

*the*  
**GOVERNING BODY**

**MINUTES of the Governing Body held on Tuesday, 20 February 2024  
in room 007, Stephen Lawrence Building, Greenwich Campus, Park Row, Greenwich  
SE10 9LS and via Microsoft Teams, commencing at 17:00**

**Present:**

Ms B Hill CBE (Chair)	Mr M Orr
Mr A Baral	Mr R Patel
Professor B Boag	Mr S Saluja
Ms P Coles (via Teams)	Ms J Seehra-Pearce
Professor J Harrington (Vice-Chancellor & CEO)	Mr A Sharma (via Teams)
Mr R Hicks	Dr S Sweeney
Ms T King	Ms E Sideris
Mr C McWilliam	

**In attendance:**

Ms R Ashton (Executive Director, Student & Academic Services)(item 23/31)  
Mrs T Brighton (Governance Support Manager)(minutes)  
Ms G Brindley (Executive Director of People)(item 23/32)  
Ms K Dawson (CEO: Greenwich Students' Union)(item 23/29)  
Mr P Garrod (University Secretary)  
Professor J Marie (Pro Vice-Chancellor: Education)(item 23/31)  
Ms A McMenamin (Associate Director, Employability & Apprenticeships (item 23/33)  
Mr P Taylor (Chief Operating Officer)  
Ms L Watson (Chief Financial Officer)  
Professor A Westby (Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Knowledge Exchange))  
Ms V Wood (Associate Director, Health & Safety)(Item 23/34)

**GB 23/25      WELCOME, APOLOGIES, ACCOUNCMENTS, ITEMS FROM THE CHAIR**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. She thanked all who had taken part in the development session between the Governing Body and the Academic Council. It was an important opportunity to improve understanding of league tables, and to discuss key drivers of student success with members of the Academic Council.

**GB 23/26      DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

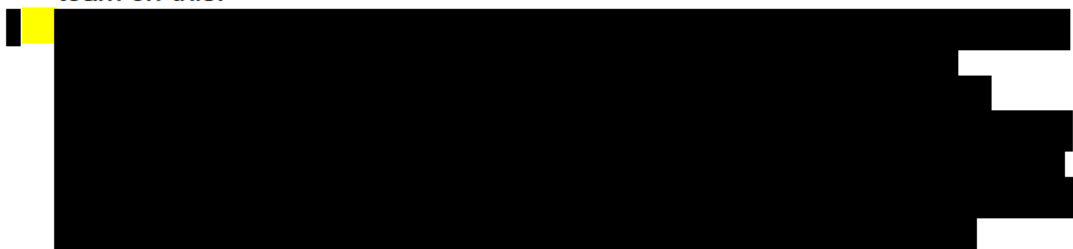
In relation to the 2024 honorary degrees (see min 23/26), Professor Boag declared a potential conflict of interests as he had nominated one of the candidates being recommended for an award.

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2023 were approved. The actions tracker was received.

GB 23/28 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT (GB 23/P47)

The Governing Body received a report from the Vice-Chancellor on recent developments:

- The University had been awarded an overall Gold rating in the OfS's 2023 Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF): comprising a Gold rating for student experience and a Silver rating for student outcomes. The University was one of six University Alliance and one of three London universities to achieve this rating. The Governing Body congratulated all involved on this outstanding achievement. A Staff Governor highlighted the huge positive impact on staff morale and appreciation for the senior management team who had led the submission.
- The University had been awarded a Research England E3 grant exceeding £9 million to develop a multi-scale, multi-disciplinary modelling platform. The University was one of five universities to achieve success in both rounds of bidding. The Governing Body commended Professor Andrew Westby and his team on this.



- The full business case for Devonport House was progressing well for presentation to the Governing Body in April. The financial model had been established in principle. A case for a bridging sum would be submitted to the Finance Committee to allow design and development work to continue.
- Interviews for the Deputy Vice-Chancellor role were taking place the next day.
- An independent review of the Office for Students, led by Sir David Behan, had started in December 2023. The Vice-Chancellor had contributed to the review. This was expected to conclude in May 2024. In response to questions about the review, the Vice-Chancellor agreed to circulate a briefing from Universities UK.
- In relation to the National Audit Office report into franchised higher education providers, the Governing Body was reassured that the University's partners were all registered with the Office for Students.

GB 23/29 STUDENT GOVERNOR'S REPORT (GB 23/P48)

Ms Kate Dawson, Chief Executive Officer, Greenwich Students' Union (GSU), attended for this item.

The Student Governor presented his report summarising the GSU's recent work in relation to Officer campaigns, the Retention Calling Project, the BAME Awarding Gap Project, Programme Representation and Officer Elections:

- Students contacted as part of the Retention Calling Project were principally citing cost of living and financial pressures as barriers to academic success. The GSU continued to work with the University on cost-of-living initiatives to alleviate student hardship.
- There had been a change of approach for the BAME Awarding Gap project with a module-based approach in response to student feedback. 100 modules would be reviewed during the course of the year.

