OPEN BUSINESS

90.1. Introduction

90.1.1. Welcome

The President welcomed Prof van Asselt to his first in-person meeting of Governing Body and said that Ellie Greer would join the meeting to speak to item 90.5 (Pathways Programme).
The President informed Governing Body that Dr Alastair Lockhart had recently resigned his fellowship to take up appointment at another college. He acknowledged Dr Lockhart’s contribution to Hughes over many years and said that Dr Lockhart would continue in his role as Statutes & Ordinances Review Lead.

90.1.2. Declarations of interests (Open Business)
There were no declarations of interests.

90.2. Minutes and Matters arising from the Open Business of Governing Body, of 14 June 2023

90.2.1. Approval of minutes (GB90 01)
Governing Body approved the minutes as an accurate record.

90.2.2. Governing Body action list: Open Business
There were no items outstanding.

90.2.3. Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda
Decisions made/information noted by circulation since the meeting of 14 June 2023

90.2.3.1. {[REDACTED]}

***90.2.3.2. Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) (GB90 03)
Governing Body noted without discussion that a paper from the Head Of Facilities confirming that none of the College’s buildings contained RAAC had been circulated since the last meeting.

90.3. President’s report
The President reported the following:

- The current Director of Institutional Advancement had announced his intention to retire and a new Development Director would be recruited.
- The election of a new Vice-President (from 1 September 2024) was planned for the meeting of 14 Feb 2024. The President encouraged Fellows to think about potential candidates.
- The start to the new academic year had been busy with student numbers close to expectations.
- There were some staff shortages in key roles which were affecting day-to-day operations and hindering progress on new projects. Filling the vacancies was a key priority.
- The situation in the Middle East was having impact on some students and senior members. The President planned to meet with those affected by the conflict.
- Council had discussed how the 2030 Vision would be implemented and agreed that there should be a Strategy and Implementation Group to work in parallel with Council to ensure that momentum was not lost. The President requested willing co-optees to join the Group.

90.4. Update on development strategy
The Director of Institutional Advancement gave an update on development strategy for three targeted areas - estate development, supporting academic excellence, and Bridge projects. He requested suggestions from Fellows for people he could approach to join the Campaign Board and said that he planned to circulate a draft of the communication for the campaign.
90.5. Update on the Pathways programme

Ellie Greer gave a short presentation on the Pathways programme, which was off to a good start with just under 40% of new students (150) participating and 26 online modules already available. She and the Head of Student Welfare and Wellbeing were offering 1:1 advice and guidance on wellbeing.

The Senior Tutor congratulated the team on the work achieved in a short space of time and thanked the Steering Group for their contribution. She said that the pilot programme was being evaluated to learn from experience and to assess whether/how the investment was making a difference for students. The evaluation was being conducted by the Faculty of Education under the leadership of Dr Sonia Ilie.

Dr Ilie gave details of the evaluation study, which would adapt as the study progressed and would compare the impact of the different methods of delivery within the programme. She and the Senior Tutor responded to questions raised during discussion.

One issue raised concerned the source of Pathways content, and whether the cost of developing content in-house might prove costlier than buying access to pre-existing third-party content, which had the benefit of economies of scale. The Senior Tutor advised that external offerings had been considered, but that it had been decided that it would be better to develop content in-house that could be tailored to the Hughes student community and adapted according to feedback. However, the inclusion of external materials had not been ruled out. The President added that the cost-effectiveness of ‘build or buy’ decisions depended on the degree of personalisation needed and the cultural fit of ready-made solutions.

90.6. Update on Statutes and Ordinances’ review

The Bursar reported that the S & O Review Working Group was being led by Dr Alastair Lockhart and included himself, Ms Emily Farnworth, and Dr Lars Vinx, and was supported by Julia Watkinson. Dr Lockhart had committed to continue the work, despite his recent move to Churchill College (which had recently undergone a similar review), and would provide a report to the Working Group in Lent term.

The working assumption was to reduce the trustee body from the entire Governing Body to Council (a body of around 15-18 trustees) in line with the College’s auditors’ recommendation and Charity Commission guidance. The review would cover the entire Statutes and Ordinances, not just the size of the trustee body, including committee structure and disciplinary processes.

In response to questions the Bursar confirmed that there would be stage points in the review process where insights and options would be put to Governing Body. He thought it likely that, in line with Charity Commission guidance on best practice, a term limit for trustees would be set and that GB Fellows would take on trusteeship on a rolling basis. He noted Fellows’ concerns about the future role of Governing Body and its relationship with the body of trustees expressed during the discussion. He encouraged Fellows to share views or concerns with himself or Dr Lockhart before the next meeting of Governing Body.

90.7. Year-end management accounts (to 31 July 2023) (GB90 04)

The Bursar reported that the position at the year-end was a net surplus of £16k, just below forecast. He paid tribute to the finance team who had managed to deliver a forecast to the accuracy of around £10k
in an £8m budget, and also to the conference team, who had made good conference bookings over the
summer and contributed to the surplus.

90.8. Re-stated budget 2023-24 (GB90 05)

The Bursar presented a restated budget for 2023-24, which had been reviewed by Council (10 October)
and Finance Committee (16 October 2023). Both recommended that the 2023-24 budget be restated to
reflect confirmed student numbers, which were close (nine fewer) to the original forecast. The overall
forecast income for 2023-24 had been raised in anticipation of a strong summer conference trade in
2024 on the back of much stronger conference trade in July and August 2023.

The Bursar mentioned a number of factors which could adversely affect the budget: a significant loss of
conference trade for any reason; a rise in student intermissions, given current trends in student welfare;
and rising utility costs, which were still a concern although less so than in the previous year.

{[REDACTED]}

Governing Body approved the restated budget for 2023-24.

The President thanked the Bursar and the finance team.

90.9. ***Cost of Fellows’ research expenses programme, 2022-23 (GB90 06)

Governing Body noted the paper without discussion.

90.10. Any other Open Business

{[REDACTED]}

End of Open Business JC/WS