

## **Minutes of the GCNYC Meeting held on 8 December 2021 at 9.00 EST (2.00pm GMT) via Online Conferencing Facilities**

**Present:** Sylvie Freund-Pickavance (Chair), Laura Becking, Dan Bena, Professor Pamela Gillies, Eva Haller, Gordon Jack, Ian Kerr, Professor James Miller, Professor Ann Priest, Dr JoAnn Rolle, Elinor Tatum and Johnnie Walker.

**In attendance:** Jacqueline LeBlanc (VP & Provost GCNYC)  
Paul Brown, GCU Director of Governance  
Paul Woods (Department of Governance - Minute Secretary)

### **Chair's opening remarks**

The Chair welcomed Paul Brown, the new GCU Director of Governance who was attending the meeting to introduce himself to the Board.

#### **1. Apologies for absence**

1.1 The Chair noted that there were no apologies.

#### **2. Declaration of Members Interests**

2.1 The Board **noted** that declarations of interest had been updated and was complete as of 8 December 2021. No further updates were proposed.

#### **3. Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees held on October 28, 2021**

3.1 The Board **approved** the minutes of the previous GCNYC Board of Trustees Committee Meeting held on October 28 2021.

#### **4. Matters arising Briefing Note**

4.1 The Board noted a report on the matters arising from its meeting held on October 28, 2021.

4.2 The Minute Secretary informed the Board that the actions listed were complete or in progress. He asked members to note that a response to draft minutes to signal approval or propose changes was expected.

4.3 A member asked if the action relating to new and existing trustees was in progress. It was noted that discussions had taken place but that an update was required.

**Action: Minute Secretary to request an update on progress for the next Board meeting.**

#### **5. Chair of the Board Trustees Report**

- 5.1 The Chair reported the Supplementary Information Report had been provided to the Middle States Commission. She thanked Trustees for their input to this process.
- 5.2 The Strategic Enrollment Plan, to be considered later on this agenda, had been developed further and approved by PEG.
- 5.3 The Chair informed members that she had recently visited GCNYC and had met with staff, faculty, students, and New York-based Board members. She had hosted an evening event for contacts in her local network to spread the word about GCNYC and sent a follow up note to attendees and invitees about ways to engage with and support GCNYC. She encouraged all trustees to think about their own contacts and the possibility of holding similar events in the future.

## **6. President & CEO's Report**

- 6.1 The President and CEO addressed the issue of the Omicron variant of Covid-19 and informed the Board that the New York Health Commissioner had signalled that he did not anticipate lockdown restrictions. Similarly, in the UK and Scotland there was no anticipation of lockdown measures at this stage. It was hoped that vaccination would mitigate a more serious impact and in the meantime measures of wearing facemasks, indoor ventilation and hand hygiene were being reinforced. She commended the VP and Provost for the investment in the Hyflex system which would allow students to engage in ways that they were comfortable with and allow the VP and Provost to swiftly pivot to online provision if circumstances became more serious.
- 6.2 The President and CEO also informed Trustees that she would be stepping aside as Principal of GCU in December 2022. The 12-month notice period would allow the process of identifying a successor to begin and to allow for transition and continuity. She reassured members that she retained great enthusiasm for the challenges of the next 12 months.
- 6.3 Board members paid tribute to the President and CEO her achievements in relation to establishing the College and to her inspirational leadership, recognising that there would be future formal opportunity to recognise the President's achievements.

## **7. GCNYC Board Secretary's Report**

- 7.1 The Board received a report from the GCNYC Board Secretary. He updated the Board on the following points:
  - The requested additional information relating to GCU at the Glasgow and London campuses for US-based trustees would take the form of an existing

monthly newsletter that is prepared by the University's Foundation team and sent routinely under separate cover in future.

- To note that an internal audit being undertaken at GCU related to the implementation of the governance arrangements between GCNYC and GCU. There are no actions required of the board although some board members who are also members of GCU Court may be asked to provide some information.