- 42% of all programme representative roles had been filled across the 15 Schools. The representatives participated in programme committee meetings to provide vital feedback from students.
- 228 nominations had been received for the 2024 Officer elections, twice the number in 2023. There had been a welcome increase in wider student engagement for example in sports clubs and societies. Inclusivity was encouraged and training had been provided to support candidates, for example in producing manifestos.
- The Governing Body were interested to hear about the GSU Town Hall event with the GSU President and the Vice-Chancellor. In response to a question about how issues were followed up, the Chief Executive Officer advised that updates on the topics discussed were made available on the GSU website.

The Chair thanked the Student Governor for the insightful report. The Governing Body looked forward to seeing the outcome of the elections.

GB 23/30 RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23  
(GB 23/P49)

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Knowledge Exchange) presented the annual report on research and knowledge exchange (R&KE) activity in 2022/23. Good progress had been made with implementing the R&KE Sub-Strategy. The societal impact of the University's R&KE was improving and the University had climbed in the Times Higher Impact Rankings to a position of 86 globally.

The positive trend in the quality of research outputs was continuing year-on-year and, at this early stage, augured well for REF 2029. The University was on the right trajectory for achieving its ambitions in relation to the Knowledge Exchange Framework.

The Governing Body asked about the risks which could impede strategic plan progress. Professor Westby explained that the targets were challenging, in particular for securing external funding, so improving the University's ability to win research grants was central to success. The University needed to build an attractive research environment in order to grow its postgraduate student population and attract researchers at all stages of their careers.

The Governing Body thanked Professor Westby for his informative report and the case studies which demonstrated the range of R&KE activities across the University.

GB 23/31 ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STANDARDS (GB 23/P50)

Professor Jenny Marie, Pro Vice-Chancellor Education, and Ms Rachel Ashton, Executive Director of Student & Academic Services attended for this item.

The presentation highlighted key elements of assurance on academic quality and standards in support of the annual assurance report from the Academic Council (in the Information Pack). This included how the University is meeting the OfS's 'B' conditions on quality and standards; how academic standards were maintained within the University and its partners and the outcome of validation by external examiners. The Governing Body was briefed on key indicators which demonstrated that the University had good quality provision, including the Teaching Excellence Framework, the National Student Survey (NSS) and the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES). Governors noted appendix 2 of the annual report (GB 23/P61) i.e. the programme scorecard showing the



performance of programmes for continuation, the NSS, Graduate Outcomes and the BAME awarding gap, and that while progress had been made in some areas, more remained to be done, in particular in relation to the BAME awarding gap.

The Governing Body noted the ways in which the University monitored academic standards and ensured they were comparable with the sector. The work of external examiners was integral to this work as was the University's good honours rates reported to Governors in the annual Degree Outcomes Statement. The degree algorithm had been reviewed and changes made to ensure that it delivered the correct balance of good honours outcomes.

The Governing Body welcomed the update on the University's quality assurance processes and the integrity embedded in them. Governors recognised the efforts of the Registry and Quality Assurance teams during the year to improve the processes, particularly in regard to Progression and Award Boards and the introduction of the Continuous Improvement Tool and noted the plans to build on these improvements in the current year.

The Governing Body thanked the PVC Education and the Executive Director of Student and Academic Services for their presentation and the work of the Academic Council in providing this assurance.

GB 23/32 GENDER PAY REPORT (GB 23/P51)

Ms Gail Brindley, Executive Director of People, attended for this item.

The draft 2023 Gender Pay Report is designed to meet legislative requirements. The University's latest data showed a fall in the mean gender pay gap of 1.4% from 10.7% to 9.3%. This was the lowest pay gap since reporting started in 2017, indicating that the University was on the right trajectory to achieving its target of no mean gender pay gap by 2030. Following analysis of gender pay data, action planning had been undertaken in relevant areas to identify how the gap could be reduced further.

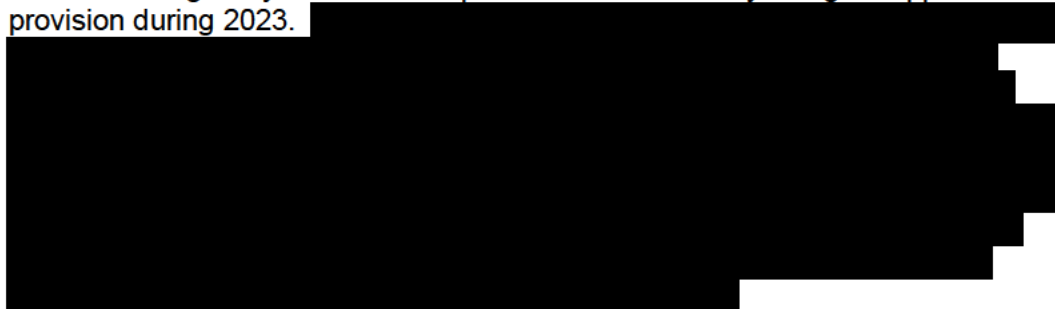
The Governing Body asked about targets for other pay gaps and was advised that the commitment was to eliminate them by 2030. It was agreed that the report prepared on other pay gaps would be made available to Governors via the BoardEffect platform.

