

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE
University of Bristol
Minutes of Council

Friday 10 February 2012

Present: Mr Denis Burn (Chair), Mr Josh Alford, Mr Gus Baker, Ms Sophie Bennett, Professor Tim Bond, Professor David Clarke, Councillor Simon Cooke, Mr Roy Cowap, Professor Gary Foster, Dr Andrew Garrad, Dr Moira Hamlin, Professor Sally Heslop, Sir Ronald Kerr, Ms Pru Lawrence-Archer, Professor Nick Lieven, Dr John Manley, Mr Robert Massie, Mr Bob Morton, Ms Dinah Moore, Mr David Ord, Professor Guy Orpen, Mrs Cindy Peck, Mr Andrew Poolman, Mr Bill Ray, Mr Mohammed Saddiq, Ms Vikki Stace, Ms Anne Stephenson, Professor Eric Thomas, Dr Trevor Thompson, Mr James Wadsworth and Mr James Wetz.

In Attendance: Mr Andy Nield, Ms Lynn Robinson, Ms Jane Bridgwater, Sir James Tidmarsh, Ms Fiona Ford (in place of Mr Guy Gregory) and Ms Kelly Archer (Secretary).

Apologies: Mr Colin Green Dr John Manley, Ms Pru Lawrence-Archer.

Session 1: Presentation of the work of the Campaigns and Alumni Relations Office (CARO) by the Director of CARO, Tania Jane Rawlinson.

Council thanked Tania Jane for the very informative account of her Division's work and congratulated her and her team on a very successful year. Council noted the challenges that the Division would need to face in coming years and the strategies that had been put in place to tackle this.

Session 2: Formal Meeting of Council

1. Welcome and announcements

1.1 The Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting. Dr Andrew Garrad, the Society of Merchant Venturers' representative and Mr Andrew Poolman, a lay member of Council elected by Court, were welcomed to their first meeting of Council.

2. Apologies for Absence

2.1 The Chair NOTED the apologies received.

3. Matters Arising and Actions Register

Action Register

3.1 Members had previously received a copy of the Action Register which had been updated to incorporate actions agreed at the 25 November 2011 Council meeting. Completed items were asterisked and would be removed from the Register for the next meeting.

3.2 It was NOTED that there were no outstanding actions on the Action Register.

4. Chair's Business

Hiatt Baker Hall

4.1 The Chair had received a letter from Mrs Mary Benton, Chair of the Hiatt Baker Hall Advisory Committee, about the proposed new hall development. Mrs Benton's

concerns had been passed onto the Bursar who would take account and respond to them in due course.

Nominations Committee of Court

- 4.2 The Nominations Committee of Court had met earlier that week to review the skills base and diversity of the current lay Council members. The Committee had concluded that, this year, it would aim to appoint someone with senior-level experience of working in graduate recruitment/employability in a large company. Applications from female candidates would be particularly welcomed. Council members were encouraged to forward the names of potential candidates to the Clerk, Kelly Archer.
- 4.3 The Nominations Committee had reached agreement that University committees would ideally be made of up an appropriate mix of people with expertise that was directly relevant to the committees' remit and terms of reference and other members who were not necessarily specialists but who would bring a helpful broader perspective and challenge.

Visiting Professors

- 4.4 APPROVED: the appointment of the following Visiting Professors:
- (i) Dr Frances Cowan, School of Clinical Science.
 - (ii) Professor Geoffrey Robinson, School of Mathematics.
 - (iii) Professor David York, School of Chemistry.
 - (iv) Dr Ningwen Zhu in the School of Clinical Sciences.

