

Confirmed Minutes

Meeting:	Board of Directors' Meeting
Date:	18 March 2024
Time:	1 pm – 3 pm
Venue:	Ballroom, First Floor, Bedford Square

Name	Designation
Carol Cook - Chair	Non-Executive Director
Melanie Fellowes	Non-Executive Director
Abdul Pisavadi*	Non-Executive Director
John Fairhurst	Principal and Chief Executive Officer
Shabnam Karim	Chief Operating Officer and Chief Financial Officer
Alena Bakare	Student Representative
Sayed Sadat*	Student Representative (Student President)
Orlagh Maye	Staff Representative (Academic)
Sara Sackey	Staff Representative (Professional Services)
Maria Jackson - Secretary	Head of Governance and Company Secretary

In attendance:

Name	Designation
Sunmi Ayorinde	Deputy Chief Operating Officer
Cal Courtney	Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Joan O'Mahony	Deputy Principal

PRELIMINARY ITEMS	
1.0	<p>Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>C Cook welcomed everyone to the meeting and, in particular, Alena Bakare as Alena was joining the meeting as a student representative for the first time. In the circumstances, C Cook invited everyone to introduce themselves.</p> <p>M Jackson reported that apologies had been received from A Pisavadi and S Sadat.</p> <p>Declarations of interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest made.</p>
2.0	<p>Minutes for approval and Action Tracker/Matters Arising:</p>
	<p>2.1 <u>Minutes from the meeting of 22 January 2024</u></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting of 22 January 2024 were approved subject to the following amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Page 5, Agenda Item 5: correction to the initial of S Sadat's first name. Page 7, Agenda Item 20: the date of the next meeting should read "18 March 2024".

