

BUSINESS COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

MINUTE OF MEETING HELD IN MEETING ROOM 2, DAVID RUSSELL APARTMENTS, ST ANDREWS

Saturday 18th January 2020, 10am

Present: Stuart Bryan (SB), Annabel Hamid (AH), Jonathan Hewitt (JH) General Council Assessor, Gregory Newman (GN), Stephanie O'Rourke (SOR) and Wendy Russell (WR), Acting Convener

In Attendance: Alastair Merrill, Registrar & Clerk & VP Governance (AM)

Via Video-link: Alison Baverstock, Alan Chalmers (AC)

Apologies: Nigel Christie (NC), Brittany Collins (BC), Adrian Greer (AG), Grace Lyon (GL), Eliane Sum (ES), Principal

Abbreviations BC = Business Committee of the General Council
 GC = General Council

1. Introduction and appointment of minute secretary.

The Convener welcomed everyone including Jonathan Hewitt, the recently appointed General Council Assessor who was attending his first BC meeting. General introductions were made. The agenda was agreed as circulated and no other competent business was intimated. SB was appointed to take the minute for the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

As noted above.

3. Minute of Business Committee Meeting 19 January 2019

The draft minute was approved in full.

Matters Arising

1. Alumni Engagement – This item will be covered under Item 7 on the Agenda.

4. Election of Vice Convener

The Convener proposed that an email process be adopted for the election of a Vice Convener of the Business Committee. All agreed this was a sensible way forward.

Action: The Convener to send an email to all BC members asking them to consider putting themselves forward for the post of Vice-Convener. Email to include all deadline dates for nomination etc.

5. Revision of Standing Orders

The Convener explained that the September 2019 discussion related to co-opted members of the Court only. The paper had now been expanded after discussion with the Vice-Principal (Governance).

The BC agreed to the following wording changes:-

- Chairman to be replaced by President.
- He/She/His/Her to be replaced by They and Their.

The above is standard in terms of University documentation.

It was agreed at the September 2019 meeting that it was helpful to have ex-officio members from the Court attend BC meetings. A discussion was held to facilitate ways to help this to take place, including having BC meetings the day after Court meetings. BC also discussed who the ex-officio Court members should be since it is not practicable to use longest serving status. It was agreed that Court would decide who the named ex-officio members would be.

The Convener brought to BC members attention the fact that the current definition of a motion for the General Council meetings could be more helpfully described. It is currently too broad and effectively means that any issue could be taken to a General Council meeting, whether or not it falls within the competence of GC. After discussion BC members decided that a motion submitted to the General Council “should be 150 words or fewer and must always fall within the competence of the General Council”.

The Convener stated that the dates of the General Council Statutory Meetings on the University calendar need to be updated to reflect current practice i.e. no meetings now take place in January.

Action:

1. Convener to write to the Chair of Governance and Nominations Committee to ask who are the two co-opted Court members who will be ex officio members of the GCBC; also, to set out how Court members can add value and the nature of the role on the GCBC. To be completed following the April 2020 meeting once there is greater clarity around the skills of the existing GCBC as a group.
2. The Vice-Principal (Governance) to add this to the agenda, as a discussion item, at the next meeting of the Governance and Nominations Committee.

3. Convener to prepare a motion for the June 2020 GC meeting to address the agreed changes to Standing Orders.

6. Business Committee - Delivering Value

a. Review of draft alumni engagement paper

A short-term working group produced a discussion paper for review by the BC. Members agreed that this was the most important topic on today's agenda.

The Convener has met with the Development Office and clarified that the BC would not move forward without involving them in any further discussion and collaboration. In taking any of the recommendations forward BC and the Development Office need to work together. The working group will spearhead this collaborative approach.

Members considered that the suggestions were good but that they could be expanded. It was suggested that events to promote engagement are held around the time of GC meetings.

The Principal has agreed to include a comment in her Graduation Speech to the effect that all new graduates have become members of the GC.

