

Minutes of Council

Friday 15 March 2013

- Present: Mr D Burn (Chair), Mr P Charlton, Professor D Clarke, Councillor S Cook, Mr R Cowap, Dr E Crawley, Professor G Foster, Mrs S Goymer, Mr C Green, Dr M Hamlin, Sir R Kerr, Ms P Lawrence-Archer, Professor N Lieven, Mr T Macdonald, Dr J Manley, Professor R Middleton, Mr B Morton, Mr D Ord, Professor G Orpen, Mrs C Peck, Mr A Poolman, Mr B Ray, Mr M Saddiq, Ms A Stephenson, Professor E Thomas, Dr T Thompson, Mr J Wetz
- In attendance: Mr D Alder, Professor M Basker, Mrs J Bridgwater, Ms T Brunnock, Ms L Collins, Mr P Finch, Ms R Geller, Mr J Goodman, Mr G Gregory, Dr R Hooper, Mr H Martin (Clerk), Ms A Milln, Mrs TJ Rawlinson, Ms L Robinson, Professor J Squires
- Apologies: Dr A Bernays, Ms A Berti, Mr T Flynn, Dr A Garrad, Mrs D Moore, Mr A Nield, Ms V Stace, Sir J Tidmarsh, Dr M Woolley

1. Welcome and Announcements

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed the Dean of Arts and the Director of Student Services and Employability to give their presentations to the meeting.

2. Council Meeting Apologies

- 2.1 NOTED: the apologies received in advance.

3. Declaration of Interests

- 3.1 Members were reminded that they had an obligation to disclose any pecuniary, family or other personal interest that they had in any matter under discussion at any meeting of Council as soon as practicable.

4. Strategic Items

- 4.1 The Dean of Arts gave the Faculty's biennial presentation (on file).

The discussion which followed highlighted these points:

- the Faculty was already in low-level conversations with Bristol City Council and many performing arts organisations across the city and recognised the need to systematise those connections;
- the 'open door' approach and the encouragement of 1-1 student-staff academic relationships in the Faculty were very successful but did result in a heavy burden of personal tutoring;
- the Faculty was exploring the use of Senior Tutors for non-academic pastoral work;
- academic staff had been recruited to areas of expansion following the recent growth in student numbers.

4.2 The Director of Student Services and Employability gave a presentation (on file).

Ms A Stephenson declared an interest as a trustee of the Citizen's Advice Bureau.

The discussion which followed the presentation highlighted these points:

- the Student Funding Office was separate from Student Services but liaison between the two, especially relating to student debt and financial difficulties, was important;
- there was potentially a limitless demand for Student Services so appropriately assessing and then managing students' contact with the service was vital;
- a range of counselling approaches was available to students, from highly trained staff;
- the services offered were of exceptional quality and compared very favourably when benchmarked with competitors;
- waiting times had been improved in the last three years (60% of students were seen on the same day; 80% by the second day);
- the Careers Service ran an ethical careers fair with UBSU and an Insight to Media course with the BBC and Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies;
- 80% of undergraduates used the Careers Service; it was expected that that demand would only increase;
- the Careers Service had one dedicated member of staff for research postgraduates; taught postgraduates were already significant users of the service.

5. Minutes of Meeting on 8 February 2013

5.1 CONFIRMED: the minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2013.

6. Matters Arising and Actions

6.1 There were no matters arising.

7. Chair's Report

7.1 APPROVED: the appointment of several Visiting Professors (reference **CN/13/016**).

7.2 CORRECTION: the appointment of Dr Hibbeln was separate from that of Professor Klenowski (whose appointment had been approved at an earlier meeting).

- 7.3 APPROVED: the appointment of Dr Montgomery as a Visiting Professor. This had recently been approved by the Vice-Chancellor and would be presented to Senate for information at its meeting on 13 May.

8 Vice-Chancellor's Report

- 8.1 RECEIVED: the Vice-Chancellor's report to Council (reference **CN/13/017**).

UKBA

- 8.2 The Vice-Chancellor noted that there had been a 25% drop in student applicants to the UK from India, and that the University itself was particularly exposed in the Chinese market.

NCC

- 8.3 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) updated Council on the NCC expansion, details of which were noted under item 9, paragraphs 5 and 6. Legal agreements with TSB and HCA for the phase 2 expansion were now ready for signature subject to formal agreement with Barclays which is expected within the next week.

GW4 – collaboration with Bath, Cardiff and Exeter

- 8.4 The Vice-Chancellor updated Council on the progress of the GW4 collaboration. An Away Day of the Vice-Chancellors and other senior staff would be held on 1 October. The collaboration was already enabling many opportunities across the four institutions.

REF 2014 preparation

- 8.5 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) updated Council on the REF preparation; he expressed his gratitude to colleagues in RED and across the University for the work done so far.

The following points were noted:

- the REF submission would be made on 27 November; the census date for staff was 31 October;
- the REF 2014 submission was expected to be 10% smaller by volume compared to the RAE 2008 submission;
- the mock REF 2012 exercise was almost complete;
- although there was an active transfer market between HEIs, the University had not experienced a major ebb or flow thus far;
- in some disciplines the REF disincentivised interdisciplinarity, but the University's submission would be configured to take advantage of the best strategy in each unit of assessment;
- the REF was an unpredictable audit of the University and was not therefore a key driver of its overall strategic planning.

Admissions update

- 8.6 CORRECTION: the Student Number Control figures '223-253' at the top of page 2 should have read '223-353'.

