

*the*  
**GOVERNING BODY**

**MINUTES of the Governing Body Business Meeting held on Wednesday,  
16 October 2024 in room HH103, Hamilton House, 15 Park Vista, Greenwich  
SE10 9LZ and via Microsoft Teams, held at 16.30**

**Present:** Mr C McWilliam (Chair) Mr S Saluja  
Mr A Chowdhury Ms J Seehra-Pearce  
Professor J Harrington (Vice-Chancellor & CEO) Mr A Sharma  
Ms B Hill CBE Dr S Sweeney  
Ms T King MS E Sideris  
Mr M Orr

**In attendance:**

Mrs T Brighton (Governance Support Manager)(minutes)  
Ms K Dawson (CEO, Greenwich Students' Union)(Item 24/07)  
Mr P Garrod (University Secretary)  
Professor V Lemm (Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost)  
Mr G Lewis (Director of Strategy Programme Office)(Item 24/09)  
Professor J Marie (PVC Education)(Item 24/07)  
Mr K Molden (Head of Strategic Planning: PIS)(Item 24/07)  
Mr P Taylor (Chief Operating Officer)  
Ms L Watson (Chief Financial Officer)  
Professor A Westby (Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Knowledge Exchange))

**Apologies for Absence:**

Professor B Boag  
Ms P Coles  
Mr R Hicks  
Mr R Patel

GB 24/01 WELCOME

The Chair welcomed Ameen Chowdhury who was attending his first meeting as the GSU President.

GB 24/02 ITEM FROM THE CHAIR

**2.1 Governing Body Effectiveness Review**

The Chair drew the Governing Body's attention to the update in the Information Pack on the Governing Body effectiveness review being conducted by Halpin Partnership (GB 24/P12). A link to a survey for completion by Governors would be circulated the next day. Focus groups and interviews with the consultants were also being arranged. The draft report and recommendations were scheduled for review by the People & Governance Committee on 4 February 2025 prior to presentation of the final report to the Governing Body's meeting on 25 February 2025.

GB 24/03 DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

No declarations of conflict of interests were made.

GB 24/04 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND ACTIONS (GB 24/P01)

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2024 were approved. The actions tracker was received.

GB 24/05 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT (GB 24/P02)

The Vice-Chancellor briefed the Governing Body on two reputational issues which were likely to attract media attention. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and the other concerned a Greenwich student who was currently suspended awaiting trial for murder and attempted murder.

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

- **Registration and Welcome:** Improvements in the registration process over the last couple of years had resulted in an earlier and smoother registration experience for students. About c3500 more students had completed registration at this time compared to the previous year. This had, in turn, led to much higher engagement in Welcome activities.
- **National Student Survey (NSS) 2024 Results:** The NSS 2024 results published in August indicated that the University was broadly on target for its student satisfaction KPI, having achieved an average of 81.3% for 'Assessment and Feedback' and 'Teaching on My Course'. However, the sector was improving more rapidly than the University and work was focussing on how to accelerate the improvement (see also minute 24/07).
- **League Table Results:** In recently published university league tables, Greenwich had fallen one place in the Guardian and three places in the Daily Mail and had improved by three places in the Sunday Times league table. There were various reasons for the results including sector issues around the submission of student-related HESA data, but the results were nevertheless disappointing. Improving Greenwich's core student success metrics was an immediate priority. The metrics were expected to start to shift in the right direction once the latest HESA data was fed into the next set of League Table results.
- **Level 7 Apprenticeships:** The Government had published its first report on Skills England and announced changes to the apprenticeship provision. The Growth and Skills Levy would be restricted to selected areas of training, with employers expected to fund more of the level 7 apprenticeships. These changes could have an impact on some of Greenwich's provision and the University would be supporting lobbying to ensure that specific programmes would be eligible for the Levy.

As an update to the communication sent to Governors by the Chief Financial Officer at the end of September on the University's financial position, the Vice-Chancellor reported that Faculties and Directorates had been instructed to identify savings. More detailed information would be shared with Governors at the November Finance Committee and Governing Body meetings.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Kate Dawson (Chief Executive, Greenwich Students' Union), Professor Vanessa Lemm (DVC & Provost), Karl Molden (Head of Strategic Planning: Planning, Insight & Student Numbers) and Professor Jenny Marie (PVC Education) provided an update on the Student Success Sub-Strategy.

