

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Meeting 3/2018-19

Friday 22 March 2019

Room W210

Approved Minutes

Present:

Mr Graham Raikes MBE (Chair)	Independent Governor	GR
Mr Mike Baker	Academic Staff Governor	MB
Mr Richard Bayly	Independent Governor	RB
Dr Sue Cooper	Academic Staff Governor	SC
Mr Matt Evans	Independent Governor	ME
Ms Claire Gibson	Independent Governor	CG
Mr Alex Hawtin	Independent Governor	AH
Prof Patricia Hind	Independent Governor	PH
Bishop Nick McKinnell	Independent Governor	NM
Mr Rhys Roberts	Student Governor (SU President)	RR
Mr John Searson	Independent Governor	JS
Ms Michele Shoebridge	Independent Governor	MS
Mrs Lynn Tamsett-White	Professional Services Staff Governor	LTW
Mrs Emma van der Lugt	Independent Governor	EvdL
Prof Rob Warner	Vice-Chancellor	RW

In Attendance:

Mr Simon Arthurs	Finance Director	SA
Miss Laura Butler	Deputy President MSU	LB
Prof Michelle Jones	Deputy Vice-Chancellor	MJ
Rev'd Michelle Parkman	University Chaplain	MP

Mrs Unity Stuart	Clerk to the Board of Governors	US
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From item 7

Miss Phoebe Cornish	Student	PC
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For item 10

Mr John Bailey	Director of Estates and IT infrastructure	JB
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For item 14

Prof Ian Luke	Executive Dean	IL
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For item 14-15

Mrs Katy Willis	PVC, Student Success	KW
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1. Introduction & welcome to new governors

- 1.1 GR welcomed ME and AH to their first meeting of the Board as well as new staff members, Prof Michelle Jones and Simon Arthurs.
- 1.2 GR noted that Sue Brownlow had since stepped down. The Board gave thanks to Sue for her contribution and wished her the best.
- 1.3 GR also thanked EvdL for her contribution as Interim Chair of the Board.
- 1.4 Each member of the Board introduced themselves for the benefit of new governors.

2. Opening remarks by the Chairman

- 2.1 GR noted that there has been a different approach to the agenda setting for this meeting to ensure that governors retain a focus on strategic level issues rather than operational detail and also ensured more engagement with the student voice.
- 2.2 GR also provided a short form to complete, requesting that the Board indicate how each of them can further add value and contribute to the work of the University.

3. Apologies & Declarations of Conflict of Interests

- 3.1 Richard Stevens and Pamela Greener gave their apologies.
- 3.2 No new conflicts of interest were declared.

4. Recommendation for appointment of new governors and remuneration committee Chair

4.1 GR noted that members of the Governance & Nominations Committee had met with Victoria Holbrook and Kate Doodson and thus recommended their appointment to the Board. The Board approved the recommendations for the appointment of Victoria and Kate.

4.2 Richard Stevens was also recommended to the Board for appointment as Chair of Remuneration Committee, replacing the Chair of the Board, in keeping with best practice and the CUC Remuneration Code. The Board approved this appointment.

5. Minutes of the previous meeting (14 November 2018)

5.1 The minutes were noted and approved with no amendments.

5.2 US outlined the progress made on each of the action points. Action 5.16 relating to the University credit score and reputation would be discussed later in the meeting in the context of the financial position of other institutions in the sector.

6. Marjon and the HE Landscape

6.1 RW presented some finance data from HESA which ranked HEIs across the sector. RW noted that there is volatility across the sector and a number of universities are reporting redundancies and cost cutting exercises. Student recruitment has also remained volatile across the sector with a level of financial precariousness.

6.2 The Augur Review of fees and funding was briefly discussed and will have further implications once published.

6.3 RW provided an outline of the recruitment timeline and planning cycle within the University and noted that the increased student recruitment at Marjon has defied sector trends.



BOARD OF GOVERNORS

- 6.4 RW presented some further data on financial security in the sector, published by WONKHE. The data indicated that 25% of HEIs are not financially healthy and RW confirmed that this is a relatively new and rapidly emerging problem in the sector further compounded by marketization, increases in pension contribution costs and other factors. Relative costs per subject were also briefly discussed.
- 6.5 It was suggested that following publication of the Augur Review, potential interventions could be modelled and RW indicated SA will be working on this now he is in post.
- 6.6 While the strong financial position of the University compared with the sector was noted, the Board queried where a good point in this ranking would be and whether the University should be aiming higher. RW confirmed this would be explored further following the publication of this data.