The Governing Body **approved** the Gender Pay Gap for publication on the Government online reporting service and the University's website.

GB 23/33 DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS UPDATE (GB 23/P52)

Ms Anna McMenamin, Interim Associate Director of Employability & Apprenticeships, attended for this item.

The Governing Body received an update on the University's degree apprenticeship provision during 2023.



In response to a question about strategic aims in the apprenticeships offer, it was reported that there are plans to scale up the provision, but strategic and financial decisions around opportunities and developments needed to be carefully considered and new programmes nurtured carefully. The Governing Body supported this approach and noted the contributions of the Associate Director and the Employability & Apprenticeships team in driving forward this work.

GB 23/34 HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23 (GB 23/P53)

Vikki Wood, Associate Director, Health & Safety, attended for this item.

The Governing Body considered the annual report on health and safety in 2022/23. Governors were pleased to note continuing progress in implementing the University's health and safety strategy and embedding a positive health and safety culture together with an improvement in KPI performance. Restructuring of health and safety services had led to additional investment to improve future performance. There had been a slight increase in the accident rate for the year although this remained below the sector average. There had been no RIDDOR reportable work-related accidents to University staff or students.

The Governing Body asked for an update on work to address potential fire safety issues at the Daniel Defoe Halls of Residence. Discussions with the builder, McLaren, were continuing on the fire door replacement programme, installation of a missing fire lobby and cladding. It was reported that only a small proportion of cladding on the building was likely to require replacement. In the meantime, the building would be registered with the Building Safety Regulator prior to submission of the full building safety case at a later date.

The Governing Body was informed that a number of fire safety mitigations to enable the Hall to be occupied safely, such as the sprinklers and fire evacuation plan, remained in place. This had been tested in January 2024 when a fire had broken out in the laundry room and the Hall had been safely evacuated. The Governing Body asked to be kept informed of progress on Daniel Defoe Halls and any other issues relating to fire risk in residences.

In discussing the report, the Governing Body received assurance that:

- There was a rigorous inspection and maintenance programme for asbestos present in areas of the estate.
- The increase in incident reporting was the result of a greater awareness of incident and accident reporting and a better engagement with the process.
- The executive was satisfied that there was proper engagement with the health and safety auditing process and the additional central resource in health and safety would help to bring about improvement in audit results.
- Health and safety responsibilities in the shared spaces on the Greenwich and Medway campuses were clear and relationships with partners were well established.

The Governing Body was pleased to note the additional resources invested in health and safety activity were beginning to have an impact.

The University Secretary introduced a proposed Procedure for Investigating Allegations Against Governors, which was recommended by the Nominations, Staffing and Governance (NSG) Committee. The Procedure had been developed to fulfil Article 13.2 in the University's Articles of Association and a requirement in the Code of Conduct for Governors. The Procedure set out how allegations of serious misconduct would be investigated and determined and the right of appeal. It would apply to all Governors with the exception of the Vice-Chancellor. It was expected that allegations against a Student Governor or Staff Governor would normally be investigated under the relevant Greenwich Students' Union or People Directorate procedures.

The Governors recognised the need to establish a Procedure and the importance of ensuring it was fit for purpose. It was agreed, following points raised in discussion, that the University Secretary would review section 4 on reporting allegations and section 9 on malicious and vexatious allegations to reduce the risk of the procedure being abused by malicious and vexatious complainants. The revised Procedure would be submitted to the NSG Committee and then the Governing Body for approval.

The Vice-Chancellor reported that, as part of its 2024 Festival, Medway Council planned to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the closure of the Chatham Dockyard. As part of these celebrations, the three universities at Medway had decided to hold a special ceremony and confer two honorary awards each. One such nomination was included in the set of honorary awards being recommended for approval, and a second nomination would follow shortly and be circulated to the Honorary Degrees Committee and Governing Body for approval.

The Governing Body **approved** the proposed honorary awards for 2024.

The Governing Body **approved** the following:

- (i) From the Nominations, Staffing & Governance Committee held on 9 February 2024:
  - Revised Governor Code of Conduct for implementation.
  - Committee Appointments:
    - (1) The appointment of **Trica King** as Chair of the Nominations, Staffing & Governance Committee from 1 September 2024 and to continue as Vice-Chair of the Remuneration Committee
    - (2) The appointment of **Elizabeth Sideris** as Vice-Chair of the Nominations, Staffing & Governance Committee from 1 September 2024.
- (ii) From the Honorary Degrees Committee held on 7 February 2024:
  - Minor amendments to the Committee's Terms of Reference for immediate adoption.

The meeting finished at 18:55.