

CANTERBURY CHRIST CHURCH UNIVERSITY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY HELD AT 4.00PM ON WEDNESDAY 5 OCTOBER 2022 IN VH3.03 (VERENA HOLMES BOARD ROOM)

Present: Ms J Armitt (Chair), Ms S Appleby, Mr D Bichener, Dr K Fox, Ms J Harding, Mr R Higgins, Bishop R Hudson-Wilkin, Mrs P Jones, Mrs A Newey, Mr C Stevens, Revd. R Stevenson, Mr J Stockwell, Professor R Thirunamachandran (Vice-Chancellor) and Mr J Wood.

In Attendance: Ms M Ayers (Director of HROD) [Minute 24 only]
Mr S Gwynne (Director of Estates and Facilities) [Minute 24 only]
Professor A Honour (Deputy Vice-Chancellor)
Mr D Leah (Director of Finance and Chief Financial Officer) *
Ms A Sear (University Solicitor & Clerk to the Governing Body)
Professor M Weed (Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research, Enterprise and Business Development))
Ms E Currie (Governance and Legal Services Assistant)

*Teams attendance

17. Opening Prayer

The opening prayer was delivered by Bishop R Hudson-Wilkin.

18. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Ms N Ahmed, Mr S Carey, Professor G Dewhurst and Dr A Eyden.

19. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

20. Chair's Communications

The Chair reported that she had attended the University's 60th Jubilee service in Canterbury Cathedral on 30 September and that it had been a wonderful event. There were several more celebratory events to follow.

The Governing Body meeting had been preceded by the Governing Body and SMT Strategy Day, which she hoped Governor colleagues had found useful.

21. Minutes of the Meetings of the Governing Body held on 28 June 2022

The minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on 28 June 2022 were agreed and signed as a true record.

22. Matters arising not appearing elsewhere on the agenda

There were no matters arising.

23. Report of the Vice-Chancellor [Paper P011]

The Vice-Chancellor was invited to present his report, Paper P011, to the Governing Body. The Vice-Chancellor said that he would firstly address recruitment, registration, and related student record system concerns. He clarified that although student recruitment had ended, student registration was ongoing. Student recruitment numbers were based on 'firm accepts' from applicants, however, this was immaterial unless those applicants registered with the University within the required timeframe. Therefore, student registration was equally as important as recruitment.

The Vice-Chancellor reported that the University was currently significantly under-recruiting Home Full-Time Undergraduate (FT UG) students, and Full-Time PGCE students. However, targets in other areas had been exceeded, and in aggregate these would balance out. It would nevertheless be vital to tackle the downward trend of FT UG students.

In terms of registration, the total target was to register 18,000 students. Positively, at the time of the meeting 92% of this number were fully registered. Outstanding students had at least started the registration process. The Vice-Chancellor said that this was the first year that registration had taken place within SITS, the new student record system. He acknowledged that there had been some teething problems, which was not unexpected with a large system implementation. There had been three significant issues:

- the interface with the virtual learning system (Blackboard) causing access issues for certain students;
- delays to individualised student timetables (ISTs); and
- interface between SITS and the Student Loan Company (SLC) had delayed receipt of maintenance loans for 1,236 students.

The SITS issues could be traced to problems with curriculum data coding. Circa 45 courses had not been coded correctly. It was important to note that SITS had exposed the problem, not created the problem. Due to these issues the University had been unable to use the automatic module population functionality, and modules had been populated manually, which had delayed the provision of ISTs. Emergency funding had been provided to students who had experienced delays in receiving their maintenance loans from the SLC. Academic colleagues had been on the front line of supporting students through these problems and their support was commended.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor confirmed that all SITS issues that impacted on students receiving their maintenance loans had been resolved within 24 hours of the University being alerted to the problem. The speed of the response did not diminish the gravity of the problem or the impact on affected students. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor said that circa 200 students were still experiencing problems and staff continued to work to resolve this. The Vice-Chancellor acknowledged the vital support that was provided by the SU in addressing these issues. The Vice-Chancellor said that he had personally apologised for the problems. The registration process had nevertheless run more smoothly than the previous year.

