

the
GOVERNING BODY

**MINUTES of the Governing Body Business Meeting held on Tuesday,
25 June 2024 in room 110, Queen Anne Court, Greenwich Campus, Park Row, Greenwich
SE10 9LS and via Microsoft Teams, held at 16.00**

Present:

Ms B Hill CBE (Chair)	Mr M Orr
Professor B Boag	Mr S Saluja
Ms P Coles	Ms J Seehra-Pearce
Professor J Harrington (Vice-Chancellor & CE)	Dr S Sweeney
Mr R Hicks	Ms E Sideris

In attendance:

Mrs T Brighton (Governance Support Manager)(minutes)
Ms G Brindley (Executive Director of People)
Mr A Chowdhury (President Designate, Greenwich Students' Union)
Mr P Garrod (University Secretary)
Professor V Lemm (Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost)
Professor J Marie (Pro Vice-Chancellor: Education)
Ms C Matthews (Director, UK Access, Recruitment & Admissions)(Item 23/60.1)
Professor D Moore (PVC: Faculty of Education, Health & Human Sciences (Item 23/60.1))
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 A Baral
Ms T King
Mr C McWilliam
Mr R Patel
Mr A Sharma

GB 23/54 WELCOME

The Chair welcomed Ameen Chowdhury, incoming President of Greenwich Students' Union, to the meeting as an observer before the start of his term of office in July 2024.

The Governing Body and executive were reminded that the meeting would be immediately followed by a drinks reception.

GB 23/55 DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

No declarations of conflict of interests were made.

GB 23/56

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 April 2024 were approved. The actions tracker was received.

GB 23/57

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

- **Student Recruitment:** [REDACTED]
- **Senior Staff Recruitment:** Interviews for the post of Pro Vice-Chancellor, Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences were being held on 28 June.
- **Athena Swan:** The University had been awarded a Bronze Athena Swan Charter Award, which was one of the goals in the 2030 Strategy.
- **League Table Result:** Due to a delay in the sector's Data Futures project, this year's league tables would be using data from the previous year for a number of important metrics. This was disappointing as Greenwich was expecting to see increases in its rankings this year. On a more positive note, Greenwich had improved in the Complete University Guide 2025 by three places, had retained its position in the Top 100 of the Times Higher Education Impact rankings, and had also retained its position in the QS World University Rankings.
- **Devonport House Project:** [REDACTED]
- **Bond Redemption:** The University had issued an early redemption notice for its Bond. The process was due to be finalised before the end of July and would mean that the University would lose its Public Interest Entity (PIE) status. It would be important to retain the discipline on financial management, after the restrictive covenant was lifted. The Governing Body agreed this was a welcome development.
- **General Election:** The Governing Body received a summary of the 2024 General Election manifestos coverage of higher education and noted that the University had hosted an elections hustling at its Medway campus on 17 June.

The Vice-Chancellor reported that formal approval had been granted by the Nursing and Midwifery Council for the delivery of nursing at the Medway campus.

The Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board had recently approached Greenwich and two other universities in Kent to sign a partnership memorandum of understanding.

The Governing Body noted that the Student Governor's Report on activities relevant to student experience had been included as part of the Information Pack and provided a useful update on recent work.

GB 23/58

BUDGET 2024/25 (GB 23/P94)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Governing Body **approved** the University's budget for 2024/25.

GB 23/59

FIVE-YEAR FINANCIAL OUTLOOK (GB 23/P95)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Governing Body **approved** the Five-Year Financial Outlook 2024/25 to 2028/29.

GB 23/60 STUDENT SUCCESS

Professor Derek Moore, PVC for the Faculty of Education, Health & Human Sciences and Claire Matthews, Director, UK Access, Recruitment and Admissions attended for this item.