5. Vice-Chancellor's Matters

- 5.1 RECEIVED: The Vice-Chancellor's Report, reference **CN/12/113** (previously circulated, copy in the minute book).
- 5.2 The number of contextual offers being made was being closely monitored. In January 2012, HEFCE had provided provisional student number control limits for 2012/13 which confirmed that Bristol could recruit a maximum of 602 students achieving below AAB at A level. This would be used to support Bristol's widening participation aims. This allocation excluded Medicine and Dental students, which were regulated separately. The Director of Recruitment, Access and Admissions would be liaising with the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) regarding concerns about the University achieving its Access Agreement targets, especially given the changed regulatory environment. Preparation was underway to implement the step change in outreach activities outlined in Bristol's 2012/13 Access Agreement and also to draft the 2013/14 Agreement. There had been close liaison with the Students' Union over the latter given their strong support for student bursaries.

Student Growth Project

Undergraduate Applications

- 5.3 Bristol's home undergraduate application numbers had dropped by ca. 10% (compared with 2011/12 levels). Bristol's application numbers were noted to be in the median position when compared with the rest of the Russell Group. Although the overall number of applications had dropped, Bristol was receiving some 30,000 applications for 3,800 undergraduate places, and so was in a relatively good position. Competitive behaviour across the sector had resulted in a great deal of unpredictability in terms of offer to acceptance conversion rates and so the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) and his team were monitoring application and firm-up rates on a daily basis, and refining the offer strategy accordingly. Currently, Bristol was 6% below its offer target and it proposed to fill this gap with 'near miss' students.

- 5.4 The University had 602 places for non-AAB-achieving students and this presented opportunities to make contextual offers to students from lower performing schools.
- 5.5 Overseas undergraduate applications had, at that stage in the cycle, increased by 13% (the national trend being a 13.3% decrease).
- 5.6 There had been some variation in demand across different academic disciplines. For example, Bristol's number of Sociology applications had dropped by 47% this year. The University aimed to meet its Faculty student number targets but would allow individual faculties to decide how best to distribute places across schools/departments.

Postgraduate Applications

- 5.7 Although it was too early in the cycle to make any accurate assessment of likely application numbers, some general trends could be observed. Currently, applications were up by 18% compared to 2011/12 (an increase in overseas applications and a decrease in home applications). There were particular concerns around levels of applications received from home students for Postgraduate Taught programmes where a 56% drop had been evident (compared with a 33% increase in overseas applications). The current situation for Postgraduate Research programmes looked more promising. Applications were 128% higher than for 2011/12 with increases evident across both home and overseas applications (although offers were currently down by 30% overall and acceptances by 13% (home) and 13% (overseas) respectively).

Academic Staff and other academic resources

- 5.8 Increases in academic staff numbers in some key areas had been agreed. The recruitment process for these staff was underway, with appointments being offered from March/April 2012, once firm up rates would be clearer.

Teaching/Student Space Requirements

- 5.9 The timetable for 2012/13 had been modelled to factor in the increased undergraduate cohort sizes and the exercise had concluded that there would be adequate centrally bookable physical resource available to house standard teaching for an additional 600 undergraduates, with the following amendments to the timetable:
 - (i) Additional seminar and tutorial classes would need to be provided for those classes whose cohorts had grown above 30 (seminars) and 16 (tutorials).
 - (ii) The introduction of a flexible lunch hour between 12 noon and 2pm (which would enable teaching rooms to be used throughout the day) and lectures starting on the hour to use the teaching day more fully.
 - (iii) Double teaching of lectures in School of Economics, Finance and Management.
- 5.10 There was a recognised need to provide additional student study and social space to cope with the increased cohort size. Discussions with the senior team, including Deans (at Senior Team Away Days and University Planning and Resources Committee) and sabbatical officers had led to a number of short-term and medium-term options being considered. The following proposals would be taken forward:
 - (i) Extension to Library opening hours in key branches during term-time and examinations (to begin in March 2012).

(ii) Refurbishment of space in the Hawthorns to provide study and group space.

(iii) A two-phase project to refurbish the Wills Memorial Library.

(iv) A Student Study Spaces Planning Group (chaired by the Deputy Registrar) had been set up to take forward the above projects and the approach to medium to longer-term open access learning spaces and IT resources.