A Governor commented that it was clear that lessons had been learnt from the problems encountered at registration in 2021, in terms of the speed with which problems had been identified and addressed. The Governor had been involved with oversight of the Modernising Our Student Information (MOSI) Project due to her IT expertise. The Governor said that staff had worked extremely hard to bring the project to fruition. The University now had an incredibly knowledgeable team overseeing the system. The Chair agreed that some glitches were inevitable but that overall, the University was well positioned going forward. She thanked the Director of IT and Digital Strategy, her team and the IT specialist Governor for their work. She hoped that in time, the benefits of SITS would help improve the University's NSS scores by facilitating efficiencies for the benefit of students.

A Governor asked if the University was vulnerable in terms of retaining specialist staff who had implemented SITS. The Vice-Chancellor said that within IT there were a number of middle manager vacancies; specialist recruitment agencies and a market supplement policy were in place to address this. There was still a certain amount of work to undertake before SITS transitioned to business as usual and he expected the project to continue until at least February. Some of the staff resource on the project was either temporary or contract and would be expecting their contracts to end. Some permanent staff on the MOSI team would be moved out to other departments and faculties to support the transition to business as usual to ensure that key processes were embedded correctly. The Vice-Chancellor said it would also be essential to maintain a strong central oversight team.

The Vice-Chancellor addressed the cost-of-living crisis. He said that the CFO chaired a group considering the impact on the University's students. Various measures had been put in place to support students. It would also be necessary to consider the impact on staff. The Vice-Chancellor had discussed with SMT using the financial surplus to make a one-off payment to staff. A proposal would come to the November Governing Body meeting. The 2021/22 financial year results included a provision for such a payment which he felt was the correct approach. The payments' principle would be progressive in order to provide a benefit which more proportionately favoured lower paid staff.

A Governor asked if the Executive was able to give assurances about the 2023 registration process. The Vice-Chancellor said that as the problem with curriculum data had been identified the University would be able to fix it. Automated module population would be functional for the 2023 student registration. He noted that there remained several large pieces of work to complete over the following three months, including integrating the assessments module.

A Staff Governor said that in terms of the problems encountered with module titles, he had heard anecdotally that Course Directors had been asked for and provided this information multiple times. He suggested that there was a breakdown in communications. The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the University would seek feedback from Course Directors when investigating and addressing the problem.

The Chair asked if the 'Jubilee Scholarship' had helped to mitigate under recruitment to FT UG places. The Vice-Chancellor said the scheme had been neutral in effect. It had been a one-off measure and would not continue.

A Governor asked about the timings of the 2023 Teaching Excellent Framework (TEF) submission. The Vice-Chancellor said that the University had been awarded Silver for its previous TEF submission. The award was metric driven, and it would be critical to avoid being downgraded to Bronze.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, who would lead the TEF submission work, said that TEF was undertaken at provider level, not at course level. Although it was metric driven, each institution was given the opportunity to provide a supporting narrative to explain any 'red flags'. The University's metrics currently indicated a Bronze rating, but the Deputy Vice-Chancellor said that the University had a fair chance of increasing this to Silver with a strong accompanying narrative. The University would study submissions from other Universities who had received a Silver rating with Bronze metrics. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor said that the work would commence on publication of the TEF guidance. The University would work in partnership with the Students Union to make the submission.

A Governor asked about the disposal of Hall Place, and the Vice-Chancellor confirmed that this had been completed.

NOTED

24. Petros Court Cladding [Late paper] [Paper P019]

The Governing Body received commercially confidential Paper P019, Petros Court Cladding, which had been circulated as a late paper. The Governing Body discussed the paper and took some decisions. The discussion and the decisions are recorded separately in the Restricted Minutes.

25. Report of the Students' Union including SU Objectives 2022/23 [Paper P012]

The Governing Body received Paper P012 Report of the Students' Union including SU Objectives for 2022/23.

The Student Governor said that recent focus for the SU had been the issues around student registration and reregistration. He acknowledged that registration had gone well for most students, and that the University had responded quickly and efficiently to the problems mentioned at minute 23 by the Vice-Chancellor. However, for many students it had been a disappointing experience. The Student Union believed that 22% of non-collaborative students remained unregistered. He said that students' priority was to receive their timetables and their student loans, and the delay in receiving these due to registration problems created a lot of strain.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor clarified that students had received their timetables (generic) but it was the ISTs that were delayed, of which 50% had been allocated to date. The Students' Union Advice and Representation Manager had reported that some students were on placement before they had completed their registration. This was concerning and would be investigated urgently.

