



**MEETING OF SENATE  
MINUTES**

**Monday 9 October 2023**

14.00, virtual Microsoft Teams meeting

**Present:**

Professors: Allen, Banissy, Barbour, Beaverstock, Bond, Browne, Butts, Cater, Chapman, Clark, Craddock, Dermott, Dillingham, Edwards, Faul, Fraser, George, Glynn, Hope-Hailey, Jessop, Juncos, Kelly, Linthorst, Main, Manley, Manzini, Marklof, McGirr, Mellor, Munafò, Mundell, Mulholland, Nabney, Nairn, Nassehi, Neild, O Madhloom, O'Toole, Piggins, Powell, Raven, Ridley, Robbins, Roberts, Rust, Sandvoss, Savery, Smart, Spear, Squires, Tahko, Tavaré, Taylor, Tether, Thirlwell, Timpson, Tormey, Warburton, Welch, West, Whittington, Wilding, Wylie.

Ms T Adeniyi, Dr P Allen, Dr M Allinson, Miss N Antoine, Miss S Bain, Mr J Barrie, Dr N Carhart, Dr R Chitchyan, Dr A Clayton, Dr T Cogan, Dr S Das, Dr S East, Dr A Edwards, Dr T Ellson, Dr V Erlandsson, Mr E Fay, Dr C Fricker, Dr H Gadelha, Ms A Garr, Dr M Gillway, Dr F Ginn, Dr L Goodhead, Dr G Hemani, Ms T Hill, Dr C Kent, Mx Y Lin, Mx Y Liu, Ms L Loades, Mrs A Lythgoe, Dr B Main, Ms M Millard, Dr J McManus, Dr S Montgomery, Ms A e Moreira, Dr I Pamunuwa, Dr A Papadaki, Ms L Parr, Dr B Pohl, Dr S Proud, Dr J Ross, Mx E Tancan, Dr K Trimmis, Ms A Voigt, Dr M Wang, Dr M Werner, Dr L-F Wong.

**In attendance:** L Barling (Deputy Head of Governance & Clerk to Senate), C Buchanan (Chief People Officer), P Coonerty (Dir. Education and Student Success), P Gibbs (Sport & Student Development Officer), M Gillway (Dir. Centre for Academic Language & Development), B Javed (International Students Officer), A Michael (Union Affairs Officer), H Quinn (Chief of Staff), I Russell (Student Living Officer), S Thambirajah (Equality, Liberation and Access Officer), P Vermeulen (Chief Financial Officer).

**Apologies:** Prof A Birdi, Prof K Malik, Prof T Parkin, Prof W Schwarzacher, Prof E Welch.

**1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING ON 19 JUNE 2023**

1.1 **APPROVED** the minutes of both the formal and the special Senate meetings of 19 June 2023, as a true and accurate record.

**2. CHAIR'S REPORT**

2.1 RECEIVED and **CONSIDERED:** paper ref: **(SN/23-24/001)** (on file).

2.2 It was noted that the Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost was standing in for the Vice-Chancellor as Chair for today's meeting.

2.3 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost welcomed all the new members of Senate, as well as ongoing Senate members, to their first meeting of the 23/24 academic year. Senate also thanked those members, whose term of office had ended, for their valuable contributions over the previous three years.

2.4 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost introduced the Chair's report, and thanked all colleagues involved in helping the University to achieve the TEF Silver Award.

2.5 **NOTED:** the 2023/24 Senate forward plan.

2.6 **APPROVED:** the 2023/24 Senate Standing Orders subject to an amendment being made to SEN3 around the sponsorship of Senate papers.