5.11 In the short-term, additional provision of residential accommodation would be provided through nominations agreements with UNITE, but with pastoral support provided by the University. The existing Stoke Bishop plans for ca.450 additional bedrooms were progressing.

5.12 The impact of expansion on individual support services was being considered and appropriate measures had been put in place to deal with the increased demand, for example in Student Services, Library Services, and the Centre for Sport, Exercise and Health. An extension to Library opening hours had been agreed, along with additional resource in Student Services.

HEFCE Grant Letter

5.13 The Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Minister for Universities and Science had, on 25 January 2012, confirmed funding allocations to HEFCE for 2012-13 and the Government's priorities for the Council for the coming year. The Finance Director outlined the implications of this letter within his report (see also minutes 6.3-6.4).

Appointment of University Registrar

5.14 APPROVED: In accordance with Statute 9, the appointment of Robin Geller as the University's Registrar. Robin, who was currently Registrar and University Secretary at Roehampton University, would take up post at Bristol in mid August 2012.

Human Resources Matters

5.15 The 2011/12 pay discussions had now concluded at national level. UNITE was still in dispute but the other unions had accepted the pay offer of £150. The University had been instructed to implement the pay offer with immediate effect. This would be paid to salaried staff in February.

Public Interest Disclosure Policy (PIDP)

5.16 In accordance with Section 3 of the PIDP, Council NOTED that the Vice-Chancellor had recently appointed Professor David Clarke, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Lead Assessor), and Professor Jon Keating, Dean of the Faculty of Science, as PIDP Assessors, in place of Professor Stephen Lisney and Professor Len Hall, who had both left the University.

The Higher Education Evaluation & Accreditation Council of Taiwan (HEEACT) Performance Ranking of Scientific Papers for World Universities

5.17 Since 2007, HEEACT has published its Performance Ranking of Scientific Papers for World Universities. The 2011 and most recent ranking had been published independently of HEEACT, by the National Taiwan University. The ranking focused on performance in scientific papers and was primarily based on citation data. The ranking was based on 8 indicators which provided an indication of research productivity (20% of the overall score), research impact (30%) and research

excellence (50%). There was an emphasis on current research performance so that universities with longer histories were not automatically favoured.

- 5.18 500 institutions were included in the ranking. Harvard University was ranked the highest - the top 8 institutions were also all US institutions. The University of Toronto was 9th and the University of Oxford 10th (with Cambridge at 14th, UCL 17th, and Imperial College 20th). The University of Bristol was ranked 82nd (the same as last year), 23rd within Europe, and 8th in the UK. There were 36 UK higher education institutions (HEIs) within the world top 500.

Lifesciences Building Project update

- 5.19 Negotiations between the University and University Hospitals Bristol regarding the tenants in Sam's House was being resolved and it was hoped that final paperwork would be signed shortly.

- 5.20 VINCI Construction UK had been confirmed as the preferred main works contractor. The value of the contract had been agreed at ca. £34.2M.

Queen's Road Building

- 5.21 APPROVED: Council agreed that the current Queen's Road building would be renamed as "The Richmond Building (Home of the Students' Union)". The new name would honour the University Chancellor (Baroness Hale of Richmond), who had originally opened the building and also reflected the building's geographical position (within the Richmond Estate).

National Composites Centre

- 5.22 The NCC had enjoyed a steady stream of investment from the initial South West Regional Development Agency/Department for Business Innovation and Skills/European Regional Development Fund project, and now the Technology Strategy Board funding. The focus was now very much on operational delivery to generate income and to maximise the value of the programme for customers, industrial partners and the University.

Health and Safety Issues

- 5.23 There were no significant health and safety issues to bring to Council's attention.

Recent Grants and Awards

- 5.24 These were noted.