	<p>2.2 <u>Action Tracker and Matters Arising</u></p> <p>C Cook highlighted the following from the Action Tracker where updates were due:</p> <p>January 2024 Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda Item 11: Completed. <p>Matters Arising</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>
3.0	<p>Chair's Update [including Chair's Action taken since previous meeting]</p> <p>C Cook reported that she had not had cause to take Chair's Action on any matters since the January 2024 Board meeting. However, she reported on the resignation of K Bartlett, T Bolton and Victoria Holbrook from the Board.</p>
STRATEGIC BUSINESS	
4.0	<p>Principal's Report (For information)</p> <p>J Fairhurst provided an update on a recent UKVI matter that had been too late for inclusion within his report. He explained that the Home Secretary has asked the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) to advance its review of the graduate visa route given concerns by the government that the system is being abused. As a result, the MAC has now been asked to report back to the Home Secretary by 14 May 2024. Some sections of the press are reporting that this has been prompted by Conservative plans to include removal of the graduate visa route within their election manifesto. J Fairhurst said that removal of the scheme would impact on international student recruitment which, nationally, has already been impacted in response to the increasingly hostile environment the UK now presents overseas. This comes at a time when the UK had been expecting to take advantage of the restrictions English-speaking destinations such as Australia and Canada have been imposing on their international students.</p> <p>C Cook commented on how interesting she had found the HEPI Debate Paper on "What is wrong with franchise provision?"</p>
ACADEMIC QUALITY AND THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE	
5.0	<p>Student Guild Report</p> <p>A Bakare provided a verbal report on behalf of S Sadat which covered the following key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She was appointed as a Trustee of the Board of Trustees in February 2024 at what had proven to be a very productive meeting involving some lively discussions on future Guild activities. Some of these activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A staff vs student football match to encourage engagement and team building. ○ A talent show (Students Got Talent) to showcase the unique skills of our students. The heats will take the form of video performances and the final will involve a live stage performance. There will be cash prizes and the event will be broadcast on Bloomsbury Radio. ○ A series of debates – some of which will involve external speakers to encourage an open culture of debate.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Society Leads are being encouraged to submit their activity plans to A Bakare so that she can offer support where necessary. • A Bakare and S Sadat met with the Deputy CEO, Student Staff Liaison Manager and the Head of Quality to discuss how students can better participate in meetings. It was agreed in the meeting that students should be encouraged to share their comments throughout meetings and not just at the point at which the student voice appears as a specific agenda item. <p>In relation to the comment about student participation in meetings, C Cook asked A Bakare which meetings she was referring to. A Bakare confirmed that she was referring to all meetings to which student representatives are invited. C Cook explained that for Board meetings there is a specific agenda item for the Student Voice, but that she would very much welcome contributions to discussions from the student representatives throughout meetings.</p> <p>C Courtney said that the meeting had been extremely positive. He said he is very much in favour of students engaging in discussions throughout meetings rather than have any comments they might have confined to a specific item on the agenda.</p> <p>J O'Mahony agreed and said that the Quality, Assurance and Enhancement Committee, has always supported students to try to bring the student voice to bear in relation to every item on the agenda.</p> <p>J O'Mahony also commented on the importance of student representatives attending committee meetings, adding that she has asked D Bailey (Secretary to the QAEC) to look into whether there are currently any obstacles to students attending meetings.</p> <p>J Fairhurst commented on the hierarchical committee structure, explaining that each has its own Terms of Reference and so it is important to ensure that issues are raised at the appropriate committee. C Courtney added that it would not be appropriate to have the same discussions in multiple committees and so the Chair of any committee would have the right to refer any matters to another committee.</p> <p>J Fairhurst also reported that at the January 2024 Academic Committee meeting, one of the students had submitted an agenda item on the Turing Scheme which had proven an extremely interesting discussion topic and one which was subsequently referred to the SMT for consideration.</p> <p>A Bakare commented on the two very successful student representative training sessions that had been delivered jointly by the SSLM, SEWS and Quality. J O'Mahony said it would be good to repeat the training sessions for any students who might have missed them.</p> <p>J O'Mahony reported that S Sadat and A Bakare both sit on the Access and Participation Committee that she chairs, and reported that she will be engaging with the student body more widely on the development of our next Access and Participation Plan through a Student Focus Group that she is arranging for early April 2024. The Director of SEWS will be facilitating the session jointly with a representative from SEER. J O'Mahony added that she may invite representatives from the Student Unions of other IHE members.</p> <p>J O'Mahony also took the opportunity to comment on the impressive contribution of the former Student President to our TEF submission.</p> <p>C Cook stressed that within committee meetings (including meetings of the Board of Directors), all voices matter. She added that although students do not have voting powers in meetings of the Board of Directors, that does not detract from the value of their input to discussions. She asked therefore that the student representatives email her directly should they feel that we are not facilitating the student voice as that is her role as Chair of the Board of Directors.</p> <p>J O'Mahony supported the debating plans A Bakare had reported and suggested A Bakare contact Amadou Jammeh and Marcus Astley for possible ideas. It was noted that Orlagh Maye and Georgiana Ursachescu were already collaborating on a mootng initiative for students within the Law School.</p>
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6.0	<p>Academic Performance Report – January 2024</p> <p>J O'Mahony presented the January 2024 Academic Performance Report, explaining that this was the same report that the Board had received at its meeting in January 2024 as the February Award Board data had not been available at the time.</p> <p>[Redacted]</p> <p>C Cook noted the time lag before the Board would receive results from the February 2024 Award Board given that the Academic Committee needs to receive the Academic Performance Report first, but asked that an earlier report be shared with the Board should the results be of concern. J O'Mahony agreed to do so.</p> <p>J O'Mahony flagged that she would be making changes to the format of the Academic Performance Report going forward to reflect requests from the Academic Committee for a breakdown of data by course discipline as well as further information on the reasons for non-completion. C Cook welcomed plans to include course level data, recognising the challenges that small numbers present when considering data at a modular level. In terms of actions to improve outcomes (Section 3.2), C Cook asked J O'Mahony to include within her next report an analysis of what is working and what is not. J O'Mahony agreed to do so.</p> <p>J Fairhurst stressed the importance of contextual information when trying to determine what action (if any) is necessary when considering reports such as the Academic Performance Report. [Redacted]</p> <p>J Fairhurst stated that the Risk Management Working Group is currently reviewing our approach to risk management, including the incorporation of control measures and formal monitoring for Principal Risks that are included within the Corporate Risk Register.</p>
7.0	<p>Academic Assurance Report – January 2024</p> <p>J O'Mahony presented the January 2024 Academic Assurance Report, highlighting the following key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The OfS has now published a Summary TEF Statement (a summary of the Full Panel Statement). A response and action plan will be submitted to the Academic Committee in due course. • The Academic Committee has received a report on our NSS Results 2023 from a protected characteristics perspective. Although the report concluded that the results do not present any concerns other than a possible need to consider the experiences of students with a disability, J O'Mahony recommended that we assume that there are inequalities given the low numbers involved, and work to address them. • Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Reports were approved at the January 2024 meeting of QAEC and were submitted to the January Academic Committee for information. • Donna Leonard ran the 2022-23 In-Bloom programme and 7 staff have now been awarded Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA). • We have received very positive External Examiner Reports. • Following a recent CMI audit, our re-accreditation has been approved subject to some actions that M Astley is currently working on. <p>S Ayorinde flagged a mistake in Section 8 whereby it was stated that the Deputy Principal and Deputy CEO had met with Helen Weller (Head of Quality at Wrexham University) in December 2023. The meeting was attended by the Deputy COO rather than the Deputy CEO.</p>
8.0	<p>Academic Committee Report – January 2024</p> <p>J Fairhurst noted formally that he had circulated by email a correction to the Academic Committee Report following an amendment to the draft minutes of the January Academic Committee that had been requested by the Deputy Principal. The amendment was in relation to coverage of the Academic Performance Report and should now read as follows:</p>