7. The Student perspective

- 7.1 Student Phoebe Cornish joined the meeting and provided a short presentation surrounding her experience as a student at Marjon. This was at the request of the Board who continue to seek further student engagement and a wider view of student experience at Marjon.
- 7.2 PC noted that she chose Marjon as it was a small university and as such the teaching staff know their students well and can easily identify when further support may be needed. PC also indicated that the Student Support team have been brilliant, and she has both a mentor and a skills specialist who support her.
- 7.3 The Board asked a series of questions and PC talked about her experience and plans for the future.
- 7.4 PC suggested that some areas of improvement might be ongoing support for graduates as well as increasing awareness for all lecturers regarding the additional mental health support available to students.
- ACTION RW confirmed he would address this.

7.5 PC left the meeting.

8. Report from the Student Union President

8.1 RR outlined the key points from his report including noting an improved relationship and governance arrangements between the Trustee Board and staff reporting to the Trustee Board directly.

8.2 RR noted ambitions to further integrate the work of the SU and University and improve communication and the partnership further.

8.3 RR noted some recent successful events including with the LGBTQ society and an event for the MSU sponsors.

8.4 RR discussed his recent visit to Bristol to meet with the DbS and Screenology students and indicated some plans to work with these students more closely, which would improve the NSS score for the Student Union as well.

8.5 Continuing to develop the relationship between the MSU and University as partners was noted as a priority.

8.6 LB provided a brief update on the 'Never OK' campaign recently launched surrounding sexual harassment and assault. She provided some data surrounding sexual assault on University campuses and outlined the improvements put in place to allow easier reporting of any incidents. This would be officially launched at the end of April. The Never Ok campaign will encompass bullying and other forms of abuse as well. The facility will be available permanently, there will be an option for anonymity and will also be available for off-campus students.

8.7 The Board thanked RR and LB for their reports and queried where the University might provide additional support to the SU, as well as financially. RR noted an additional member of staff would be helpful.

8.8 RW provided some context surrounding the partnership with DbS and the intention to further support partner students. EvdL also noted the plans for the Internal Auditors to review the provision in Bristol.

9. Research Update

9.1 JB joined the meeting at this point.

9.2 MJ gave a short presentation on what research is, why it is important, what her plans are and

what 'research' means at Marjon, including some key areas of research.

9.3 The regional, national and international impact of research at Marjon was also discussed specifically in health clinics, youth work, education and entrepreneurship.

9.4 MJ noted that should research quality score more highly in the Good University Guide, along with the current rank of second in teaching quality and 10th in student experience, this could result in a significant jump in the overall league table position.

9.5 The potential funding available to further support research was also discussed and MJ provided her timeline for work towards the REF.

9.6 The potentially significant contribution from local businesses towards research and development was discussed and MJ requested that the Board continue to promote the University as a research institution.

10. Estates Development & Strategy Update

10.1 JB provided a short presentation surrounding his previous HE experience and achievements, and initial observations and plans for the estates.

10.2 Health & Safety, compliance, security and space utilisation has been an initial priority for the Estates team and first impressions indicated that teaching space appeared to be underused.

10.3 JB noted that a review of space utilisation and timetabling was taking place and while there was space to grow, this space could be better used, with higher quality spaces and more flexibility.

10.4 Ensuring teaching spaces reflect a modern student focused approach to teaching and student accommodation to meet demand would also be a priority.

10.5 JB noted the intention to improve sustainability with investment in this area likely to reduce costs as well.

10.6 JB noted a planned timeline for the Estates Strategy, with the November Board meeting as a target for detailed discussion and ratification.

10.7 LTW added that she felt the 'vision' for Marjon now appears to be clearer for external contacts, creating an increased sense of confidence in the institution.

10.8 JB noted that wellbeing and values will be embedded into any plans for the estate and as well as reducing the focus on the 'car' on campus, reducing the focus on the 'chair' in office spaces could increase wellbeing.

10.9 CG noted that if any governors were interested in joining the Estates Task Group they should contact US.

11. Update on Finance & Resources from Committee Chair

11.1 RB provided a brief outline of the work of Finance & Resources Committee. The committee met in February and will meet again in April and June.

11.2 The financial situation was currently felt to be stable, driven by good cost control and efforts to improve student recruitment.

11.3 SA had begun his first week as Finance Director and as such finance issues would become a greater focus at the following meeting of the Board.

11.4 SA and the Finance & Resources Committee would consider the bank covenant position, financial investments, modelling the financial position surrounding fees and funding, and investment in the estate at future meetings.

