



**MEETING OF SENATE  
MINUTES  
Monday 7 February 2022  
14.00, virtual Zoom meeting**

**Present:**

Professors: Banissy, Barbour, Bickers, Birdi, Blom, Brady, Butts, Cater, Chapman, Clark, Clatworthy, Craddock, Dillingham, Dermott, Dudley, Faul, Flack, George, Grierson, Hannuna, Jessop, Juncos, Key, Kunutsor, Linthorst, Luckhurst, Madhloom, Manley, Marklof, McGrirr, Morgan, Mundell, Norman, Oliphant, Pancost, Parkin, Piggins, Pollman, Poole, Powell, Purdy, Pleydell-Pearce, Raven, Ridley, Robbins, Savery, Schonle, Smart, Spear, Squires, Tahko, Taylor, Tavare, O'Toole, Tormey, West, Wilding, Wilson

Dr N Davies, Dr N Dahnoun, Dr V Erlandsson, Mr E Fay, Dr C Fricker, Dr F Ginn, Dr T Hodos, C Lai, Dr J McManus, Dr R Murray, Ms L Parr, Dr D Poole, Dr S Proud, Dr M Werner, Dr K Whittington, Dr L Zuccolo, Ms G Walter

**In attendance:** Ms T Brunnock (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager), Ms C Buchanan (Chief People Officer), (S Johnson (Clerk), Mr R Kerse (Chief Operating Officer), Professor C Relton (Bristol Medical School) Richard Neal and Graham Fleming (Deloitte for item 6)

**Apologies:** Professor Ian Bond, Professor Catherine Nobes, Mr Jeff Barrie, Joel Ross, Professor Marcus Munafo, Professor Paola Manzini, Mr Steve Chadwick, Dr Jason Yon, Professor Walther Schwarzacher, Professor Tim Peters, Professor Melissa Allen, Dr Kit Opie, Professor Joel Ross, Mr Jack Boyer, Mr Dominic Freda, Ms Lu Macey, Professor Iain Gilchrist, Professor Matthew Hickman, Professor David Humphreys, Professor Karim Malik, Professor Ian Nabney, Mr R Burford, Dr N Carhart, S Gupta, Mr D Klymenko

**1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING ON 13 December 2021.**

1.1 **APPROVED** the minutes of the meeting of 13 December 2021, subject to the inclusion of the question from Professor Emma Clark in relation to a Medical Student Lounge and the response.

**2. CHAIR'S REPORT INCLUDING USE OF CHAIR'S POWERS (COVID19 BEHAVIOUR POLICY) AND SENATE FORWARD PLAN**

2.1 RECEIVED: paper ref: (SN/21-22/020).

2.2 NOTED the report of the Vice-Chancellor, and the use of Chair's Powers on behalf of Senate in relation to amendments to Exam Regulations.

2.3 NOTED the Senate Forward Plan for 2021/22.

2.4 DISCUSSED

- **Sector updates:** The response to the Auger Review was still outstanding.
- Association or not with Horizon Europe was still caught up in the Northern Ireland protocol and the Sector had not yet seen a plan B for if there was not full association.

- The Levelling up White Paper had been published and contained a lot of relevant material for the Sector, particularly the role of universities as catalysts for growth in city regions.
- The Government's Freedom of Speech Bill had received a proposed amendment which would obligate Universities to disclose any dealings with a foreign entity worth over £50K. This could potentially mean reporting on any student fees over 50k and the bureaucratic burden would be significant. The Sector was lobbying for the financial trigger to be lower.
- **Questions submitted by Senator Dr Neil Davies on USS /Pay and Conditions questions:**
- The question in relation as to why the USS Directors allegedly refuse to honour their written commitments to update the assumptions used in the valuation should be directed to the USS directors.
- In relation to future financial return assumptions the University had published its responses to consultations, and these should be referenced.
- In relation to questions on Government support for the USS Covenant the COO had raised this with the UUK Employer Pension Forum. UUK are procuring a response from USS on behalf of all employers. It is understood that this matter was considered in 2019. USS' response will be shared with the local branch of UCU.
- Cost of UCU proposals and potential savings: The UCU proposal would cost £6m more to April 2023 than the UUK one.
- In relation to whether the University would support the UCU proposal, affordability was a key factor, and the University would consider the proposal once costed by USS.
- In relation to University pay and remuneration the University applied the nationally negotiated framework. The University benchmarked against other UK and international institutions. The University was undertaking a review of pay and allowances and there was also the new academic promotions framework.
- In relation to recruitment and retention the University did not have problems recruiting high calibre staff with the current pay and conditions. There was discretion to use the recruitment and retention policy in in certain circumstances. Exit interviews over the last 3 years did not mention pay as an issue for leaving. Turnover was currently not of concern.
- **Report from Academic Trustees (Professor Ian Cradock and Professor Caroline Relton on the Board of Trustees Meeting (4 February 2022))**
- There had been unanimous support from the Board to proceed with Temple Quarter and the CM1 building. On the Thursday prior to the Board meeting there had been a tour of the Temple Quarter site and in the evening an address from Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol, who had articulated the importance of the Temple Quarter development in terms of city regeneration. As well as unanimous support for the Temple Quarter Campus the Board had also emphasised the importance of a campus wide estates plan to meet the needs of the whole University community and support the University's ambitions and new Strategic Plan.
- The Board had also had extensive discussions on the implementation plans for the University Strategy.
- **University Response to Industrial Action (Strike Action and Action Short of a Strike)** Concerns were expressed about the University response in relation to action short of a strike and the risk this had of eroding staff good will. It was noted that the University had to balance a number of issues in arriving at its response, including legal obligations and impact on student learning and experience but would feedback comments to the Executive Board. In relation to online materials the Executive had concluded that this merited a distinct approach so as not to disadvantage student learning. The University would not be monitoring this area and would rely on staff declaring /student reports on adverse effect on learning. The Chair thanked all staff

