

Minutes of the GCNYC Meeting held on 14 March 2022 at 11.00 EST (3.00pm GMT) via Online Conferencing Facilities

Present: Sylvie Freund-Pickavance (Chair), Dan Bena, Professor Pamela Gillies, 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 and Legal
Paul Woods (Department of Governance - Minute Secretary)

Minute Secretary's note: Due to connectivity issues for the Chair, she was chaired by the Board Secretary for the first four agenda items.

1. Apologies for absence

1.1 The Chair noted that there were apologies from Laura Becking and Eva Haller.

2. Declaration of Members Interests

2.1 The Board **noted** the updated register of interests. No further updates were proposed.

3. Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees held on December 8th, 2021

3.1 The Board **approved** the minutes of the previous GCNYC Board of Trustees Committee Meeting held on December 8th, 2021.

4. Matters arising Briefing Note

4.1 The Board **noted** a report on the matters arising from its meeting held on December 8th, 2021.

5. Chair of the Board Trustees Report

5.1 The Chair reported that since the December meeting she has had several calls with the VP and Provost and she wished to commend the VP and Provost and the GCNYC team for their focus on delivering growth. She added that the Head of Recruitment had now joined the team and was settling in well. The 5 tri B recruits was short of the recruitment target but work had been done by the team to stay within budget and focus on accelerated future development. The Chair noted that of the 5 new students, 3 were distance learners and this highlighted the importance of remote provision to future development.

- 5.2 The Chair highlighted the successful pilot of GCNYC's first non-credit certificate program, developed in collaboration with Fashion Revolution, which attracted nine students.

6. President & CEO's Report

- 6.1 The President and CEO addressed the issue of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. She informed the Board that GCU had made a statement expressing sadness and concern and affirming GCU support for any students or staff affected via student welfare networks and People Services. She assured the Board that GCU had no investments in Russia and any research-related work involving Russia had been suspended. The statement was on the University website and it would be updated in the coming days to align more closely with the statements from Universities Scotland and Universities UK. She asked members if they felt it was appropriate to have a statement on the GCNYC website.
- 6.2 Members noted there had been varying responses from different organisations which included those who did not exclude Russian peers. However, members were supportive of a GCNYC statement that would reflect GCNYC values and closely align with GCU and were supportive of the President's message that whilst association with Russia was suspended, it was hoped that partnerships could be rebuilt post-conflict.
- 6.3 The VP and Provost informed the Board that an internal message, similar to that of GCU, had been sent to students and alumni.

Action: That a public GCNYC statement is developed and published on the GCNYC website (VP and Provost).

- 6.4 The President informed the Board that the Middle States accreditation decision was awaited and although informal feedback was positive the final decision was still uncertain. The ability to add *edu.com* would be crucial to GCNYC and would allow for a significant scaling up in marketing and recruitment. With this in mind PEG had agreed that GCNYC should seek a significant partner to help facilitate this scaling up which would accompany the expected positive outcome from Middle States. The aim of this partnership would be to use a different marketing platform to facilitate growth e.g. in online courses. There was no decision on the partner as yet and the Board would be kept informed of developments.

7. GCNYC Board Secretary's Report

- 7.1 The Board received a report from the GCNYC Board Secretary. He updated the Board on the internal audit being conducted with regard to GCU governance arrangements in relation to GCNYC. The Board Secretary highlighted that the

fieldwork has now been completed with the report due to be considered at the next meeting of the GCU Audit Committee on 28th March 2022.

7.2 The Board Secretary informed the Board that the report included the Annual Compliance Note which encompassed the Whistleblowing Policy, Conflict of Interest Policy and Gift Acceptance Policy which had all been reviewed as part of the annual policy review with the appropriate changes, as approved by the Board, incorporated into revised versions of each. He outlined the annual update in relation to each of these policies:

- **Whistleblowing Policy**
There have been no instance of the Whistleblowing Policy having been invoked in the past year.
- **Conflict of Interest Policy**
All trustees have now provided a declaration of interest summary. There have been no additional instances of conflicts of interest (real or perceived) notified in the past year.
- **Gift Acceptance Policy**
No notifications have been received of any gifts having been received that would fall within the terms of the Gift Acceptance Policy