	<p>“Following discussion, it was agreed a further breakdown of data would be provided. The Deputy Principal proposed that once this data is received, the Committee could make a decision on whether to incorporate this more granular data in the regular Academic Performance Report or have it presented separately.”</p> <p>The Committee received the Academic Committee Report and noted the above amendment.</p>
9.0	<p>Student Recruitment and Admissions Update</p> <p>There were no updates to report.</p>
AUDIT AND RISK	
10.0	<p>Prevent Risk Assessment – March 2024 Review</p> <p>M Jackson presented the March 2024 Review of the Prevent Risk Assessment and highlighted the following key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No amendments have been made to the risk ratings. • Updates to existing measures/actions to be taken include the following more substantial areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Removal of the statement about assessing the effectiveness of Prevent training following a change in approach to training. (Page 12) ○ The Deputy CEO has been substituted for the Head of Infrastructure and Estates in the event of us needing to develop a Room Hire Policy and Procedures. ○ Revision to the frequency of the compulsory Prevent online training for all staff. It will be completed every other year going forward in line with the SMT’s decision on compulsory training programmes for staff. <p>The Board of Directors approved the March 2024 review of the Prevent Risk Assessment. However, C Cook asked M Jackson to continue to consider the Risk Assessment through the lens of our international student profile.</p>
11.0	<p>APP KPI Milestones</p> <p>J O’Mahony presented the APP KPI Milestones report that had been drafted by SEER, explaining that an update to the OfS data dashboard had been due in March 2024, but this has now been deferred to May 2024. As a result, the latest OfS data we have relates to 2021-22. J O’Mahony reminded the Board of the challenges we face in terms of small datasets and large confidence intervals.</p> <p>In terms of development of our new Access and Participation Plan, J O’Mahony explained that we will be expected to address all risks in the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register and to focus not only on the intake in hand, but also on all future intakes.</p>
FINANCIAL AND CORPORATE	
12.0	<p>Reforecast 2023-24</p> <p>S Karim said that she had nothing to report for this particular meeting.</p>
NOMINATIONS AND GOVERNANCE	