11.5 The Board recorded their thanks to Suskia Collins who had stepped up as Finance Manager in the interim.

12. Audit Update from Committee Chair

12.1 Evdl provided a brief update surrounding the work of the Audit committee. The recent audit report on risk was noted and one high risk recommendation had been received surrounding the work of the Sports centre. MJ and the Director of Sport would address any weak areas.

12.2 AH had recently attended his first meeting of the Audit committee and Mike Sturgess had stepped down as a committee co-optee. Additional co-opted members with financial expertise were sought and governors with recommendations should contact US.

13. Report from the Vice-Chancellor

13.1 RW noted that 'unlocking the potential' of Marjon is the current theme of work and new starters MJ, JB and SA will continue to take the University from strength to strength along with the other senior managers.

13.2 The structure chart for the senior team was noted and this would continue to be reviewed annually.

- 13.3 The Marjon 180th anniversary and Mayflower 400 celebrations were noted as coinciding and various events will be organised to celebrate this with the University keen to work with others in the city to this effect.
- 13.4 RW noted that the Registrar, Stephen Plant, is responsible for the overall KPI document and this is reported to the Board annually. If there are any concerns surrounding the KPIs this would be reported at an earlier opportunity.
- 13.5 The recently published report surrounding the airport land was briefly noted and would continue to be monitored.
- 13.6 Some recent changes in staffing were noted and RW confirmed that everything has been done to support the students in completing their studies in this period of change.
- 13.7 The Marjon Growth Plan (2017-2025) was discussed having been submitted to the September and November meetings of the Board. Some minor amendments were suggested, and this was approved, with Phase 3 planned for 2020.
- 13.8 RW reminded the Board that following the meeting, lunch would take place with some students in the main dining hall, to allow the opportunity for governors to mix with students and ensure the student voice is heard.
- 13.9 The Board thanked Sarah McAddam for her work in supporting the recent staffing changes in the School of Arts and Humanities.

14. Student Recruitment, retention and trends

- 14.1 KW and IL joined the meeting.
- 14.2 KW noted that recruitment figures remained positive, particularly compared with the sector. May 1st as the 'decline by default' date would be a key point at which the student numbers become clearer.
- 14.3 Some specific subject areas were noted in which recruitment is down, up, or stagnant and this is closely monitored. Journalism recruitment remains stable although the partnership with the BBC doesn't seem to be known to many prospective students.
- 14.4 IL outlined the key points surrounding retention and completion. The gap analysis surrounding this was required as part of the Access and Participation plan submission.
- 14.5 Some improvements in the TEF data were anticipated and IL noted the areas for improvement. IL noted that there would be differing implications to the gap analysis and benchmarking would have and agreed to present this with LEO data at a future meeting of the

Board.

15. Access Agreement and update on impact of policy on unconditional offers and bursaries

- 15.1 KW noted the changes in the expectations for the Access Agreement submission, including a greater focus on the outcomes of expenditure rather than the levels of expenditure to support access, participation and completion.
- 15.2 Impact evaluation would be a focus of the submission and KW indicated that Governors may be asked to engage with training to better understand the access agreement.
- 15.3 Greater student involvement has also been suggested with a longer term, more ambitious plan for this.
- 15.4 The Access agreement would be submitted in June, with a strategy centred on the Marjon Values to act as a basis to address the requirements of the submission.
- 15.5 KW noted the key attainment gaps that would need to be addressed and the draft would be available for Board review and approval at the end of May.

Part B for Information only

The Board were given the chance to request further discussion of these items and all items under Part B were noted.

16. Matters Arising from the previous meeting (14 November)

Learning institution briefing

Virtual learning briefing

17. Minutes of committees including Senate

Finance & Resources – 17/10/2018 (approved), 20/02/2019 (unapproved)

Audit Committee – 2/11/2018 (approved), 8/03/2019 (unapproved)

Senate – 10/10/2018 (approved), 12/12/2018 (approved) 13/02/2019 (unapproved)

18. Report on Fraudulent, Whistleblowing, Health and Safety Incidents and Legal

Activities

19. Management Accounts and Mid-Year Review

20. Portfolio and programmes

21. Recruitment, retention, completion and good honours

- a) KPIs document
- b) Course profile spreadsheet

22. Annual Health & Safety Report

23. Cycle of business (and items for next meeting)

Action Log

Minute	Action	Owner	Deadline
7.4	Post-University support and ongoing contact following graduation was noted as a potential area for improvement as well as increasing awareness for all lecturers regarding the additional support available to students in terms of mental health. RW confirmed he would address this.	RW	Next meeting