### 7.1 Student Success KPIs: Latest Results 2024

The Governing Body received a presentation on the current performance of the four Student Success KPIs:

- KPI1 (**Continuation**): the latest results for the 2021/22 cohort indicated a decline of 2.4% points to 83.4%. This was above the average sector decline of 1.6% points and below the yearly KPI milestone of 90.5%.
- KPI2 (**National Student Survey (NSS)**): as core areas used in League Tables, the KPI on student satisfaction measured the positive responses to the 'Teaching on my Course' and 'Assessment and Feedback' questions. There had been an improvement in the KPI performance of 0.3% but the sector had increased more, by 0.5% and Greenwich had moved down rankings from 57<sup>th</sup> to 69<sup>th</sup> place.
- KPI3 (**Graduate Outcomes**): the 2024 results, which related to students graduating in 2021/22, showed a decline of 3.9% points. This performance reversed the 4.5% improvement of the previous year and the overall employment and further study rate was now 86% against the sector average of 89%.
- KPI4 (**BAME Awarding Gap**): the latest results for the 2022/23 graduating cohort indicated a widening of the gap by 4.4% points to 17.5%, against the sector average gap of 12.5%. Absolute awarding rates for both white and BAME students showed a reduction for both since 2019/20 and this was associated with the return to pre-Covid awarding levels.

In discussing the OfS's most recent Progression metric for **Graduate Outcomes**, the Governing Body noted that graduate outcomes data was collected 15 months after graduation, which introduced a degree of lag in the metric. In the latest Progression metric, Greenwich had dropped 2.9% points. This mirrored the performance across modern London institutions which had seen an average drop of 4% points. The changes in performance appeared to be driven by external factors (such as severe economic uncertainty and the volatile job market post Covid). Whilst all institutions were moving in the same direction, marginal differences in performance were important as they fed into league table performance.

With regard to the **BAME Awarding Gap**, the Governing Body was advised that there was a significant correlation between the results and the number of students who worked, were from low socio-economic backgrounds or had non-traditional entry qualifications. The Governing Body asked about factors which had influenced the decline in Asian progression rates. It was reported that the Business School had one of the most diverse student populations including high numbers of Asian students who had lower employability outcomes. There was generally some association with subjects. Strategically, Greenwich was aware that some programmes had higher employability rates than others, but it was necessary to offer a balanced academic programme. Some institutions had achieved success through a targeted approach and the Governing Body noted that Greenwich was seeking to address this challenge through the '100 modules' programme (tailored action plans and interventions targeted at the 100 modules with the most significant gaps).

The Governing Body noted that the data gathered fed into the Access and Participation Plan. The University was proud of its work in taking students from different backgrounds and giving them opportunities for higher education.

## 7.2 Student Success Sub-Strategy

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost outlined the ongoing work associated with the Student Success Sub-Strategy. There were four workstreams (Foundations, Innovations, Interventions and Enablers (relevant to other strategies as well)) with Interventions particularly focussed on improving the Student Success metrics and enhancing the student experience and outcomes.

- **Foundations:** Strong progress had been made in putting the foundations in place to enable student success. A new governance structure had been implemented and an annual student success communications plan developed. The Continuous Improvement Tool had gone live and programme leaders of taught programmes could now access all the metrics related to their programme's performance. The new Greenwich Tutoring Framework to improve student pastoral and academic support had started a two-year roll out and new Faculty Student Advisors had been appointed for 2024/25. The Quality Assurance review in train aimed to streamline modification and programme approval processes.
- **Innovations:** The business plan for Greenwich Online was being developed and would provide a new income stream. A draft of the new Curriculum Framework, which was intended to ensure that curricula aligned with the University's strategic ambitions and followed a standardised credit framework, was nearing completion. The high-level benefits of the project were summarised and it was agreed that a more detailed information note on the operational efficiencies and impact on the student experience would be provided to Governors at a later date.
- **Interventions:** The Academic Programme Taskforce had been launched and would support programmes where there was poor performance in any of the core Student Success metrics. Stakeholder Groups for each of the metrics had been established to oversee progress and identify impactful interventions to increase or accelerate the impact of the work. Faculty and School Plans on a Page for 2024/25 had been developed to coordinate work to improve metrics across the University. To help improve the continuation and BAME gap metrics, a pre-arrival provision had been delivered for the first time and a new, simplified, Extenuating Circumstances Policy introduced for the 2024/25 academic year.

The Governing Body supported the new approach of Foundations, Innovations and Interventions and hoped that the focus on metrics and standardisation of programmes would not detract from their value-added. Assurance was given that there continued to be opportunities for staff to be innovative and create exciting and engaging content. It was agreed that the appointment of Faculty Student Advisors was a helpful development for students and would be a valuable source of qualitative information on the varying needs of students.

It was explained that the Curriculum Framework would aid understanding of the profitability of programmes to ensure that the curriculum was financially viable. Governors were pleased to note that the revised framework included the embedding of employability into the content of programmes. Ongoing work around Graduate Attributes would help to identify what made a Greenwich graduate distinctive and could bring real marketing advantages.

## 7.3 Greenwich Students' Union NSS Action Plan

The CEO of GSU reported on GSU's role in improving the NSS metrics. GSU's work on student voice aligned with Questions 22-25, with Question 25 specifically

about the work of GSU in representing students' academic interests. Generally, the results for these questions had been positive but GSU was seeking to improve them. GSU was working to improve the response rate and was working with the new Evaluation Centre to understand which interventions were working and track progress. The Governing Body was given assurance that, notwithstanding the focus on metrics, students remained at the heart of the work. The CEO also noted that GSU supported the steps that the University was taking to improve continuation.

