW highlighted key events such as the Government fees and funding review and Brexit which will also need to be planned for. A reduction in fees is anticipated and RW provided an outline of the political context and potential scenarios. RW also reported that Plymouth University has publicly stated they intend to reduce their undergraduate cohort, which may provide some regional opportunity for Marjon.

9.5 PU reminded the Board that horizon scanning had been discussed at the strategy Away Days and the need to consider these issues more carefully.

9.6 GR queried the impact of the changes to the financial covenant, including the relevant variables and whether governors will be required to provide further input.

ACTION RW agreed that RiW would draft a statement on this and GR would provide some input before circulating to governors more widely.

9.7 It was noted that an ongoing review of the curriculum will be required as part of long term planning. The Board and Executive will need to continue to be proactive and informed as well as an attempt to further diversify income streams.

9.8 CG noted that HEFCEs estimated cost for a full development of the campus has not currently been included in the milestones outlined.

## **10. Future agendas**

10.1 PU confirmed that he will meet with committee Chairs and the VC to discuss the agenda items for the next meeting and following these governors would be asked to add any key items they feel need to be discussed.

**ACTION LOG**

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<b>Minute</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
5.3	KW agreed to consider the gender balance as part of any marketing	KW	July meeting
5.4	The Board requested a breakdown of target and actual recruitment figures by programme.	KW/RW	July meeting
6.4	The Board requested internal and external Benchmarking data on withdrawals by subject, age range, and gender as well as retention figures for new programmes.	IL/SP	July meeting
9.6	Draft a statement on changes to the financial covenant, including the relevant variables and whether governors will be required to provide further input. GR would then provide some input before circulating to governors more widely.	RiW/GR/All	July meeting