7.3 The Board **approved** the Annual Compliance 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 Commission timeline for decision
- GCNYC has developed operational imperatives and action items to ensure a high-level of excellence and student support as enrollment grows
- GCNYC is partnering with learning technologists at GCU to design versions of our courses for asynchronous online programming which will launch in January 2023
- GCNYC is contracting with a commission-based event planner to drive rental revenue as New York City opens up post pandemic
- GCNYC has signed a contract with international recruitment agency MSM, which is operating across Latin America, Asia, and Africa. They have committed to recruiting a minimum of 15 students for GCNYC in 2022-2023
- GCNYC launched its first non-credit certificate developed in collaboration with Fashion Revolution. Nine students enrolled in the program, which began on February 19th and runs synchronously via Zoom on Saturdays through May. The certificate brings in additional revenue of approximately \$18,000 and is helping to

attract attention to our master's in Sustainable Fashion. It was intended to run the program again in Fall 2022

- Thanks was due to the Chair and to trustee Dan Bena for a number of introductions to valuable partners and to trustee Dr JoAnn Rolle who would be participating in the speaker series for the Center for Social Impact & Innovation.

8.2 The VP and Provost reported that, in response to an action from a previous Board meeting, she was providing a broader update on the NYC educational landscape from contact with colleagues at the New York School of Visual Arts, John Jay College of Criminal Justice and with Board member Dr Rolle. Some key points had emerged out of these conversations:

- Enrollment is down in general in the NYC area.
- There is currently greater competition in PG recruitment in general and competition with public Schools in the NYC area was difficult for all private Schools/Colleges.
- International recruitment had been hit by the Covid-19 pandemic but was building back.
- Implementation of asynchronous online programming had boosted recruitment to John Jay College when implemented in 2017 (and which GCNYC intend to launch in January 2023, as noted above).

8.3 The Chair asked the VP and Provost if she felt there was value in exploring opportunities in developing similar noncredit programs as with the program developed with Fashion Revolution. The VP and Provost agreed that there were possibilities to create certificates from within the curriculum, particularly where the certificates could lead into ongoing engagement on Masters programs. It was a matter under active consideration.

8.4 The Board **noted** the VP and Provost's Report.

9. **2022-2028 Strategic Operations Plan**

9.1 The VP and Provost reported that the first phase of the Strategic Plan 2022-28 was the Strategic Enrollment Plan, was developed in fall 2021 and approved by the Board of Trustees in December. The Strategic Operations Plan was the second phase and was intended to ensure the continued excellence in educational delivery and student support as enrollment grows and programming expands. The plan had been developed by staff and faculty during January and February 2022. The VP and Provost clarified that the strategic imperative and action item *Raise awareness among faculty of international student learning and communication styles* should have Fall 2022 as its timeline for completion, not spring 2023.

9.2 The Board **approved** the 2022-2028 Strategic Operations Plan subject to the amendment of the timeline for completion of the Strategic Imperatives and Action

Item Raise awareness among faculty of international student learning and communication styles to fall 2022.

Action: VP and Provost to update the Strategic Operations Plan in accordance with minute 9.2.

10. 2022-2023 Tuition and Fees

10.1 The VP and Provost presented a proposal recommending a 3% increase in fees, which was in line with the increase in 2021. Also proposed is the introduction in fall 2022 of a mandatory administrative fee of \$150 per student per trimester to support costs that are associated with services, activities, facilities and infrastructure that support students inside and outside the classroom. Information provided to PEG had highlighted that, among 36 private and public, not for profit institutions offering graduate degrees in Manhattan, there are only four institutions (11%), including GCNYC, reporting that they do not charge similar administration fees. This also takes into account students progressing more slowly.

10.2 The Board discussed whether 3% was a sufficient increase. The VP and Provost clarified that there was no single source for comparable data on competitors' fee increases. Members considered whether lower pricing could lead to programs being undervalued in the market. The Board Secretary stated that the PEG had looked at a large number of competitors. He agreed that the fee(s) could be reviewed but that GCNYC would be competing primarily on subject provision rather than price. He added that pricing differently across programs was also acceptable. Members felt that gaining Middle States accreditation would be an opportunity to review fees factoring in both premium and common good offers. Another factor highlighted that the NYC market itself was very competitive on fees so there could be consideration of stratification of fees based on in state/out of state applicants.