7.2 The Board **noted** the Board Secretary's Report.

## **8. Vice President & Provost's Report**

8.1 The Board received and considered a report from the Vice President and Provost and she summarised the following items:

- Middle States Accreditation (with Supplemental Information Report attached as an appendix)
- The appointment of John Albanese as Dean of Enrollment
- Associate Professor Gaston de los Reyes, GCNYC co-hosted, with Rutgers University and St. Joseph's University, the inaugural meeting of the northeast network of United Nations PRME (Principles for Responsible Management Education) on GCNYC's campus with attendees from over a dozen regional colleges and universities participating in person or through Zoom.
- Program Development: GCNYC has formed a taskforce to develop a new M.S. program in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Leadership, following approval from the Academic Board.
- GCNYC has partnered with the non-profit organization Fashion Revolution USA to launch *Measuring Sustainable Fashion*, a non-credit certificate in understanding and applying data for sustainable fashion.
- GCNYC has contracted with MSquare Media (MSM) for international recruitment and MSM will begin assigning agents who will be GCNYC's exclusive agents in India, Kenya, Nigeria, Brazil, and Bangladesh, with recruitment activities beginning immediately.
- Coco Marketing, has worked with Good Porpoise Productions to produce a new GCNYC promotional video, featuring interviews with alumni, students, and faculty. The video is featured on the GCNYC website and will be edited down to shorter versions that will be leveraged in marketing and recruitment campaigning.
- The visit from Chair of the Board and GCNYC networking event hosted by the Chair of the Board.
- Re-design of Academic Program Web Pages
- Winter Commencement – a virtual event on Saturday December 11.

8.2 The VP and Provost provided a Covid-19 update. Currently GCNYC is operating a facemask and vaccine mandate on campus. However, there had been 2 positive

tests in the community, one student and one staff. The student reverted immediately to remote learning and there had been no exposure on campus. The contacts of the member of staff had tested negative so there had been no campus spread. Both individuals experienced mild symptoms and have now recovered. The VP and Provost would be discussing obtaining vaccine boosters with staff ahead of trimester B and, more generally the situation in relation to covid-19 was being monitored carefully.

- 8.3 The VP and Provost thanked the Chair for her visit and for hosting the recent networking event. She felt that the event had gone very well with great positivity and goodwill from attendees. GCNYC staff and faculty had also been delighted to meet with the Chair, in person and online.
- 8.4 Commencement in December 2021 would be via Zoom and she informed Trustees who wish to attend that they would be required to register for the event.
- 8.5 The Middle States evaluators will conduct a virtual visit to GCNYC on December 16<sup>th</sup>. The President and other Board representatives will be in attendance. The Director of Finance and Board Secretary had prepared some sample questions which would be circulated to the attendees. A statement to confirm that GCU understand Middle States certification had been signed by the Principal and provided to the Middle States Commission. The evaluators' findings will be reported at the exit meeting on 17 December and the final decision will be known after the Commission meeting in March 2022.
- 8.6 A Board member asked if the President's plans required to be reported. The VP and Provost stated that this was a normal business process and there was no requirement to report to Middle States. Another member asked if the College's preparedness in response to Omicron may be a factor. The VP and Provost agreed that this may be a topic that evaluators would ask about but GCNYC was prepared for this and could share plans if required.
- 8.7 The Chair asked if there had been any feedback from Dr. Kushnood Haq, GCNYC's staff liaison with Middle States on the material submitted. The VP and Provost stated that there had not been any additional feedback at this time and this was not expected, unless there were requests for additional information.
- 8.8 The Board **noted** the VP and Provost's Report.

## **9. Student Recruitment Update**

- 9.1 The Board considered the updated Strategic Enrollment Plan. The VP and Provost thanked trustees who had provided feedback on the developing plan. There had been major changes to the draft considered by the Board at the last meeting following consideration by PEG. The plan was now simplified and reprioritised with the previous 6 pillars reduced to the following 3 pillars:

- Distributed Recruitment
- Online Program Delivery
- New Academic Programs

The letter of support for the plan from RNL requested by the Board was included in the paper.

