

*the*  
**GOVERNING BODY**

**MINUTES of the Governing Body held on Wednesday, 11 October 2023  
in Room 038, Queen Anne Court, 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 (via Teams)
Ms P Coles	Ms J Seehra-Pearce
Professor J Harrington (Vice-Chancellor & CEO)	Dr S Sweeney
Ms T King	

**In attendance:**

Mrs T Brighton (Governance Support Manager)(minutes)  
Mr P Garrod (University Secretary)  
Dr S Lewis (Executive Director of Strategic Planning (items 23/07-08))  
Professor J Roscoe (Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost)  
Mr P Taylor (Chief Operating Officer)  
Ms L Watson (Chief Financial Officer)  
Professor A Westby (Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Knowledge Exchange))

**Apologies for Absence:**

Mr R Hicks  
Mr C McWilliam  
Mr A Sharma  
Ms E Sideris

**GB 23/01 WELCOME, APOLOGIES, ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair welcomed Anuj Baral (Student Governor), Pamela Coles, Rakesh Patel and Stuart Sweeny (new Independent Governors) and Brian Boag and Jas Seehra-Pearce (new Staff Governors) to their first meeting.

The Governing Body was reminded that the meeting would be followed by a drinks reception to welcome the new Governors and thank two former Governors, Anastasios Maragiannis and Aruna Mehta, who had stepped down from the Governing Body since the last meeting.

**GB 23/02 DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of conflict of interests.

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2023 were approved. The actions list was received.

## VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT (GB 23/P02)

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

- [REDACTED]
- The UCU marking and assessment boycott had disrupted graduations across the sector. The Vice-Chancellor was pleased to report that there were no Greenwich on-campus students with missing marks for their assignments and all students had been able to either graduate or transition into the next year of study on time. The Governing Body recorded its thanks to all staff involved for this excellent achievement.
- [REDACTED]
- The House of Lords had issued its report on the performance of the Office for Students (OfS). A number of significant recommendations for both the OfS and the Government had been identified.
- The findings of two assessment visits by the OfS focussing on the quality of business and management courses at other universities had been published in September. The OfS was now considering whether any regulatory action was appropriate.
- The University welcomed the new agreement for the UK to associate with Horizon Europe and Copernicus programmes which would allow researchers to resume applying for grants and bids.
- An open day was being held at Avery Hill on 14 October and local MPs had been invited to attend for a tour of the campus facilities.

The Governing Body noted the University's performance in a number of recently published national league tables. Greenwich had been ranked 68<sup>th</sup> in a new Daily Mail league table and 45<sup>th</sup> in the Times Higher Education NSS league table but had dropped in the Guardian, The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide and the Complete University Guide. The results were due to various factors including student growth, the use of lag data and an inconsistent performance across various key metrics.

. The Vice-Chancellor briefed the Governing Body on the work in hand to bring about improvements in the core metrics, including improvements in understanding how the metrics work. A consistent, sustainable improvement was required and a targeted approach was being taken to review the initiatives underway to ensure that they had impact.

A fuller session on league tables to explain the data and the actions being taken to address performance would be arranged. The Governing Body emphasised the importance of making sure that, in responding to the challenge of league table performance, the key objective of striving for student success was not lost. The Vice-Chancellor provided assurance that the focus would be on issues that were of institutional importance.

GB 23/05 STUDENT GOVERNOR'S REPORT (GB 23/P03)

The Student Governor updated the Governing Body on the GSU's work with the Retention Calling Project, the improvements in the student voice and representation structure, the Welcome programme for new students and GSU's submission for the 2023/24 Access and Participation Plan.

He also reported work on the BAME Awarding Gap Project, which had been redesigned for 2023/24 with an increased focus on student voice. Inclusivity Researchers would be conducting focus groups with selected BAME students to draw up recommendations to improve the inclusivity of modules where needed. In addition, a Polar 1 Project had been initiated whereby students from low participation backgrounds would be offered a package of tailored support to remove barriers to accessing higher education. The Project was established as a tool for converting low participation groups and its effectiveness would be monitored.