### 3. **REPORT FROM THE ACADEMIC TRUSTEES: UPDATE ON BOARD-RELATED BUSINESS**

3.1 On behalf of both staff trustees, Professor Craddock provided a verbal update on the business undertaken by the Board of Trustees at its meeting on 22 September 2023:

3.2 Agenda items referred to included:

- NSS 2023: Context, analysis, and proposed actions
- Finance Report
- Research showcase: Hydrogen and Nuclear research activity (Prof Tom Scott)
- Research showcase: Review of the Research, Development, and Innovation Organisational Landscape (Sir Paul Nurse, Chancellor)
- University Business School future strategy
- Committee Reports

3.3 **NOTED:** applications for an academic trustee to serve a three-year term on the Board of Trustees had now closed, and shortlisting was currently underway, with interviews scheduled imminently. Should Senate members be interested in joining the Board as an academic trustee in the future, Prof Craddock offered to provide further information.

*The SU Sabbatical Officers joined the meeting*

### 4. **ANNUAL PRESENTATION FROM SU SABBATICAL OFFICERS: PRIORITIES 23/24 RECEIVED and CONSIDERED:** PowerPoint presentation (on file).

4.2 The SU Sabbatical Officers delivered their presentation which covered their key priorities for the academic year 2023/24.

4.3 **NOTED:** On 12 September 2023, the Bristol SU Officer team (BSU) and CE joined the University Executive Board (UEB) conference for two sessions, including a presentation of the Officers' student priorities for 23/24. These priorities had been developed using a range of existing student experience research, direct student feedback, engagement with staff and drawing on Officers election manifestos. UEB and BSU recognised the shared responsibility they held in shaping the student experience and agreed to work together in a spirit of mutual respect and open dialogue. Their combined efforts would focus on identifying areas for improvement, co-creating initiatives, and implementing effective strategies that enhanced the overall university experience for all students. The aim is for this to become an annual process of collaborative working that would be developed further over time, underpinned by transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.

4.4 Senate thanked the Sabbatical Officers for their presentation and the following was **DISCUSSED:**

4.4.1 Training providers for the proposed Wellbeing Champions in student societies and groups was causing a barrier to delivery, and the Executive offered support to the Sabbatical Officers to identify appropriate providers and other tools to address the gap.

4.4.2 NSS results and continuing to ensure that the SU fully represented students' academic interests. The SU Sabbatical Officers confirmed that their objectives fully aligned with what the University's students needed, and it was noted that the NSS score had improved significantly over previous years.

- 4.4.3 The importance of continuing to address student housing issues, particularly for students in private residences, working together with the City Council and the University Executive to make improvements in that area. It was noted that the University had an ambition to achieve Gold in the TEF, and student residences was a priority for the Executive, collaborating with Sabbatical Officer team.
- 4.4.4 The cross-over of priorities particularly in relation to challenging inequalities and the impact on student experience.
- 4.5 Senate thanked the Sabbatical Officers once again for their presentation and noted their offer to engage with Senate members outside of today's meeting on any number of their deliverables for 23/24.

*The SU Sabbatical Officers left the meeting*

## **5. UPDATE ON US2030 PROGRAMME**

- 5.1 RECEIVED and **CONSIDERED**: paper ref: **(SN/23-24/002)** (on file).
- 5.2 The DVC & Provost introduced the report and the following was **NOTED**:
- 5.2.1 From the 1 August 2023, three new faculties (Faculty of Arts, Law and Social Sciences, Faculty of Science and Engineering, and Faculty of Health and Life Sciences) were established. The new faculties would co-exist alongside the 'old' faculties for the duration of the transition period (two years) to allow for a period of review and integration.
- 5.2.2 The faculty academic leadership teams for the transition period were now in place. This included the PVC & Executive Dean, Dean and a new role of Associate Dean for the Faculties of Arts, Law and Social Sciences and Science and Engineering recognising the need for additional senior leadership capacity through this period of change, including commitments to Temple Quarter and growth.
- 5.2.3 To work alongside the new academic leadership teams, a new professional services senior leadership structure had been developed for the three faculties, following a consultation period. Recruitment to the roles was currently underway and a future update would be provided to Senate.
- 5.2.4 Priorities for the first-year transition included:
- The development of faculty sub-strategies, ensuring that the University capitalised on the opportunities through their creation, and how they would support the delivery of the University strategy, led by Faculty.
  - A review of the leadership capabilities and capacity required to support delivery of the three thematic PVC portfolios and the faculty sub-strategies, and how those were integrated within faculty structures. Initial high level design workshops had been held, with further deep dive sessions for each area planned.
  - Working through the operational impact and requirements following the creation of the new faculties and capitalising on opportunities for incremental integration (e.g., system changes, mailing lists, governance arrangements etc).
- 5.2.5 Alongside supporting the academic structure changes, the University aimed to make administrative workloads more manageable and sustainable, ensuring colleagues were equipped and supported to carry out their role to ensure the University was structured in the right way to deliver the 2030 Strategy objectives, so students had a smooth journey from application to becoming alumni, and colleagues could perform their key roles unimpeded by bureaucracy, poor technology and inefficient structures within an affordable cost envelope. Current priorities included:
- Participation in the Cubane UniForum 2023 data collection that would provide benchmark data and analysis on the current operation, including information on what had changed since the last collection and sector comparison. The University would receive its analysed data set in December.