6. Finance Report

- 6.1 RECEIVED: The Financial Update report from the Finance Director, reference **CN/12/114** (previously circulated, copy in the minute book).

Overall Financial Performance

- 6.2 The current full year forecast showed a £2m surplus which included a £4m contingency. The Finance Director explained that this would be reviewed now that the concern about an in-year HEFCE funding cut had been removed. The Finance Dashboard for December 2011 was attached at **Appendix A**.

HEFCE Grant Funding

- 6.3 BIS had issued its annual funding letter to HEFCE on 25 January. Key points outlined within the letter had been:

(i) An emphasis on the need for continued pay restraint by the HE sector with references to the overall public sector position.

(ii) No major changes to the overall level of recurrent funding available from 2011/12 to 2013/14.

(iii) Strong emphasis that the HEFCE funding level for 2012/13 onwards may be transferred back to BIS to meet unanticipated pressures such as student support costs resulting from any over-recruitment.

(iv) Penalties for 2011/12 over recruitment of £3800 per home graduate FTE-2012/13 position to be confirmed.

(v) There had been no proposals regarding further deregulation of home undergraduate student intake for 2013/14 onwards but further details would follow.

6.4. HEFCE was expected to confirm the final grant position for HE institutions for the 2011/12 year in mid February and then details for 2012/13 in March.

Cash and Debt

6.5 Cashflows for the first five months had been positive. Net debt, at the end of December 2011, had reduced to £45m, but was currently expected to increase to £95m by the year end as the major capital schemes progressed.

6.6 The current forecast showed a reasonable headroom against the Barclays interest cover ratio covenant.

6.7 As had been the case for the previous two years, the University would, in due course, take a decision about whether it would be prudent to make a further additional deficit recovery payment to the University of Bristol Pension and Assurance Scheme (UBPAS).

Treasury

6.8 The continuing volatility in the financial markets had resulted in some particular concerns for the University: (i) credit rating downgrades of a number of its investment counterparties; and (ii) an increase in bond market yields which had reduced the market value of its corporate bond portfolio.

6.9 The University had set its investment counterparty limits with reference to Standard and Poors' long term credit ratings. There had been a number of sovereign and bank downgrading in recent months and the University had taken the opportunity to review its counterparty lists and to remove any institutions which had fallen below its minimum criteria. The exceptions to these criteria had been the four major UK clearing banks; and a number of existing bond investments which were rated at one 'step' below the University's minimum counterparty requirements. The markets would continue to be monitored closely.

Endowments

6.10 Cambridge Associates' review of the University's endowments investment portfolio had been concluded and a final report submitted to the Finance Committee. The review found that the current strategy remained appropriate and that Sarasin remained a sensible choice of investment manager to deliver this strategy.

Pensions

UBPAS

6.11 Preparatory work for the July 2012 actuarial review of UBPAS was underway.

Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS)

- 6.12 Details of the USS preliminary March 2011 actuarial review had now been released. The review showed a funding deficit of £2.9bn, with the scheme being 92% funded on this basis. Bristol's notional share of the deficit would be ca. £60m, although USS was a 'last man standing' mutual scheme. Financial conditions had worsened considerably since the 2011 review and it was estimated that if the review had been run today, the deficit would be of the order of £6-10bn.
- 6.13 USS Trustees were consulting members on a draft recovery plan and had proposed that no change be made to the current 16% employers' contribution rate until 2017, after which employers would pay 2% in excess of the then composite future service costs of accruals.