Action:

1. AH, SOR and WR (Convener) to meet again virtually to follow-up on the discussions held and prepare for a meeting with the Director of Development (Robert Fleming).
2. Convener to invite a member of the Student Association to a future GCBC meeting.

b. Entrepreneurship

AC introduced the topic. Since BC represents the graduate body, how does it develop an entrepreneurial strand to support the University? Then how does any activity get taken forward? Looking to those on the Donor role may be helpful as they are already actively engaged with the University. The key question is how can BC make a difference over and above the actions being taken forward by the University itself? The University's Enabling Strategy for the Entrepreneurial strand is not currently available. The Eden Campus is an exciting challenge in this regard. The University had investigated the establishment of an investment fund for entrepreneurship but had decided against that preferring to engage with Development Office to support and in time build a network with sympathetic investors. The Eden Campus and Tay City deal will create a hub similar to the technology hub in Edinburgh. Support from GC would be very welcome and anyone interested should engage with Derek Watson, Quaestor and Factor, who is leading on this area.

The Convener stated that it was important that any initiatives from BC align with the University's own plans and goals. The Entrepreneurial Enabling Strategy should be available by April 20.

Action:

3. VP Governance to share the 'Enabling Strategy' for Entrepreneurship with GCBC once available
4. AB, AC and WR (Convener) to meet virtually to take forward the entrepreneurship strand and report back to the April meeting. Includes meeting with Derek Watson (Quaestor and Factor).

7. GCBC Skills Matrix

The Convener explained that the Court publishes a skills matrix on the website. BC completed one two years ago and used the same skills. It was agreed that there was a need to repeat the survey with the BC; this will give an idea of the strengths of the committee as a whole and help with identifying any potential need to co-opt members. All agreed to go ahead; the survey results will be anonymised.

It was agreed by the BC that additional skills could be added to the matrix but it should retain the same skills as used by the Court for comparison purposes.

Action: Convener to send out online survey to GCBC members to gather the data necessary to create an anonymised skills matrix.

8. Ordinances & Resolutions Sub-Committee

There was nothing to report.

9. General Council Meeting, 30 November, 2019

There were 37 GC members in attendance compared to 39 the previous year, including a number of BC members. The next meeting is scheduled to take place on June 27th in Parliament Hall. The invited speaker will be Professor Peddie, Proctor and Vice Principal of Education.

10. Oral Report from General Council Assessor

JH had attended his first Court meeting the day before - 17th January. He reported that there was a high level of debate, focus, and openness to challenge. The Principal's report focused on the graduation, work done to minimise disruption from strike action, senior lay member election and strategic pillars. He considered that the People Strategy and Mental Health Strategy were very impressive. He was impressed by the completeness of the strategy and how they were aligned to the strategic pillars. He noted that a system of KPIs for Court is in development – for analysis for how the University is performing. An update on all the projects indicated they are progressing well.

11. Oral Report from VP Governance

This report covered the following areas:-

- The People Strategy, the last of the 'enabling strategies' that sit beneath the overall strategic plan. Owing to an extensive consultation and the fact that it was built from the ground up using a shared set of values, it had taken longer to complete. 'You said, we will events' are taking place and these will be followed by 'You said, we did events'
- Two thousand students graduated during the December graduations.
- The Senior Lay member election took place and Catherine Stihler was successfully elected.
- 450 professional services staff will be relocated to Walter Bower House; this will give greater efficiency and free up town centre space.
- The Laidlaw Music centre will be opened in the first week of April for University 2020 stakeholder meeting and alumni festival.
- There have been eight days of strike action – staff liaison was good and the measures taken were successful. It is hoped that disruption will be minimised during the 14 days of strike action scheduled in Feb/March 2020. The University is keeping lines of communication open; it is a national dispute but with sustained effort to minimise local impact. There will be pro-active communication with overseas students.
- A Director of People reporting to V-P (Governance) is to be recruited in 2020. There will be a pause in the process given relocation and the recent adoption of the people strategy.

12. Dates of GC and Business Committee meetings

A list of relevant dates was circulated by email.

The next GC meeting is on 27th June at 10.30, Parliament Hall

The next BC meeting is on 4th April 2020 by V.C.

The Alumni Weekend, is scheduled for 4th/5th April.

Action: Convener to issue invitation to BC members to make up a table at the Alumni dinner in April - to include partners/guests. [Note: The Alumni weekend and all activities have subsequently been cancelled due to the Covid19 pandemic].

13. AOCB

There was no other competent business. The Convener thanked all those in attendance. The meeting closed at 12.45pm.