



**MEETING OF SENATE  
MINUTES  
Monday 8 February 2021  
14.00, virtual Zoom meeting**

**Present:** The Vice-Chancellor (**Chair**) – Professor Brady, Bickers, Birdi, Bond, Carrington, Cater, Cini, Clatworthy, Cristianini, Dermott, Faul, Flecker, George, Gilchrist, Grierson, Hickman, Iredale, Jessop, Jordan, Lithander, Linthorst, Luckhurst, Marklof, Neild, Nobes, Norman, Oliphant, Pancost, Pantazis, Payne, Peters, Powell, Purdy, Pleydell-Pearce, Raven, Ridley, Robbins, Schonle, Smart, B Smith, F Smith, Spear, Squires, Schwarzscher, Szczelkun, Tavare, Taylor, Timpson, Tonks, Tormey, Wilding, D Wilson, E Wilson;

Dr J Agarwal, Dr M Allinson, Dr K Austin, Dr M Barbour, Mr E Bempong-Manful, Ms T Brunnock, Dr N Dahnoun, Dr M Dudley, Mr E Fay, Dr S Fitzjohn, Dr A Flack, Dr S Fox, Mrs M Gillway, Dr S Hannuna, Dr J Howarth, Dr AJ Howkins, Ms J Inglis, Mr D Ion, Mr D Jones, Dr C Kelly, Dr P Langton, Dr I Lazar, Dr E Love, Mr T Metcalfe, Dr D Morgan, Ms A Noble-Denny, Mrs L Parr, Dr D Poole, Dr S Proud, Mr S Sreekanth

**In attendance:** Ms L Barling (Clerk), Mr J Bigwood, Ms C Buchanan, Mr R Kerse, Ms P Coonerty, Ms A O'Grady, Mr L O'Shea, Ms Hannah Quinn, Professor Caroline Relton

**Apologies:** Prof Melissa Allen, Dr Sarah Bain, Mr Jack Boyer, Prof Ashley Blom, Dr L Dickinson, Prof Hickman, Prof Luckhurst, Ms I Marshall, Ms Leah Martindale, Dr R Murray, Dr Kit Opie, Dr MT O'Toole, Ms R Pullin, Mr R Rossi, Dr L Walling, Dr K Whittington.

**1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING ON 14 DECEMBER 2020.**

- 1.1 **CONFIRMED** and **APPROVED** the minutes of the meeting of 14 December 2020, subject to two minor amendments in the list of members present at the meeting.

**2. CHAIR'S REPORT**

- 2.1 RECEIVED: Chair's Report: paper ref: (**SN/20-21/020**).
- 2.2 There were no written questions for the meeting.
- 2.3 Senate NOTED a sectoral update from the Vice-Chancellor.
- 2.4 Senate NOTED that at the Board of Trustees meeting on 5 February 2021, Board members expressed their appreciation and gratitude for the inspiring effort of the University community to not only to continue to offer its students a different but high-quality educational experience, but also the excellent research and the efforts around the civic response regionally and nationally.
- 2.5 Senate NOTED that up to two vacancies were arising on the Board of Trustees for academic staff trustees beginning in the autumn term of 2021/22. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost would establish a small working group, on Senate's behalf, to oversee the shortlisting of the academic staff applications, which would then be submitted to the Nominations Committee (a committee of the Board). The Nominations Committee would then interview the candidates and recommend the final appointment(s) to the Board for approval. Members noted that the Provost would be making contact with

some members of Senate imminently to invite them to join the working group. The roles would be advertised transparently to everyone towards the end of February, with an application deadline of early March, and interviews scheduled for April 2021.

- 2.6 Senators were encouraged to disseminate paper and information from the meeting to academic colleagues, except where items are marked as strictly confidential (of which none are for this meeting).

### **3. COVID-19 PLANNING UPDATE**

- 3.1 RECEIVED and NOTED: a PowerPoint presentation from the Registrar & University Secretary and Professor Caroline Relton (*presentation on file*).

### **4. FLEXIBLE AND BLENDED EDUCATION AND THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE 20/21**

- 4.1 RECEIVED and NOTED: a PowerPoint presentation from the Pro Vice-Chancellors for Education, and Student Experience respectively (*presentation on file*).

- 4.2 Senate NOTED that the [student hardship funding](#) would cover areas such as rent, heating costs, childcare, IT equipment and broadband. Each applicant would have an appointment with a member of the funding team who could offer advice quite quickly. Money could also be made available within 24h in a crisis. UG, PGT, PGR and International students all eligible.

### **5. RESEARCH UPDATE**

- 5.1 RECEIVED and NOTED: a PowerPoint presentation from the PVC Research & Enterprise (*presentation on file*).

### **6. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

- 6.1 The Chair invited questions from the 'floor' after each presentation.

### **7. GREEN PAPER: STRATEGY REFRESH**

- 7.1 RECEIVED: Green Paper: Strategy Refresh paper ref: (**SN/20-21/021**).

- 7.2 The Vice-Chancellor & Provost introduced the report. Senate NOTED that a copy of the strategy was made available to Senate members via a link to SharePoint.

