



BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Meeting 4/2019-20

13 May 2020, 10.00

Microsoft Teams (Virtual)

Approved Minutes

Present

Mr Graham Raikes MBE (Chair)	Independent Governor	GR
Dr Sue Cooper	Academic Staff Governor	SC
Mr Matt Evans	Independent Governor	ME
Ms Claire Gibson	Independent Governor	CG
Mr Geoffery Gulzar	Student Governor	GG
Mr Alex Hawtin	Independent Governor	AH
Ms Victoria Holbrook	Independent Governor	VH
Prof Patricia Hind	Independent Governor	PH
Ms Jacynth Ivey	Independent Governor	JI
Bishop Nick McKinnell	Independent Governor	NM
Mrs Ruth Mounstephen	Independent Governor	RM
Prof Gina Radford	Independent Governor	GiR
Prof Gary Shum	Academic Staff Governor	GS
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	Director of Finance	SA
Mr John Bailey	Director of Estates & IT Infrastructure	JB
Ms Laura Butler	Student Engagement Officer	LB
Prof Michelle Jones	Deputy Vice-Chancellor	MJ
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 item 3		
Mrs Katy Willis	Pro Vice-Chancellor, Student Success	KW

1. Welcome, Apologies & Declarations of Conflicts of Interests

- 1.1 The Chair, Graham Raikes, invited Rev'd Michelle Parkman to open the meeting with a prayer.
- 1.2 GR welcomed colleagues to this interim Board of Governors meeting, particularly those attending their first Board meeting: Jacynth Ivey, Gina Radford and Jessamie Thomas.
- 1.3 Apologies were received from Kate Doodson, John Searson and Prof Ian Luke, Pro Vice-Chancellor.
- 1.4 No conflicts of interest were declared.

2. Report from Vice Chancellor - COVID-19 update; developments in the University; finance update

- 2.1 Professor Rob Warner, Vice Chancellor, updated the Board on steps being taken by the University to address the impact of COVID-19.
- 2.2 In an all-staff briefing the previous day, RW had reiterated assurances that a move from lockdown towards a return to work would not be rushed. Risk assessments were constantly developing. Staff would continue to work from home as much as possible. The focus would be on working safely in partnership, with carefully phased returns to protect the vulnerable. There would be a continued process of dialogue over how to make the transition work in practice.
- 2.3 With a view to re-opening the campus in September, RW highlighted the work being done to address timetabling challenges and pedagogical issues, keeping safe while delivering

personalised learning.

- 2.4 Solving the student experience (induction, freshers' week, students' social life, sporting life and how to manage self-isolation amidst future lockdowns) was at the forefront of discussions, with a focus on finding safe and effective ways of delivery.
- 2.5 Study skills opportunities would be offered to incoming students to help bring them up to speed and to engender a sense of belonging. Current students would continue to be supported online. Ways to go ahead with final year students' graduation and leavers' dinner were being discussed. Increasing numbers were expected to consider postgraduate study; those leaving were being supported in their job search.
- 2.6 The financial impact of COVID-19 has been a loss of approximately £1m of income. Students have not been charged for campus accommodation this term. There has been a tight control of expenditure to minimise the COVID-19 deficit.
- 2.7 Most reserves have been moved out of shares, in consultation with the F&R Committee.
- 2.8 Capital expenditure has been restricted, with no major building works scheduled.
- 2.9 IT expenditure has been brought forward, to accelerate and support digital solutions.
- 2.10 Achieving incoming student numbers to match the departing third year (the smallest year group) would represent a stand still position, with the aim being to exceed that. RW drew the Board's attention to the Marjon blog, and #Marjontgether, promoting Marjon's approach and values.

- 2.11 RW noted that the greatest financial risk was students not joining, or not returning. Other universities might attempt to recruit Marjon students, particularly those institutions facing significant loss of income from international students. Marjon does not currently have international students (apart from some supplementary income from groups focusing on their English language and study skills).
- 2.12 The OfS has declared that no HE provider would be allowed to fail due to COVID-19. UUK's weekly briefing would be attended by the OfS Chief Executive and possibly the Universities Minister.
- 2.13 RW informed colleagues that he had written to UCAS, expressing concern that they were advocating that students 'trade up' (drop an existing accepted offer in order to take up a newly-offered place) at a Russell Group university. RW felt it inappropriate for UCAS to assume that Russell Group universities would inherently be a better choice for prospective Marjon students.
- 2.14 RW noted that there may be opportunities arising from the NHS' aim to train more nurses/allied health professionals in the region.
- 2.15 The Board commended the tremendous work being done by all staff and the leadership team, aligned with Marjon's values and uniqueness, during a challenging time for all.