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) updated Council on the Admissions figures, noting that the acceptance rate from Overseas students had risen by 57%. The

University's 18% of Overseas (ie non-UK/EU) students was lower than its competitors and it was targeting 20-25%.

CIPB

- 8.7 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor reported that contracts had been exchanged on the BBC villas on Tyndall's Park Road, a planning application had been submitted for the large lecture theatre, and a significant programme was underway to improve the student experience in the University's libraries, halls of residence, and study spaces.

NSS

- 8.8 The President of the Union updated Council on UBSU's work on improving its NSS score.

The following points were noted:

- UBSU had scored 46% on question 23 of the NSS compared to a 63% sector average;
- UBSU's focus was now on what it did well and its brand; it would also be looking at what was good for students as well as what students identified they wanted;
- UBSU had recently won a Green Impact Silver Award and an NUS Bronze Award;
- attendance at Student Council had risen by 260%;
- there had been a 20% rise in sports clubs and societies;
- turnout in the UBSU elections had increased significantly on previous years.

Recent Grants and Awards

- 8.9 The Vice-Chancellor reported that the MRC would award the University the first new university-based Unit in epidemiology (the University of Cambridge would be awarded the only other such Unit); this was a major success.

9. Financial Matters

Monthly Financial Report

- 9.1 NOTED: the Monthly Financial Report (reference **CN/13/018**).

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor reported that the 1% saving sought in academic staff was necessary in order for a balanced budget to be brought to Council at its meeting on 10 May. He and the Finance Director had met with each Dean and Head of School to carry out a forensic examination of income expectations. Permanent savings would be sought in the long term but the 1% was expected in the short term; the Deputy Vice-Chancellor was confident that this would not lead to redundancies.

- 9.2 APPROVED: the revised resolution related to the University's banking arrangements with RBS/NatWest.

10. SPis

- 10.1 NOTED: the Strategic Performance Indicators 2013 (reference **CN/13/019**).

The Registrar and Chief Operating Officer thanked the Director of Planning and Deputy Secretary and the Planning Office for the hard work which had gone into the report.

The discussion which followed highlighted these points:

- it was not intended that the SPIs would be drilled down into at this stage but it was recommended to Council that the Ratio of Students by Level of Study and Income per m² could be indicators on which attention could be focused;
- the comparator group that had been used was not the aspirational group discussed at the Council Away Day but such a group was being considered;
- it would be helpful to consider a measure of philanthropy in a future SPI iteration;
- another measure by which research could be tested was the research information system in which the University was investing (the REF would provide additional data but only on a six-year cycle);
- a text commentary could be added to unpack the details underneath each SPI.

11. BHP Billiton

- 11.1 NOTED: the BHP Billiton Due Diligence Report (reference **CN/13/020**).

12. Widening Participation Strategy

- 12.1 APPROVED: University of Bristol Widening Participation Strategy Revision (reference **CN/13/021**).

The Chair and the Vice-Chancellor commended the Widening Participation team on their enthusiastic work and Council's positive support of the University's widening participation agenda was noted.

13. 2014 Access Agreement

- 13.1 APPROVED: University of Bristol 2014 Access Agreement Submission (reference **CN/13/022**).

Input from UBSU had been included in the submission and would be sought again in future submissions.

14. Senate Report

- 14.1 NOTED: the business that was presented to Senate on 25 February for information/discussion (reference **CN/13/023**).

15. Equality and Diversity Annual Report

- 15.1 NOTED: the Equality and Diversity Annual Report (reference **CN/13/024**).

It was noted that data from the comparator group (as detailed under item 10) could be added to future Equality and Diversity reporting, and that it would be helpful to include the ethnicity of Home students as an appendix to the next Annual Report.

It was noted that work was ongoing to support the enhancement of gender equality in academic career development across all six faculties of the University. This would

support delivery of our institutional aspirations and values, the University's response to the recently issued RCUK statement of expectations, and the University and STEM faculties engagement with the Athena SWAN process.

16. Committee Reports

Personnel and Health & Safety Committee

- 16.1 RECEIVED: the report of the Personnel and Health & Safety Committee meeting on 8 March (reference **CN/13/031**).

Student Affairs Committee

- 16.2 RECEIVED: the minutes of the Student Affairs Committee meeting on 4 March (reference **CN/13/025**).

Copies of the UBSU Impact Report were distributed.

Ethics of Research Committee

- 16.3 RECEIVED: the report of the Ethics of Research Committee meeting on 8 March (reference **CN/13/026**).

Nominations Committee of Court

- 16.4 RECEIVED: the report of the Nominations Committee of Court meeting on 27 February (reference **CN/13/027**).

Membership Appointments Group

- 16.5 RECEIVED: the report of the Membership Appointments Group meeting on 8 February (reference **CN/13/028**).

17. Reports for Information

Annual Report, Faculty of Arts

- 17.1 NOTED: the Annual Report 2012 (reference **CN/13/029**).

Chair Appointments

- 17.2 RECEIVED: the summary of Chair appointments that had taken place since the previous report to Council in February 2013 (reference **CN/13/030**).

18. Standing Items

Equality and Diversity Implications

- 18.1 Council did not feel that the business discussed at the meeting had raised any equality and diversity issues which had not been appropriately addressed by report authors and/or relevant sub-committees.

Communications and Consultation

- 18.2 The Chair reminded those present that item 11 and the discussions around it should be kept confidential.

19. Dates of Next Meeting

- 19.1 The next meetings of Council had been scheduled as follows:

- Friday 10 May 2013
- Friday 5 July 2013