- 7.3 Senate DISCUSSED and SUPPORTED the direction of travel and provided views on the Green Paper to progress the University's strategic thinking.

- 7.4 Senate members were encouraged to add their comments on Padlet both during and after today's meeting. The Padlet would close at the end of the week (Friday 12 February 2021). A link to the Padlet was provided to members during the meeting, and a separate email would also be circulated after the meeting as a reminder.

- 7.4 The following comments were made:

- 7.4.1 Instead of asking how the University's new ways of working help staff to deliver the overarching Strategy, perhaps the focus should switch to being about how the University's new ways of working help individual staff to do their job more efficiently and effectively.

- 7.4.2 It would be important to reflect on how the University ensures that any individual academic or groups of academics, or School/ Faculty are as excellent as they can be. The central focus being about how the University ensures that the individuals within the organisation are able to excel.

- 7.4.3 It was important to recognise within the Strategy that the University should deliver things that others may not be expecting in order to make Bristol more unique – for example,

- fostering and funding inter and cross disciplinarity could push Bristol into a unique outlier position.
- 7.4.4 Academic staff would benefit from making use of the summer months to focus on research.
  - 7.4.5 Perhaps more importance/thinking could be given to non-STEM subjects such as social sciences and the arts in terms of marketing for international audiences – for example, what are our core messages that we would like to project around the globe, and how do we articulate those?
  - 7.4.6 The approach the University was taking around world rankings was that it would engage with the most important rankings by ensuring that it was performing highly across them rather than chasing the detail of any particular ranking. It would be important not to be driven by the rankings but refer to them as an indicator of the University's international profile.
  - 7.4.7 There was a feeling from some Senate members that the University should try to avoid the tension / dichotomy between “distinctiveness” and “excellence”. Distinctiveness comes about through excellence in disciplinary or faculty/school levels, and it would be helpful to highlight that distinctiveness from the ‘bottom up’ and promote it well.
- 7.5 Senate NOTED that feedback would be shared with Strategic Theme Leads to inform the writing of a White Paper, which would be consulted on widely after Easter.

## **8. DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY'S INSTITUTIONAL VALUES**

- 8.1 RECEIVED: paper ref: (SN/20-21/022)
- 8.2 The DVC & Provost introduced the paper.
- 8.3 Senate NOTED the institution's work on defining institutional values statements as a key element in the ongoing strategy refresh process.
- 8.4 Senate COMMENTED on the test values statements and the planned approach to consultation. Members were encouraged to make use of Padlet as per before.
- 8.5 The following comments were made:
  - 8.5.1 The University's values should reflect its unique history – it was important to take lessons from the past to inform the future.
  - 8.5.2 Lifelong learning was a key value that was common both to education and research.
  - 8.5.3 It would be useful to see more of a focus on 'knowledge' than strictly 'innovation'.
  - 8.5.4 It would be important to try and articulate and build on the values the University already had.
  - 8.5.5 If the University valued the importance of having a real impact in the world, then league tables were ways of capturing that, but they should not be an end goal. Therefore a values conversation was helpful in articulating the Strategy.
  - 8.5.6 It would be important to consider innovation and an agreed definition of what that was. Without unity on what the University Community meant by the term 'innovation', it was unlikely that the University would become innovative.
  - 8.5.7 The fact that the University values its staff and cares for its employees should be inherent in the institutional values.
  - 8.5.8 Perhaps exploring what the University valued now, what it wanted to value, and how others saw our values, might be helpful.
  - 8.5.9 Sometimes in order to understand a brand's values, it was helpful to explore what all of the key stakeholders think, particularly as there could be a difference between who we think we are and who we actually are or are known for. It would be important to engage with our external key stakeholders in this area as well as with staff and students.

**9. EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT**

9.1 RECEIVED: paper ref: (SN/20-21/023).

9.2 The Pro Vice-Chancellor Education introduced the paper.

9.3 Senate NOTED the Annual Report of Quality Assurance which was approved by the Board of Trustees on 5 February.

9.4 Members were made aware of a Futurelearn course on [decolonising education](#).

9.3 After some discussion, Senate APPROVED a new policy for staff participation in the CREATE scheme, noting that Human Resources would be modelling the numbers of staff involved in relation to workload and the CREATE scheme's capacity.

**10. RESEARCH COMMITTEE REPORT**

10.1 RECEIVED paper ref: (SN/20-21/024).

10.2 The Pro Vice-Chancellor Research introduced the paper.

10.3 Senate APPROVED the Bristol Statement on Transparency in Research (**Annex 1**).

10.4 Senate APPROVED the updated Terms of Reference for URC (**Annex 2**).

**11. CONSTITUTION MODERNISATION: SENATE ORDINANCES**

11.1 RECEIVED paper ref: (SN/20-21/025).

11.2 The Registrar & University Secretary introduced the paper.

11.3 Senate NOTED the timeline.

11.4 Senate ENDORSED the three draft Ordinances, to the Board of Trustees for their approval.

**12 Annual Report of Promotions Committee**

12.1 RECEIVED and NOTED: paper ref SN/20-21/026.

**13. Date of next meeting:** Monday 19 April 2021, 1400.