The Governing Body thanked the GSU President for the report.

GB 23/06 STUDENT RECRUITMENT (GB 23/P04)

The Chief Operating Officer provided an update on student recruitment for the 2023//24 academic year.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

GB 23/07 NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY 2023 RESULTS (GB 23/P05)

The Executive Director of Strategic Planning presented the results of the National Student Survey (NSS) 2023. Overall, the University's performance had remained relatively stable although some of the relative positioning against the sector was disappointing.

It was reported that, following a radical review by the OfS, the NSS had been restructured with some changes to the questions and a shift from a five to a four-point scale. The question on 'overall satisfaction' had been removed, although retained as an optional question. Greenwich had elected to include 'overall satisfaction' in order to gain a proper understanding of year-on-year performance, and the 2023 score of 76% was identical to the previous year.

The University's performance had been mixed. It had lost some ground against the sector in core areas such as "Teaching on my Course" and "Organisation and Management", but had performed well in the new Mental Wellbeing question and in the areas of Student voice, Learning Opportunities and Marking and Assessment.

Questions around Healthcare, Allied Health and Clinical Practice Placement had performed particularly well against the sector.

There had been considerable sector volatility but Greenwich's results would likely result in a decline in relative league table rankings. On a more positive note, in lieu of the original measure for overall satisfaction, Times Higher Education (THE) had created a new league table by averaging scores across the 27 core questions and Greenwich had been placed 45<sup>th</sup>.

The OfS had also provided subject level benchmarking for each question in the themes of 'Teaching on my Course' and 'Assessment and Feedback'. Greenwich had performed above sector average in 'Assessment and Feedback' but below for 'Teaching on my Course'. The Governing Body noted that the NSS Taskforce approach to bringing about improvement was continuing and had been adapted to focus around the five areas of the Teaching Excellence Framework together with 'Organisation and Management'. According to individual scores, programmes had been selected to either celebrate and share good practice, or for inclusion in the Task Force. Thematic workshops were being run to ensure that staff across the Faculties understood what good practice looked like.

The Governing Body asked how the University would track progress with the Taskforce and was advised that the work would be assessed during the second term. Management was confident that collective focus would yield results. The Governing Body confirmed its support for continuing the work and noted the importance of celebrating success. The Chair encouraged Governors to attend the NSS celebration event if available.

GB 23/08

#### GRADUATE OUTCOMES SURVEY 2023 RESULTS (GB 23/P06)

The Executive Director of Strategic Planning introduced the results of the 2023 Graduate Outcomes Survey. The survey captured the current status of undergraduate students who had graduated in 2020/21 and provided the statistical data around graduate employability/further study and the OfS progression metric (used in Condition B3).

The headline results were:

- 88% of Greenwich's 2021/21 graduates were in employment or further study. Unemployment had fallen marginally but was still higher than both the sector and University Alliance averages. There had been some improvement in outcomes in subject areas, especially in all four Schools within the Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences.
- The University's OfS progression metric had improved in line with the sector (2.1% increase from 71% to 73.1%). The results mirrored the sector's with a rise in full-time employment but an equivalent fall in part-time employment. Greenwich had gained some ground in University Alliance universities, moving from 11<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> ranking.

Work to improve performance in this area included:

- Incentives to students to promote further study
- Guidance to students on how to report their employment status
- Measures to increase take up of internships and work experience
- Improving the confidence and skills of students to equip them for the workforce.

The Governing Body agreed that the report provided a useful insight into this area of the University's work.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Knowledge Exchange) presented the preliminary analysis of the results of the 2023 Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES). This was conducted by Advance HE and provided insight into the learning and supervision experience of postgraduate research (PGR) students together with sector benchmarking data. The data would help the University to work towards attaining its postgraduate research ambitions.