- 9.2 A Board member thanked the VP and Provost and stated he was very pleased to see that the RNL feedback was a strong validation of the plan without any caveats, also noting how impressed RNL were with the GCNYC team. He asked if this could be provided to the Middle States Commission as part of the College's evidence base. The VP and Provost stated that the letter had arrived after the submission to Middle States but she would offer it as additional information to the Middle States team.
- 9.3 Another Board member stated that the timeline to development of new products appeared to be very slow and reliant on the recruitment of additional academic expertise. She queried if there was any possibility to speed up this process, perhaps in partnership with GCU and GCU London. The VP and Provost stated that she would take this on board but asked the Board to note that there is a process required by New York state, already begun for the first new program listed, and that this was a process that all competitors had to follow.
- 9.4 The Chair asked if there had been feedback on the plan from the Dean of Enrollment. The VP and Provost stated that the Dean of Enrollment had given feedback on the plan and was in contact with the interim Director of Enrollment regarding current actions and future strategy.
- 9.5 Another member welcomed the strategic plan stating that a long term view was warranted and the right steps were being taken.
- 9.6 Another member asked for clarification on the additional posts envisaged for 2024 and if this was feasible within the current budget projections. The VP and Provost replied there was a commitment to fit these required posts within the budget parameters.
- 9.7 The VP and Provost clarified that RNL's contract had concluded and it was not considered necessary to continue from this point.
- 9.8 The Board **approved** the Strategic Enrollment Plan.
- 9.9 The Board considered a Student Recruitment Update. The VP and Provost informed the Board that the target of 7 enrollments for trimester B was tight and one serious prospect had pulled out for personal reasons. The Recruitment and Admissions team was working hard to achieve the target.

- 9.10 The Chair remarked on the international intake at GCU and GCU London which had been spectacularly good and asked if there was any crossover with agents being used.
- 9.11 The Board Secretary clarified that there was one agent in common. There was not much in the way of crossover as agents tended to be specialists for e.g. the UK or US. The agency MSquare Media (MSM), referred to the VP and Provost's report, were US specialists and expected exclusivity in the countries they were contracted for. He added that MSM were paid on a commission basis only.
- 9.12 The VP and Provost stated that the target in terms of enrollments for tri A had been met but unfortunately one student had to withdraw. She also highlighted that students were enrolling to fewer credits than envisaged. This was a pattern with current students. The Board felt that the number of credits and time to progress was an important piece of information for the financial reporting and planning assumptions and should be factored in.
- 9.13 The Board Secretary agreed that a sensitivity analysis was required to make an adaptation to the financial reporting and planning assumption.

**Action: To review financial reporting/planning to take account of Fte as well as headcount. (VP / Provost)**

## **10. GCNYC P3 Management Accounts with Q1 Forecast**

- 10.1 The Board **noted** this report which covered GCNYC for the period August to end October, Period 3 of the 2021/22 financial year. The Q1 21/22 report forecasts a full year end deficit of \$4.6m which is c\$0.1m adverse to the budget target. Actions to be agreed to bring the forecast back into balance by Q2

## **11. Academic Board**

- 11.1 The Board **noted** the confirmed minutes of the Academic Board meetings on August 26th 2021 and October 7th 2021. The VP and Provost reported that the activity described reflected the 2 pillars of the Strategic Enrollment Plan, Online Programming and New Academic Programs.
- 11.2 The Board **approved** the terms of reference and composition of the Academic Board for 2021-22.

## **12. Draft agenda for Next Meeting of GCNYC Board of Trustees**

- 12.1 The Board **noted** the draft agenda for the next meeting of the Board of Trustees.

## **13. Date of Next Meeting**

13.1 It was **noted** that the date of the next meeting in March 2022 would be confirmed by the Department of Governance.

**Action: Governance to confirm the date and time of the Board meeting in March 2022.**

14.5 The Board **noted** the decision to suspend performance Related Pay (PRP) and that there are no staff within GCNYC covered by this previous Scheme.