A Governor asked about the timeline for students receiving their ISTs. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor said that progress had been made, overseen by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (STEM). 75% of ISTs were expected to have been issued by the coming weekend. Student registration had to be completed by 14 October, so the issue would be fully addressed by that point. The Vice-Chancellor said that root of the problem, that the University needed to remedy for the future, was data quality for course coding, which also impacted access to blackboard.

The Student Governor said that the growth in student numbers due to the University's collaborative partnerships meant that the Union now represented significantly more students than in previous years. The Vice-Chancellor said that it was not financially feasible for the Union to represent all collaborative students in the same way as it represented non-collaborative students. The University would work to ensure that student representation for those at partner institutions was addressed. Networks between the various unions could be established. The Senior Pro Vice-Chancellor and the CEO of the Students' Union would take this forward.

The Student Governor reported that Freshers' Week had gone well, and it was extremely positive to see students back on campus in large numbers. He said that the Students' Union was grateful for the University's support in addressing the cost-of-living crisis for students.

NOTED

26. Governing Body Terms of Reference and Work Plan 2022/23 and Terms of Reference Compliance Statement 2021/22 [Paper P013]

The Governing Body received Paper P013, Governing Body Terms of Reference and Work Plan 2022/23 and Terms of Reference Compliance Statement 2021/22. The Clerk said there had been no material changes to the Terms of Reference. Having reviewed the workplan, the Chair asked that the Clerk consider how best to manage the busy November meeting. The Vice-Chancellor said that most of the papers that came to the November meeting were due to the

OfS regulatory requirements. The Clerk would review options to support the smooth running of the November meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Governing Body Terms of Reference 2022/23 and the Work Plan 2022/23 be approved, and that the Compliance Statement 2021/22 be noted.

Action: Clerk to review November 2022 meeting arrangements.

27. Risk Management: Risk Appetite Statement 2022/23, Risk Management Framework 2022/23 and High-Level Risk Register Summary [Paper P014]

The Governing Body received Paper P014, Risk Management: Risk Appetite Statement 2022/23, Risk Management Framework 2022/23 and High-Level Risk Register Summary. The CFO said that the paper was an update on the approach that would be taken to risk management.

The CFO said that the Risk Appetite Statement, Risk Management Framework and High-Level Risk Register would be reviewed once the new Strategic Framework was in place, to ensure alignment, and would come to the March 2023 Governing Body meeting for approval. The CFO said that the Risk item could be removed from the November work plan.

NOTED.

Action: Remove risk from Governing Body work plan for November 2022.

28. Termly Health and Safety Report [Paper P015]

The Governing Body received Paper P015, the Termly Health and Safety Report. The Vice-Chancellor said that the work of the Health and Safety team was no longer dominated by the Covid response. He noted the partnership with Kent Fire and Rescue Service, that was incredibly important not least because of the situation at Petros Court. There had been no RIDDOR reportable events in the reporting period.

NOTED

29. Calendars of Meetings 2022/23 and 2023/24 [Paper P016]

The Governing Body received Paper P016, Calendars of Meetings 2022/23 and 2023/24. The Clerk said that the 2023/24 dates were provided for diary management purposes. They would be confirmed, and calendar invites issued within the month.

NOTED

30. Summary Minutes of the Meetings of the Academic Board on 20 June and 22 August 2022 [Paper P017]

The Governing Body received Paper P017, Summary minutes of the meetings of the Academic Board on 20 June and 22 August 2022. The Vice-Chancellor said that the Academic Board had spent time considering student feedback at a granular level.

NOTED

31. Schedule of Delegation [Paper P018]

The Governing Body received Paper P018, the Schedule of Delegation. There were no changes to the Schedule of Delegation for 2022/23.

NOTED

32. Any other business

There was no other business to be discussed.

33. Confidential items

The commercially confidential elements of the Petros Court discussion would be kept confidential from the published minutes.

NOTED

The meeting closed at 5.45pm.