Action: VP and Provost to review the fee increase in consultation with Director of Enrollment and Director of Recruitment & Admissions and, in light of the Middle States Accreditation outcome, circulate a proposal for Board approval.

10.3 The Board **approved** the introduction of the mandatory administrative fee per trimester.

11. Curriculum Revision

11.1 The VP and Provost informed the Board that the Academic Board and the President's Executive Group have approved a revision to the curriculum requirements for the M.S. in Sustainable Fashion and the M.S. in Business for Social Impact & Innovation. The revisions feature changing most course credits from 4 to 3. The reasons for this are:

- To address the current challenge of fitting all the required hours for a 4-credit course into a 12-week trimester.
- To allow room for new courses that strengthen the learning outcomes
- To better align with GCU's credits for masters-level modules which will facilitate exchange between campuses

The VP and Provost also highlighted that the 3 credit module was normal within the US Higher Education environment. If the revised curriculum is approved, an application for a program change will be submitted to NYSED seeking approval for the changes, which, if approved, will be implemented in fall 2022.

11.2 The Board **approved** the revised curriculum.

12. M.S. in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Leadership

12.1 The VP and Provost reported that as part of the Strategic Enrollment Plan, GCNYC has drafted a curriculum for a new M.S. program in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Leadership. The curriculum was developed by Dr. JeffriAnne Wilder, who was hired as a subject-matter consultant for this purpose, and represents input from GCNYC and GCU faculty. It includes the current core courses that focus on the College's mission of business for the common good and builds on this core with classes to prepare students to lead diversity efforts in corporations, non-profits and educational settings. The DEI master's program presents an important opportunity for GCNYC since the program is unique in American higher education. The curriculum was a draft at the moment and there will be further feedback from the subject expert in the coming week.

12.2 The Board **noted** that the finalised curriculum would be circulated to Board members for approval.

13. Student Recruitment Report

13.1 The VP and Provost presented the following summary:

- GCNYC enrolled 5 new students in Trimester B;
- The College is nurturing 9 serious prospects for Trimester C;
- Recruitment for Trimester A is running far ahead of where we were this time last year, with 1023 leads and 3 admits.

As the current trend would not meet short-term goals the budget forecast had been adjusted.

13.2 A member noted the number of leads had doubled for entry in trimester A 2022. He asked if this was in line with expectations and if there was greater confidence on conversion of these leads. The VP and Provost replied that whilst the number was

encouraging it needed to increase more. She acknowledged that conversion had been problematic in the past and she would be seeking the Director of Enrollment's assessment on the prospects for Tri A 2022.

13.4 Another member asked if the Director of Enrollment had assessed strategies for international enrollment. The VP and Provost replied that the Director of Enrollment's assessment was that current strategies were not strong enough and there were plans to engage with *Keystone*, an online platform which provided global reach for student recruitment.

13.5 The Board **noted** the Student Recruitment Report.

14. GCNYC Management Accounts

14.1 The report covered GCNYC for the period August to end January, Period 6 of the 2021/22 financial year. The Q2 21/22 report forecasts a full year end deficit of \$4.5m, which is in keeping with the budget target.

14.2 The Board **noted** the Management Accounts report.

15. Report from the Audit Committee meeting February 25th, 2022, including External Audit Plan year ending 31 July 2022

15.1 The Treasurer reported that the main business of the meeting was the review of the External Audit Plan for the current year, prepared by BDO with support of the Financial Accounting Manager. The Audit Committee approved the External Audit Plan. There had been a discussion with the BDO representatives on federal funding activity and the Committee was advised that as it is expected that the College will be below the \$750,000 threshold of federal funded activity, an additional audit on its schedule of expenditures of federal awards, under the Uniform Guidance (Single Audit), will not be required in the current year.

15.2 The Board **noted** the Audit Committee report and External Audit Plan year ending 31 July 2022.

16. Draft agenda for Next Meeting of GCNYC Board of Trustees

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

17. Date of Next Meeting

17.1 It was **noted** that as the date of the next meeting July 22nd 2022, a short additional meeting is likely to be required to consider the budget for 2022-23. The VP and Provost also informed the Board that there would be no commencement ceremony

in July and it was hoped to have an in-person event for Winter 2022 commencement.

Action: The Board Secretary and Department of Governance and Legal Services identify a suitable date for the additional meeting