

### Approved Minutes

#### Present

Prof Mark Llewellyn	Independent Governor, Chair of Committee	ML
Graham Raikes, MBE	Independent Governor, Chair of the Board of Governors (BoG), Deputy Chair of Committee	GR
Prof Claire Taylor	Vice-Chancellor	CT

#### In attendance

Liam Williams (attendee)	Student Governor; President, Marjon Student Union	LWi
Prof Michelle Jones	Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost	MJ
Ann Holman	Chief Operating Officer	AH
David Soutter	Interim Chief Finance Officer	DS
Lynne Hyland	Financial Controller	LH
Jessamie Thomas	Governance Officer	JT

#### 1. Welcome, Apologies & Declaration of Conflicts of Interests

- 1.1 Chair of F&R Committee, Prof Mark Llewellyn, welcomed colleagues.
- 1.2 Apologies were received from Independent Governor and Joint Deputy Chair of BoG, Kate Doodson.
- 1.3 ML invited members to provide any updates to the Register of Interests, included in Part C; none were declared.
- 1.4 ML read out a confidentiality statement, based on wording contained in the Governor Affirmation and Governors' Handbook, to remind Board colleagues and attendees of their duties in this regard.
- 1.5 ML invited governors to 'unstar' items from Part B for discussion. No items were identified and the reports were taken as read.

#### 2. To Receive a Student Population Update

- 2.1 The report was received. ML invited Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost, Prof Michelle Jones, to present an overview.
- 2.2 MJ guided the Committee through key elements of the report, including overall population, retention, withdrawals, comparison to budget, anticipated conversion activity and student recruitment levels. MJ presented updates in a number of areas, due to the timing of the report's release. For example, students whose courses had started in January in previous years and whose courses had just concluded, had been excluded from the data, but new January starters had not yet been incorporated.
- 2.3- ***Text redacted on the grounds of commercial sensitivity.***
- 2.5
- 2.6 MJ provided an update on international student recruitment, noting contract negotiation and early phase implementation with a selected partner.
- 2.7 With regard to apprenticeships, while outside the scope of this report, MJ confirmed they were supported by degree apprentice development funding. A number of engagement events had been delivered since October, including a presence at the National

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Apprenticeship show for the first time; MJ noted a number of 'positive conversations' and sign-ups to bulletins and updates. This was focused on apprenticeships, with the outreach team active in schools and colleges and promoting the University more generally.

- 2.8 In response to a question as to how to counter the reduction in marketing spend and remain competitive, MJ outlined the approach of the Director of External Engagement, the spend approved for the months ahead, the plan for improving the position, particularly via increasing conversion and the future implementation of the customer relationship management (CRM) tool, all of which were expected to have a positive impact.
- 2.9 MJ noted the recently announced new partnership with Plymouth Argyle Football Club (PAFC) and the accompanying media coverage and interest this had generated, increasing the recognition of Marjon's sport-related programmes.
- 2.10 The Committee noted the position and MJ was thanked for the report.

### **3. To Receive a Finance Update**

- 3.1 The report was received. ML invited Vice-Chancellor, Prof Claire Taylor and Interim Chief Finance Officer, David Soutter, to present an overview.

3.2- *Text redacted on the grounds of commercial sensitivity.*

3.17

- 3.18 ML invited CT to provide a verbal update on the finance function resourcing and development plan. The Committee noted the profile and experience of the Interim Finance Director who would join Marjon later in the month. Their induction programme would include training on the IFM, with an opportunity to refine the modelling further, with Prompt Strategies' support, as appropriate. The Committee noted further proposed enhancements to the Finance Team and was content with the position.
- 3.19 The Committee was satisfied with the position and thanked CT and ELT members for their work and the detailed updates.

### **4. To Receive an Estates Infrastructure & Digital Update**

- 4.1 ML noted the papers, at item 7 in Part B, which had been received by Digital & Physical Infrastructure Group (DPIG) M2, on 29.01.2025. Noting that DPIG had been established as a task group of F&R Committee, with an estates-focused remit, ML invited AH to summarise a proposal regarding this group becoming a committee, to allow for greater prominence in the governance structure for the change and digital transformation agenda while still allowing F&R Committee appropriate finance and resources scrutiny. F&R Committee confirmed it would be appropriate for Governance & Nominations (Gov & Noms) Committee to consider, for potential onward recommendation to BoG.
- 4.2 It was suggested that a review of the Board committee structure and streamlining of governance more widely could be timely, in line with key messaging from the Board's Strategy Day in November to promote agile governance. GR and CT confirmed that discussions would be held at Gov & Noms Committee later in the month.
- 4.3 AH was thanked for the update.

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#### **Part B**

The following reports were received and approved:

5. Minutes of Previous Meeting (Extraordinary Meeting 07.01.2025) were received as an accurate record and **APPROVED** with no amendments.

The following report was received for information:

6. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting
7. Papers from DPIG M2 29.01.2025

#### **Part C**

The following reports were received for information:

- C3 Annual Financial Return (AFR) Workbook (initial submission)
- C Register of Interests

8. **Reserved Business** – *See RB minutes*

#### **Close**

ML invited colleagues to consider whether any of the meeting's discussions impacted on the current Risk Register; no new risks were identified.

In closing the meeting, ML thanked colleagues for their contributions. Particular thanks were extended to DS and LH for their work for University, noting that this was their last scheduled meeting of the F&R Committee.