7. Matters for Discussion and/or Approval

Senate Report

- 7.1 RECEIVED: The report of the Senate meeting on 5 December 2011, reference **CN/12/115** (previously circulated, copy in the minute book).
- 7.2 APPROVED: The change of programme title of MRes Earth System Science to the MRes in Climate and Earth System Science from 2012/13, to better reflect the content of the programme (and the consequential amendment to the General Regulations for Postgraduate Programmes and page 242 of the Charter, Acts, Statutes, Ordinances and Regulations 2012-2013).
- 7.3 APPROVED: The appointment of Professor Hans J Briegel, currently the Scientific Director at the Institute for Quantum Optics and Quantum Information at the Austrian Academy of Science in Innsbruck, as a Visiting Professor in the Department of Physics, Faculty of Science.
- 7.4 NOTED: That Senate had considered and endorsed a number of recommendations from the University's Equality and Diversity Manager, proposing a range of strategies and measures through which the University might increase representation of women in senior academic roles, including targets for increased female representation on University Council and committees. The paper was being considered by the relevant committees during this term and a final report, including recommendations, would be presented to Council in March 2012.

Reviewing Council Effectiveness

- 7.5 RECEIVED: A report by the Director of Planning, setting a possible framework through which the University might undertake a formal review of its Council, reference **CN/12/116** (previously circulated, copy in the minute book).
- 7.6 Council noted that the Committee for University Chairs (CUC), within its guidelines, encouraged the regular review and monitoring of governing body effectiveness and that moreover, on a national level, governing bodies were being placed under increasing public scrutiny. With HEFCE signalling that it wished to move to a more risk-based approach to institutional regulation, Council agreed that it would be important for Bristol to demonstrate its commitment to, and delivery of, effective governance.
- 7.7 The report set out the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education's effectiveness framework and Council noted that many other HEIs had used a variation of this model, tailored to their institution's needs, as a basis for their governing body effectiveness reviews.

- 7.8 Council confirmed that it was supportive of undertaking such an exercise and could see the potential benefits of doing so. Members felt that it should be structured in such a way that it was appropriately challenging, but not overly complex or time-consuming.
- 7.9 Initial feedback from Council indicated that Bristol's effectiveness review should broadly consist of the following elements:
- (i) A desk-based review of the key documents relating to the operation of Council, including the Statement of Primary Responsibilities, the Code of Conduct and the University's Delegations Schedule (to be undertaken by the Secretariat).
 - (ii) The Chair and Vice-Chair of Council or, where appropriate the chair of a committee, would, over the course of the next two-three years, hold 1-to-1 meetings with every member of Council. This would include an element of appraisal and self-appraisal and the main objective would be for the Chair to identify how best to support individual members to develop in their role as a governor.
- 7.10 AGREED: That the Chair, Vice-Chair and Council Secretariat would progress the effectiveness review in line with the elements set out above and to make a formal report to Council on the outcomes in due course.
- Strategic Performance Indicators (SPIs)
- 7.11 RECEIVED: A report from the Director of Planning and Finance Director proposing fundamental review of the University's SPIs, reference **CN/12/117** (previously circulated, copy in the minute book).
- 7.12 The aim would be the establishment of a revised set of corporate SPIs which would facilitate Council complying with HEFCE's new requirement for institutions to produce an annual 'Sustainability Return, intended to look at institutional sustainability in a broad sense. HEFCE had suggested that this return should assess sustainability by way of a small number of relevant SPIs, focussing on five key areas:
- (i) Teaching and learning.
 - (ii) Research output and sustainability.
 - (iii) Headline financial performance.
 - (iv) Financial health.
 - (v) Other areas which were significant to the institution, for example, human resources, estates, internationalisation.
- 7.13 The suggested approach was the development a new set of SPIs, covering five key areas, developed by the Planning Office in consultation with relevant Divisional Heads and with input from Council and council committees. A very preliminary draft set of new SPIs were set out in the report and Council members were encouraged to comment on them. The SPIs had been designed to be: strategic, capable of being targeted and benchmarked; and to include a combination of lead and lag indicators. Having taken account of Council's feedback, the new set of SPIs would be discussed at a forthcoming Senior Management Team (SMT) awayday and then considered by the relevant committees. A final report would be presented to Council for approval later in the year.
- 7.14 Council members expressed concern that the draft set of SPIs did not explicitly refer to widening participation. Other specific areas which were felt to be missing or understated were: reference to postgraduate students; measurement of the

conversion rate of the number of applications received into offers made (although it was noted that Council would first need to establish what would constitute 'success' – a fewer or greater number of applications per place); and a measure of the strength of the University's brand.