60.1 Student Success Update (GB 23/P96)

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost gave a presentation on progress on the Success Student Sub-Strategy. Work was focussed on four distinct workstreams: Foundational Work, Innovations, Interventions and Enablers. A new strategic and methodological approach would bring together the work across the university on improving Student Success metrics. There would be a stronger alignment of work in Schools, Faculties and central teams and enhanced central oversight to ensure consistency, effectiveness and impact. A combination of general interventions (applicable to all metrics) and metric-specific interventions were designed to bring about improvement. The governance structure for Student Success had been reshaped and streamlined to improve efficiency and monitoring. Responsibility for monitoring the Access and Participation Plan, which aimed at targeting specific gaps, now came under the Student Success Board.

The Governing Body was briefed on some of the general interventions, including the new Student Success Evaluation Centre which would inform decision-making, track interventions and monitor their effectiveness; the establishment of metric stakeholder groups; and the creation of Faculty and School Student Success plans-on-a-page. The metric-specific interventions would have projects designed to address Continuation, the BAME Awarding Gap, Graduate Outcomes as well as the NSS. A new Academic Programme Taskforce, evolved from the NSS Taskforce, would increase the focus on all four metrics and would include

performance review at a programme and module level. A future proposal was the development of a student-at-risk dashboard.

It was agreed that a one-page guide for Governors on modules would be prepared, linked to the Student success work.

60.2 Approval of 2025/26-2028/29 Access and Participation Plan (GB 23/P97)

Professor Moore and Ms Matthews presented the final draft of the University's new Access and Participation Plan covering the five-year period 2025/26 to 2028/29.

Professor Moore reported that the current Access and Participation Plan (APP) would come to an end in September 2025. The APP reflected OfS regulatory requirements linked to the University's ability to charge the maximum tuition fee. For example, one focus had been to increase the number of students who were care-leavers and to reduce the gap in progression to employment between Black and White students: this had been reduced to zero. The new OfS Director of Fair Access and Participation, John Blake, had introduced changes for example, annual monitoring of targets was no longer carried out, and institutions were required to take a risk-based approach and set their own targets to drive the new Plan.

The primary focus of the new APP was to address gaps in access, attainment and progression in relation to Home undergraduate students. Notwithstanding the University's strategic commitment to eliminate all gaps by 2030, six specific targets had been set for the APP which had been modelled on realistic expectations of achievement. The targets would be assessed and re-modelled each year to ensure progress was on track. The Plan outlined the challenges and the strategies and interventions which would mitigate the risks to equality of opportunity. No new investment had been allocated but resources and spend would be specifically directed to the targeted areas of focus. A detailed schedule of fees, investment and targets (GB 23/P114a) had been provided to Governors as part of the Information Pack, together with the separate submission by the GSU (GB 23/P114b).

The following points were made in discussion:

- Noting the targets for attainment and progression for students from areas of high deprivation, Governors asked about the ways in which students were being supported financially. It was explained that the University understood that many students faced financial difficulties and offered internships, support from a Hardship Fund, opportunities for part-time employment and other cost-of-living initiatives to address this.
- Engagement with local employers was crucial to student success. The new Partnerships Hub would be looking at the University approach to encourage wider engagement from local employers. Governors offered their assistance with this.
- The Governing Body was assured that, notwithstanding the need to seek cost efficiencies, future projects and work to support students were being prioritised. As the result of benchmarking against the sector, some policies had been refreshed and streamlined for the benefit of students.

The Chair commended the APP team for their work in producing the new Plan.

The Governing Body **approved** the draft Access and Participation Plan 2025/26 to 2028/29 for submission to the OfS by 31 July 2024.

GB 23/61 FREEDOM OF SPEECH CODE OF PRACTICE (GB 23/P98)

The Governing Body noted that, since its last meeting, the Government had issued the statutory instruments which would bring most of the substantive provisions of the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023 into effect on 1 August 2024.

Under the terms of the Act, universities and students' unions were required to have a Freedom of Speech Code of Practice. The OfS had issued draft regulatory advice on freedom of speech which included guidance on Codes of Practice. The University's response to the OfS consultation on the guidance had been provided in the Information Pack (GB 23/P115). The University's Code of Practice had been revised to reflect the requirements of the 2023 Act and the OfS's proposed guidance in time for implementation on 1 August. The Governing Body **approved** the revised Freedom of Speech Code of Practice for adoption.