3. Student Recruitment Update

- 3.1 The report was received. Katy Willis, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Student Success summarised the current recruitment position. Despite challenging times, strong trends in many areas was noted, particularly PGCE/School Direct and, potentially, postgraduate recruitment.
- 3.2 KW explained the work being done to engage with prospective students for autumn 2021; thousands of face to face conversations being replaced by online conversations and connections.
- 3.3 It was noted that the 'decline by' default date had been set back by six weeks to 18 June 2020, making recruitment benchmarking unreliable at this stage.
- 3.4 UCAS forums indicated that prospective candidates may delay their decision as late as possible so as to have a clearer understanding of autumn study arrangements. KW lamented UCAS' position of encouraging applicants to keep options open and consider 'trading up' in August.
- 3.5 RW noted that the annual NSS (National Student Survey) had gone ahead; the outcome was awaited.

- 3.6 The Board commended KW and her team and encouraged ongoing communication of the message that joining or indeed 'trading up' to Marjon would bring learning and psychological benefits.
- 3.7 The Board noted the importance of Marjon's values and KW explained the work being done to 'knit' the student community together. RW commented on the potential of the university's Business School, Governors noted the journalism course's close connections with the BBC; Michelle Jones noted discussions about wider business engagement.

4. Report from the Student Governor

- 4.1 The Chair invited Geoffery Gulzar to present an oral update to the Board. GG's term of office would conclude in July and GG took this opportunity to provide an overview of his tenure to date.
- 4.2 Despite the challenges of being President through this period, GG said it had been a successful year for the SU, and on a personal level an experience that would stand him in good stead going forwards.

- 4.3 The SU had continued to operate through the lockdown, with officers working remotely and elections being held to fill officer and trustee roles. GG was pleased to note improvements in how the SU functioned socially and on social media and that it had fostered a strong sense of community. GG gave examples of fundraising, staff/student challenge events, awards ceremonies and entertainment which had been well received.
- 4.4 GG noted the support provided by the Futures Team for students like himself seeking employment.
- 4.5 The Board congratulated GG on his achievements and asked for his perspective on how the Board could support students going forwards. GG recommended they help the SU secure sufficient resources to deliver a successful induction week. **ACTION: RW**
- 4.6 The Chair thanked GG for this overview and for his great work over the year. He joined with colleagues in wishing GG all the best in his future endeavours.
- 4.7 The Chair informed the Board that he and RW had met with the SU President and Deputy President designate, with a view to building on the collaboration this year between SU and Board.

5. Minutes of Previous Meeting (01.04.2020)

The minutes were received and approved as an accurate record, subject to noting SP as an attendee.

6. Governor Appointment

- 6.1 GR noted that members of the Governance & Nominations Committee had met and recommended the appointment of Mr Stephen Criddle OBE to the Board. The Board **APPROVED** this recommendation.
- 6.2 Mr Stephen Criddle was also recommended to the Board for appointment as a member of the Audit Committee and Remuneration Committee. The Board **APPROVED** this appointment, noting the skills that he would bring as an experienced and qualified accountant.

7. Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking Annual Statement

The purpose of the statement was discussed and endorsed and its wording **APPROVED**. It would be signed by the Vice Chancellor and Chair and uploaded to the university website.

Close

GR thanked members and attendees for their contributions. The next Board of Governors meeting would be held on Monday, 18 May, 2020, at 15.00, via Microsoft Teams. This would be an interim Board meeting, in addition to those scheduled, with the aim of keeping the Board fully in touch with developments at Marjon during the lockdown, and would focus on the Campus Development Plan.

Part B – for information only

8. Matters arising from previous meeting

The report was received. All matters arising were considered complete.

9. COVID-19 Risk Register

This report was received for information with no queries.

10. Innovations and Amendments

This report was received for information with no queries.

11. OfS Registration Requirements

This report was received for information with no queries.

12. Team Marjon Blog - inspiring features:

<https://sites.marjon.ac.uk/marketing1/>

The details of this webpage were received for information with no queries.

Also circulated was #MarjonTogether – the stories behind the hashtag (Laura Butler)

Action Log

4.5 - Consider how SU can secure sufficient resources to deliver a successful induction week. RW