7.15 Members of Council were encouraged to forward any further comments about the SPIs to either Helen Galbraith, Director of Planning or Andy Nield, Finance Director. This feedback would then be considered by the SMT.

7.16 Council agreed that the SPIs should, wherever possible, be considered by the relevant committees before any final decisions were made.

7.17 COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

Student Appeals Complaints and Disciplinary Matters (Reserved Business)

7.2 RESERVED BUSINESS

Employment Tribunal Proceedings, Stage 2 Staff Grievances and Appeals against dismissal (Reserved Business)

7.24 RESERVED BUSINESS

Chair Appointments

7.28 RECEIVED and NOTED: A report setting out the Chair appointment activity that had taken place since the previous meeting of Council in November 2011, reference **CN/12/121** (previously circulated, copy in the minute book).

Report of the Annual Meeting of Court on 9 December 2011

7.29 RECEIVED: A report from the Secretary setting out the key outcomes of discussions at the 2011 annual meeting of Court.

7.30 NOTED: That Court had elected the following four lay members of Council, following recommendations from its Nominations Committee:

- (i) Ms Anne Stephenson (reappointment to 31 December 2014)
- (ii) Mr James Wetz (reappointment to 31 December 2014)
- (iii) Mr Denis Burn (reappointment to a different membership category to 31 December 2014)
- (iv) Mr Andrew Poolman (appointment to 31 December 2014).

7.31 NOTED: That Court had elected Mr James Wadsworth as Treasurer for a period of one year to 31 December 2012 and had reappointed PriceWaterhouseCoopers LLP as Auditors to the University for the current year. It was noted that Mr Wadsworth would be retiring from the position of Treasurer and lay member of Council at the end of December 2012.

7.32 Dr Alison Bernays had presented Court with a paper setting out a series of proposed changes to the constitution and terms of reference of the Nominations Committee of Court. The changes, which had been approved by Council at its meeting in November 2011, aimed to streamline the Committee's processes, make it more focused and fit-for-purpose. Court had voted in favour of the proposals. Court also approved the consequential amendments to Statute 14 and the addition of a new Ordinance 3A (subject to some minor drafting clarifications about the use of Chair's Powers and the preferred method of election).

7.33 Dr Alison Bernays was re-appointed as Pro-Chancellor for a second three-year term until December 2014.

Ethics of Research Committee Annual Report

- 7.34 RECEIVED: The Annual Report of the Ethics of Research Committee, reference **CN/12/124** (previously circulated, copy in the minute book).
- 7.35 Professor Guy Orpen took the opportunity to thank the members of the Committee, particularly the lay members, for their useful and valuable contributions to the committee's discussions. Feedback from staff working in research ethics across the University indicated that the Committee added value to the University in terms of providing an oversight which helped to facilitate best practice and for providing a forum for discussion and dissemination of ethical issues.

8. Committee Reports

- 8.1 RECEIVED: The report of the Estates Committee meeting on 20 January 2012, reference **CN/12/124** (previously circulated, copy in the minute book).
- 8.2 NOTED: That the Committee had confirmed its commitment to seek to achieve greater gender diversity amongst its members, although it felt that this would be challenging as the pool of experts from which members would be found was considered to be male-dominated. The Committee would welcome guidance from the Secretariat about possible channels for identifying female candidates.

9. Date of Next Meeting

- 9.1 NOTED: That the next meetings of Council had been scheduled as follows:
Thursday, 22 March 2012 (away day at the National Composites Centre, followed by Council dinner from approx 6.30pm)
Friday, 23 March 2012
Friday 25 May 2012
Friday, 6 July 2012