In response to questioning, the CEO advised that the GSU's greatest challenge was understanding how to support the varying needs of students from different socio-economic backgrounds and addressing the real barriers to engaging in student life.

The Governing Body thanked the presenters for the informative update and expressed support for the approach and work being taken forward.

#### GB 24/08 HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT UPDATE (GB 24/P05)

The University Secretary presented an update on harassment and sexual misconduct and the new OfS condition of registration (condition E6). The OfS's consultation on the proposed condition had closed in May 2023. The requirements would come into effect on 1 August 2025, with the exception of a ban on the use of non-disclosure agreements in student harassment and sexual misconduct cases which came into effect on 1 September 2024. The University was already in compliance with this latter requirement, having signed up to Can't Buy My Silence's Universities Pledge.

He reported that many of the requirements related to the creation of a 'single comprehensive source of information' and minimum content requirements which specified what was required to be published on the University's website. The University had much of what was required already in place, and it should be possible to get the 'single source of information' ready by early the New Year. The University had launched mandatory training in harassment and sexual misconduct for students at the start of the September Welcome period and training for staff was due to be developed. The Governing Body noted the update.

#### GB 24/09 STRATEGIC KPIS (GB 24/P06)

The Governing Body received an update on the performance of six Strategy Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). In addition to the updates on the four student success KPIs considered earlier in the meeting (see minute 24/07), the Governing Body noted that:

- *KPI5: Inclusivity and Culture: Gender Pay Gap* – the latest results showed the gap had narrowed by 1.4% points and that the annual Strategy milestone had been met.
- *KPI9: Financial Sustainability – Operating cash as a percentage of income* – the latest result of 9.8% exceeded the annual minimum threshold of 8%.

In relation to KPI3 (*Graduate Outcomes*), the Director of the Strategy Programme Office reported that following a review of the KPI, it was being proposed that the University should change its methodology and modelling for KPI3 to that used by the OfS for calculating its 'Progression' metric (ie student progression to highly skilled employment and/or further study). In light of the proposed change in the metric and the sector's current performance, it was further proposed that the Strategy-end target of 85% should be reset to 80%. This would currently equate to

a ranking of 15<sup>th</sup> in the sector. The trajectory and yearly milestones to achieve this would also need to be revised.

The Governing Body noted that the proposed target of 80% remained ambitious but the modelling would still aim to have Greenwich amongst the top 30 in the sector by 2030 and agreed that the move seemed sensible. Accordingly, the Governing Body **approved** the change in data methodology for the Graduate Outcomes 'Progression' KPI and the revised Strategy-end target and yearly milestones.

GB 24/10 STRATEGIC RISKS (GB 24/P07)

The Governing Body considered the quarterly Strategic Risk dashboard (October 2024). Some new controls and actions had been added to nine of the risks and the commentaries had been updated to reflect recent developments, such as the latest KPI performance (referenced in minute 24/04).

The Vice-Chancellor's Executive (VCE) had approved a change to the scoring to SRR2 (*Student Recruitment*) to reflect the more challenging recruitment environment. The residual risk score had been increased from 12 to 16 thereby moving the risk above its tolerance threshold. The commentary highlighted risks associated with both home and international recruitment. It was noted that the VCE had chosen not to reduce the risk scoring of SRR3 (Financial Sustainability) given the measures being implemented to ensure that financial targets were achieved. While the detail in report was useful, it was suggested that the risk commentaries be reviewed with a view to making them more concise.

GB 24/11 GOVERNING BODY APPOINTMENTS (GB 24/P08)

The Governing Body **approved** the following on the recommendation of the Nominations, Staffing & Governance Committee:

- (i) the appointment of **Murray Orr** as the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body for the remainder of his term as a Governor;
- (ii) the extension of the final terms of **Murray Orr** and **Tricia King** by one year to 31 August 2026, as well as the extension of their committee chair/vice-chair appointments;
- (iii) the re-appointment of **Ameet Sharma** to a third term as an Independent Governor commencing in September 2025.

GB 24/12 GOVERNING BODY COMMITTEES: MATTERS REQUIRING APPROVAL (GB 24/P09)

The Governing Body **approved** the following:

- *From the Nominations, Staffing & Governance Committee held on 1 October 2024:*
  - A change to the Committee's name from the Nominations, Staffing & Governance Committee to the People & Governance Committee with immediate effect.
  - Amendments to the Governing Body Delegation Framework following annual review.
- *From the Academic Council held on 2 October 2024:*
  - 2024 Annual Statement on Research Integrity for publication.
  - Revised Academic Council Terms of Reference for immediate implementation.

- *From the Finance Committee held on 7 October 2024:*
  - The Business Case and overall project budget of £8.08m (incl VAT) for the refurbishment of the Boleyn Halls of Residence at the Avery Hill Campus.

The meeting finished at 18:20.

T.A.Brighton  
31 October 2024