involved in supporting students over the winter break and also thanked those staff who had had to adjust assessment methodologies.

### **3. COVID19 UPDATE**

3.1 RECEIVED: paper ref: (**SN/21-22/021**).

3.2 The Registrar and University Secretary and Professor Caroline Relton presented the item.

3.3 NOTED:

- Good take up from the 'Vaccine Pop Ups'
- Student population case rates had gone up slightly against the general population case rates, but this was not a concern for Public Health. There was no evidence of transmission from teaching spaces.
- Tracking of positive cases continued both in terms of the R number and distribution of cases.
- There were no major changes in test reporting behaviour.
- The blended working pilot would be key in getting staff back to work and providing flexibility.
- The Scientific Advisory Group would continue to remain vigilant especially in relation to any new variants and required response.

### **4. STRATEGY GOVERNANCE AND SPIs**

4.1 RECEIVED: paper ref: (**SN/21-22/022**).

4.2 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost introduced the paper.

4.3 NOTED

- The final version of Strategy 2030 and plans for governing its implementation were approved by the Board of Trustees at its meeting on the 4th February 2022.
- The Board had requested that the University should use postgrad SPIs as well as undergrad SPIs and had requested more SPIs around staff diversity.
- Current governance arrangements had been augmented and made more robust and the University Executive Board would constitute itself once a month as a Strategy Implementation Board to monitor progress on strategy implementation, performance against SPIs and KPIs as well as overseeing Portfolio Boards, Projects and Programmes and the Integrated Planning Process (IPP). Information on progress against SPIs/KPIs would be reported to both the Board of Trustees and Senate, including qualitative reports from theme owners.
- SPIs had been selected as measures which aligned with the overarching goals of the Strategy, and which were familiar to the sector, thus enabling benchmarking.
- There were a range of input and output measures including metrics from domestic and global league tables.
- There were new SPIs for global civic and sustainable development goals.

#### **DISCUSSED**

- The draft Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Strategic Performance Indicators (SPIs) used to track progress against strategic objectives, particularly in relation to education, research and civic themes.
- In response to a question from Senator Dr Setor Kunutsor on whether the goal of global top 50 research intensive universities by 2030 goal was too ambitious it was acknowledged that this was ambitious, but it was right and proper to be that ambitious and to aim to deliver against that goal.

- The governance arrangements and the Strategy Implementation Board were key to monitoring progress against SPIs and to be able to take action/vire income and resource if necessary to achieve the required level of performance.
- In relation to the sustainability SPIs there needed to be more discussion on whether the University was comfortable with offsetting and further deconstruction of what exactly the University's emissions were. In terms of sustainability there needed to be discussions not only about what the campus division could do, but also in education and research.
- In terms of metrics on citation it was noted that there needed to be sensitivity around this but to also understand the metrics of key league tables to understand how the University was being evaluated, and how to ensure the required allocation of resources so as not to put the University in an adverse position in relation to reputation and those metrics.
- In terms of implementation plans the Executive was undertaking a process of prioritisation and relevant resource allocation. This would then be an ongoing process through the Integrated Planning Process, Budget Setting, Portfolio and Project delivery, monthly Strategy Implementation Board meetings and reporting to the Board of Trustees and Senate.
- In terms of REF outcomes, it was not known what the next REF would measure so this had not been included in the SPIs
- The Strategy would be launched internally in March to guide decision making with an external launch in the autumn to allow the incoming Vice Chancellor to influence the articulation of the strategy with key stakeholders.