13.0	<p>Governance Updates</p> <p>M Jackson presented the Governance Updates report, highlighting the following in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A report commissioned by the Council for the Defence of British Universities that identifies consistent deficits in current governance arrangements and cultures based on interviews with 47 current or former members of governing bodies. • Reflections by the Head of Governance and Consulting at Advance HE on the degree of progress that has been made in the context of university governance effectiveness. • A spate of recent cases in which universities have been found negligent/guilty. • Calls for universities to sign up to a global Misconduct Disclosure Scheme.
COMPLIANCE AND REGULATION	
14.0	<p>Compliance Report</p> <p>It was noted that there was nothing to report at this meeting.</p>
15.0	<p>Access and Participation Plan</p> <p>15.1 <u>APP: Update Report</u></p> <p>J O'Mahony reported that she is working very closely with SEER on our new Access and Participation Plan (APP) which is due for submission to the OfS by 1 October 2024 (for implementation from 2025-26), and stressed the value that the OfS places on such collaborative partnerships.</p> <p>J O'Mahony explained that the intention is to close off as many actions as possible from the current APP and to focus in the new APP on only a few key strategic measures. In terms of timelines, she said that she plans to submit to the SMT a draft of the core of the Plan in May 2024, a full draft in June and a final draft in July. The Board will then receive the APP for approval at its July 2024 meeting.</p>
16.0	<p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</p> <p>16.1 <u>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee Report</u></p> <p>The Board of Directors received M Jackson's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee Report.</p> <p>16.2 <u>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2022-23</u></p> <p>M Jackson presented the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2022-23 and highlighted the following key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite a number of changes (staffing and structural), Bloomsbury Institute's equality, diversity and inclusion agenda continued to feature strongly, influencing policy reviews where relevant. • We continued to extend our external profile in the EDI space in 2022-23 through the Head of Governance and Company Secretary's membership of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ London Higher's EDI Network at which she gave a presentation on EDI Governance within HE. ○ Advance HE's Race Equality Charter Small and Specialist Institutes Working Group. ○ QAA Academic Integrity Collaborative Enhancement Project team. ○ IHE's Demonstrating Inclusive Cultures Working Group at which she gave a presentation on Bloomsbury Institute's Inclusive Learning Environment Framework.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion continues to be reflected in our student and staff profile, and student feedback - both internal (through our Initiation Course Evaluations and Student Module Evaluation Questionnaires) and external (through the NSS). The Head of Governance and Company Secretary was not able to complete all elements of the EDI Action Plan for 2022-23 due to competing priorities and, in some case, factors beyond her control. The Head of Governance and Company Secretary submitted a proposal to the March 2024 SMT to revisit our Inclusive Learning Environment Framework and map it against recent research /current best practice in order to enhance our own practices. The Proposal was agreed. <p>J O'Mahony stressed the importance of all members of the SMT engaging with the review of our Inclusive Learning Environment Framework and committing to further initiatives. She added that this would support our APP ambitions. J Fairhurst agreed.</p>
POLICY AND DOCUMENT APPROVAL	
17.0	<p>Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom</p> <p>The Board approved the Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom as recommended for approval by the SMT.</p>
18.0	<p>Staff Recruitment and Development Policy</p> <p>The Board approved the Staff Recruitment and Development Policy as recommended for approval by the SMT.</p>
19.0	<p>Privacy Notice</p> <p>The Board approved the Privacy Notice as recommended for approval by the SMT.</p>
20.0	<p>Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement</p> <p>The Board approved the Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement as recommended for approval by the SMT.</p>
21.0	<p>Conditions of Registration – Bloomsbury Institute's Compliance</p> <p>The Board approved Conditions of Registration – Bloomsbury Institute's Compliance as recommended for approval by the SMT.</p>
OTHER BUSINESS	
22.0	There were no items of Other Business.
DATE/TIME OF NEXT MEETING	
20.0	Date: 3 June 2024. Time and venue to be confirmed.