[REDACTED]

A more detailed set of analyses was being undertaken and an action plan was being formulated for the next PRES. The data would contribute to considerations around a Doctoral College.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION: REQUIREMENTS OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION  
(FREEDOM OF SPEECH) ACT 2023 (GB 23/P08)

The Governing Body considered a report on the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023 and the implications for the University. The University Secretary reported that the HE Freedom of Speech Act was now law but most of its provisions would not come into effect until August 2024 and September 2025, the new OfS Director for Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom had taken up post in August 2023.

The Governing Body noted the work in hand in to prepare for the Act's requirements and the timetable for implementation. These included a review of the University's Freedom of Expression Code of Practice and the complaints procedures and the development of a communications plan. GSU would need to review its External Speaker Policy and procedures and re-issue them as a GSU Freedom of Speech Code of Practice.

The Governing Body noted the preparatory work and noted that the revised Code of Practice would be presented at its April 2024 meeting.

## STRATEGIC RISKS (GB 23/P09)

The University Secretary presented a report on strategic risks and the updated strategic risk dashboard (October 2023), following consideration by the Audit & Risk Committee (ARC). The narratives had been updated to reflect the current position but no changes to residual risk scoring were recommended.

[REDACTED]

It was noted that the residual risk score for SRR4 (Student Experience) was level with its tolerance threshold and the question was asked whether this risk should be retained on the Strategic Risk Register. The Vice-Chancellor explained that student experience was fundamental to the University's work and the risk needed to be visible on the Register in order to ensure it remained at an acceptable level.



GB 23/12 STRATEGIC KPIS (GB 23/P10)

The Executive Director of Strategic Planning presented an update on strategic KPIS. It was noted that KPI#6 (Staff Engagement) remained on track and that KPI#3 (Graduate Outcomes) had slightly exceeded the year-end target. KPI#2 (NSS overall satisfaction) had remained stable. Following the removal of the question on 'overall satisfaction' from the NSS, a proposal for a revised student satisfaction KPI would be presented to the next Governing Body meeting.

The OfS had changed the way in which it calculated the metrics for continuation and the BAME Awarding Gap. As a consequence, revised milestones and year-end milestones for KPI#1(Continuation) and KPI#4 (BAME Awarding Gap) would be presented to the Governing Body.

GB 23/13 GOVERNING BODY COMMITTEES: MATTERS REQUIRING APPROVAL (GB 23/P11)

The Governing Body **approved** the following:

- (i) *From the Audit & Risk Committee held on 2 October 2023:*
  - Revisions to the Risk Management Policy and Guidance for immediate implementation.
- (ii) *From the Nominations, Staffing & Governance Committee held on 3 October 2023:*
  - The appointment of Elizabeth Sideris to a third term of office as an Independent Governor for the period 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2027 and her continuation as chair of the Remuneration Committee and as the Senior Independent Governor during this period.
  - The committee appointments for the new Staff Governors with immediate effect:
    - Professor Brian Boag to the Finance Committee
    - Jas Seehra-Pearce to the Nominations, Staffing and Governance Committee and the Honorary Degrees Committee.
- (iii) *From the Honorary Degrees Committee:*
  - An additional Honorary Award planned for conferment in 2024.

The Governing Body noted that, on the recommendation of the Honorary Degrees Committee, an additional honorary award for conferment in 2023 had been approved by the Chair of the Governing Body via Chair's Action.

- (iv) *From the Academic Council held on 27 September 2023:*
  - 2022/23 Annual Statement on Research Integrity for publication.

GB 23/14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

**14.1 Devonport House**



## **14.2 Additional Honorary Degrees**

The Vice-Chancellor reported that proposals for additional Honorary Degrees to be awarded collectively by the Universities at Medway in recognition of Medway's centenary would be circulated for approval to the Governing Body in between meetings.

The meeting finished at 6.10 pm.

T A Brighton  
24 October 2023