- Student Facing Services scoping and definition of challenges was underway to inform the creation of suitable work packages. This work would align closely with the academic structures design.
- HR and Finance scoping and definition of challenges was underway to inform the creation of suitable work packages.
- Staff voice – through the all-staff survey, the University would shortly be offering the opportunity for colleagues to contribute any areas where they believe change was needed. Further opportunities for staff to engage in the change programme would be identified in coming months.

5.2.6 The Faculty PVCs also provided an update on work currently underway in their Faculties:

- Review of faculty capabilities and where strengths aligned and how to best take advantage of the Faculties coming together.
- Development of Faculty strategies aligned with the University Strategy 2030, with a view to developing a ‘gold thread’ down to School level.
- Review governance structures and clarify decision making authorities, to include bringing together faculty level committees e.g., Education, Research and EEDI.
- Launch of the first meeting of the Faculty Assemblies before the end of the year.
- IPP and budget planning.
- Communication with Faculty and School staff.

5.3 The following was **DISCUSSED**:

- 5.3.1 The importance of engaging staff to bring them ‘on the journey’ and to keep them updated throughout the change process.
- 5.3.2 Working together with the new Global Engagement Division to support the delivery of the Faculties’ strategic narratives.
- 5.3.3 Prioritisation of how the University could consolidate the faculty officer roles – a consultation was currently underway with existing staff in those roles to clarify responsibilities and scope prior to any transition.
- 5.3.4 Communicating quite quickly with wider staff about the real time and immediate gains/benefits of the new three Faculty structure.

**ACTION: DVC & Provost**

## **6. EDUCATION AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE UPDATE**

- 6.1 RECEIVED and **CONSIDERED**: paper ref: **(SN/23-24/003)** and a PowerPoint presentation (on file).
- 6.2 Kate Whittington (Associate PVC Education Quality and Standards) and Paula Coonerty (Executive Director for Education & Student Success) delivered a presentation to Senate which highlighted the TEF outcomes and next steps, NSS headlines and what the University was already doing (and was planning to do) to improve the results in future years, an update on the provisions being put in place for cost of living support for students and a short update on the Student Experience Programme.
- 6.3 The following was **DISCUSSED**:
  - 6.3.1 The importance of a) showing students how the University was acting upon their feedback and; b) ensuring that students played a key role in university decision-making, through student representation which would increase the ability of students to make a difference.
  - 6.3.2 One negative outcome of the TEF which was highlighted in the presentation was around students with disabilities. A clear plan for this would be discussed as part of the TEF

Gold Working Group that was currently being established.

REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests

- 6.3.3 The relative year-on year improvement to NSS in terms of its quartile position relative to other groupings in the sector in 2023 was a positive step forward but it would be helpful to see this relative to the University's average quartile position. It was acknowledged that the most useful table in the report was around how much the University had changed, compared with how other universities had changed over the 2022/23.
- 6.3.4 The importance of learning from and adapting good practice from other Russell Group Universities.
- 6.3.5 Considering how the University could cross-reference NSS results with those areas that had been heavily impacted by industrial action. This would certainly be something to consider in terms of what NSS 2024 might look like, considering the Marking and Assessment Boycott impacts.
- 6.4 TEF and NSS would continue to be a priority for the University and Senate would receive updates on future agendas.

*Simon Swales joined the meeting*

## 7. **ACADEMIC PROMOTIONS FRAMEWORK**

- 7.1 RECEIVED and **CONSIDERED**: paper ref: (SN/23-24/004) and a PowerPoint presentation (on file).
- 7.2 The DVC & Provost introduced this item. Senate **NOTED** the following:
  - 7.2.1 It had been almost six years since presenting the recommendations to Senate that came from an extensive review of all academic promotion and progression in 2017.
  - 7.2.2 One of the main changes was to review the promotion criteria for Associate Professor and Professor, which resulted in the Academic Promotions Framework.
  - 7.2.3 It was first used three years ago and by the end of this academic year it would form part of all academic promotion and movement.
  - 7.2.4 The size of the professoriate as a % of the total academic community had not changed since the review in 2017 (just over 16%), but the % of female professors had increased by 10% to around 34%.
  - 7.2.5 Increasing the % of female professors was one of the Strategic Performance Indicators the University set itself in the 2016 Strategy along with the professorial GPG.
  - 7.2.6 The final figures would be confirmed before the end of this calendar year, but the University appeared to be on track to meet these SPIs.
  - 7.2.7 This was also the third academic year with the new pay range for Associate Professors and the University had just launched the fourth round of Promotion up to Senior Lecturer / Senior Research Fellow, which replaced Progression in May 2022.
  - 7.2.8 Following feedback from FPC members and observers, consultation with Heads of School and ongoing data analysis from last year, UPC discussed several process enhancements, as highlighted in the paper, and these were also discussed with UCU representatives.
- 7.3 Senate **CONSIDERED** the proposed enhancements to the process as highlighted in the paper and were comfortable with the progress made and with the majority of changes, however, Senate requested that the University Promotions Committee review again the proposal to drop the use of External Assessor reports. Senators were encouraged to provide any further suggestions/ideas to the DVC & Provost outside of today's meeting.

**ACTION: DVC & Provost**  
*Simon Swales left the meeting*

**8. TEMPLE QUARTER PROGRAMME UPDATE**

8.1 RECEIVED: paper ref: (SN/23-24/005) (on file)).

8.2 Due to the meeting overrunning, this update was deferred to the next meeting of Senate.

**9. UPDATE ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

9.1 Due to the meeting overrunning, this oral update was deferred to the next meeting of Senate.

**10. EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT**

10.1 RECEIVED and **APPROVED**: paper ref: (SN/23-24/006) (on file)).

10.2 Mark Allinson introduced the report on behalf of the PVC Education & Students. Senate **NOTED** the report.

10.3 **APPROVED**: UEC terms of reference for academic year 23/24.

**11. RESEARCH COMMITTEE REPORT**

11.1 RECEIVED and **NOTED**: a PowerPoint presentation delivered by the PVC Research & Enterprise (on file).

11.2 The PVC Research & Enterprise introduced his slides which provided updates from the Research Committee (URC) meeting on 21 September, an update from the recent URC Away Day, and other Research highlights.

11.3 Specifically, the following was **NOTED**:

11.3.1 Three new Critical Path SPIs had been proposed to UEB and then to the Board of Trustees. **REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests**

11.3.2 URC would be monitoring a new Research and Enterprise Risk Register that would sit below the Key University Risk Register (KURR).

11.3.3 The outputs from the URC Away Day would be used to drive areas of focus for URC in 23/24. Examples included:

**REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests**

11.3.4 Research Highlights were:

**REDACTED: Section 43 - Commercial interests**

**MEETING CLOSED.** Next meeting 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023, 2pm.