GB 23/62 DEGREE OUTCOMES STATEMENT 2022/23 (GB 23/P99)

The Governing Body considered the draft Degree Outcomes Statement for 2022/23. The statement confirmed that the percentage of 'Good Honours Degrees' (firsts and 2:1s) remained similar to previous years and had moved from 71.0% in 2021/22 to 71.5% in 2022/23. The Governing Body **approved** the 2022/23 Degree Outcomes Statement for publication on the University's website.

GB 23/63 GREAT 2023 EXERCISE (GB 23/P100)

The Governing Body considered a report on the 2023 GREAT exercise in preparation for the 2029 Research Excellence Framework (REF). The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (R&KE) reported that this was the first Greenwich REF Assessment Trials (GREAT) conducted since the 2021 REF. The exercise measured the quality of research outputs. The quality score multiplied by the number of staff with Significant Responsibility for Research determined the Research Power score. The University's KPI target was a Research Power score of 2000 by 2030.

The Governing Body noted that analysis of the results indicated that the University was making good progress to achieve its KPI target. Future work would focus on ensuring the production of high-quality outputs, optimising the number of staff with Significant Responsibility for Research and refining submission strategies for REF 2029. A key criterion for driving forward the work was the time allocated to research, and early career researchers were being recruited to support the University's strategic ambitions. The Governing Body was encouraged by the progress made in the preparations for REF 2029.

GB 23/64 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24 (GB 23/P101)

The Executive Director of People introduced the draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Annual Report for 2023/24 which had been prepared to meet the legislative requirement to publish equality information annually.

The Governing Body discussed the data on staff and students in the Appendix and how the data was labelled, noting that some "unknown" categories did not seem to make sense. It was explained that the data categories and classifications used for staff and students reflected those used by HESA. Governors were asked to convey any specific queries on the data to the Executive Director of People who would review these outside the meeting. The Governing Body was assured that

the management of data for this reporting requirement would be reviewed going forward.

Subject to clarification of the data presented in the report as “unknown”, the Governing Body **approved** the 2023/24 EDI Annual Report for publication on the University’s webpages.

GB 23/65 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR (GB 23/P102)

The Governing Body **approved**:

- (i) the appointment of Craig McWilliam as Chair of the Governing Body from 1 September 2024;
- (ii) the extension of Craig McWilliam’s final term as Independent Governor by one year until 31 August 2027.

It was noted that the current Chair, Bronwyn Hill, who would remain a Governor during 2024/25 until her third term of office expired on 31 August 2025, had been appointed by the Nominations, Staffing and Governance Committee to the Finance Committee. As this would be her last meeting as Chair, the Governing Body formally thanked Bronwyn for her service as Chair since August 2020. A celebratory event to recognise her service would be held in the autumn.

GB 23/66 STRATEGIC RISKS (GB 23/P103)

The Governing Body considered the quarterly Strategic Risk dashboard (June 2024). Some new actions had been added to three of the risks and commentary on the governance and management of risks related to the Devonport House project had been added to SRR9 (Estates and Digital).

The Vice-Chancellor’s Executive (VCE) had approved a change to the scoring to SRR6 (relating to Engagement, Skills and Capabilities of Staff). The residual risk score had been reduced from 12 to 8 following work to identify an appropriate metric for staff skills and capabilities.



GB 23/67 GOVERNING BODY COMMITTEES: MATTERS REQUIRING APPROVAL (GB 23/P104)

The Governing Body **approved** the following:

- (i) From the Finance Committee held on 3 June 2024:
 - Revised Committee Terms of Reference for immediate implementation
 - Letter of Support for Greenwich Students’ Union
- (ii) From the Nominations, Staffing and Governance Committee held on 4 June 2024:
 - Revised Committee Terms of Reference for immediate implementation

- (iii) From the Audit and Risk Committee held on 10 June 2024:
 - Revisions to the Risk Management Policy and Guidance
 - Revised Committee Terms of Reference for immediate implementation.
- (iv) From Academic Council held on 12 June 2024:
 - Student Protection Plan 2024/25 for submission to the OfS.

The meeting finished at 18:12.

T.A.Brighton
4 July 2024