## **5. STRUCTURE OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR**

5.1 RECEIVED: paper ref: (SN/21-22/023).

5.2 The PVC Education and PVC Research introduced the paper.

5.3 NOTED

- The rationale, process of consultation, implementation timeline, and SAY options.
- The SAY impacted not just on education and research but also significantly on other areas of the University and the ability to achieve its' strategic ambitions. Changes to the SAY would also impact on assessment and could be an opportunity to make improvements for the benefit of both staff and students and potentially also impact positively in terms of NSS outcomes.
- There was no perfect structure, and any choice would potentially mean some sacrifices and changes.
- The pandemic had clearly highlighted a number of legacy issues which were now not fit for the future.
- National level benchmarking had been carried out across the sector and the University came out at the end of the spectrum which had a longer academic year and more complex processes.
- From a research perspective the goal was to create space for research, innovation and impact. For example, there was not a well embedded and consistent sabbatical research approach across the University and the SAY could support this.
- Changes to the SAY could also support staff and student mental health and wellbeing.
- In terms of response to the options there had been some positive feedback but also some comments that the proposals were not radical enough to achieve the impact needed.
- The consultation process was ongoing with Faculties, Sabbaticals and the extended University Management Team

- 5.4 DISCUSSED the models, and their implications for education, research and staff workload, and student and staff-wellbeing, and the University's strategic aspirations.
- In terms of consultation, it was suggested that all staff should be consulted.
  - There would be benefit to carrying out international benchmarking.
  - Discussions relating to research and teaching demands should not be framed in opposition with each-other and there was real value in research led teaching and teaching-led research
  - If marking were to be carried out in a single week this could have significant impact on staff mental health and the student experience.
  - Concerns about the implementation timeline and the feasibility of introducing changes in October 2022.
  - All 3 proposals had elements that would benefit from further refinement. If further changes were to be made, they could potentially be more radical to drive the required change and impact. However, a more radical approach would require a longer implementation timeframe, particularly given other significant changes such as de-colonizing the curriculum and the need to discuss changes to the way in which assessments were carried out, which should be more consistent across the University.
  - Proposed changes to the timing of re-assessments were welcomed but there was also a need to change how re-assessment were done to free up time in the summer for research/research proposals/applications.
  - The introduction of blended learning also had an impact on the SAY and could potentially have even more impact e.g., Singapore University had all lectures recorded and online with students going on campus for more high-quality interactions and experiences.
  - In conclusion there would be further consultation and assessment of options to ensure they were radical enough to achieve the desired level of change. It was acknowledged that more radical proposals would require a longer implementation timeline and there would also need to be evaluation of the impact on other key activities. There would also need to be consideration going forward of PGT activity and differences between Pathways

## 6. ASSESSMENT REVIEW

- 6.1 RECEIVED: paper ref: (SN/21-22/024) to follow.
- 6.2 The Registrar and University Secretary and PVC Education introduced the item and handed over to Deloitte representatives to provide a detailed overview of the review outcomes.
- 6.4 NOTED
- Deloitte had been commissioned to review the problems with online assessment in May 2021.
  - There were substantial recommendations in the review, some of which had already been enacted.
  - The review highlighted issues around the governance of online assessment and ensuring clarity in relation to the overall strategy, policy and guidance. The strategy would now provide more direction and indication of where there was local flexibility and guidance would assist in verifying academic integrity.
  - Responsibilities would also be clarified in relation to the key phases of delivery.
  - Risk assessment would also be key to understanding mitigating controls going forward. The risk assessment process had improved during the review period, and this now needed to become embedded in business as usual.

- In terms of next steps, the Review Panel would agree an action plan, and this would be monitored through the Education Committee.

## **7. EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT**

7.1 RECEIVED: paper ref: (SN/21-22/025).

7.2 NOTED the report.

## **8. RESEARCH COMMITTEE REPORT**

8.1 RECEIVED: paper ref: (SN/21-22/026).

8.2 NOTED the report.

## **9. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT**

9.1 RECEIVED: paper ref: (SN/21-22/027)

9.2 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost introduced the paper.

9.3 NOTED

- This was the first report of the University Civic Engagement Committee to Senate.
- The Committee had been created in recognition of the Global Civic University theme of the new strategy
- Issues of note were the development of the Civic University Agreement with the Council, discussions on ethics of partnerships and Lifelong Learning.

## **10. ANNUAL REPORT OF UNIVERSITY PROMOTIONS COMMITTEE**

10.1 RECEIVED: paper ref: (SN/21-22/028).

10.2 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost introduced the paper.

10.3 NOTED

- the report which provided details of successful outcomes of the 2020-2021 annual academic promotion procedure.
- There had been positive feedback from those who went through the new procedure, panel members and other people who inputted.
- EDI statistics were being carefully monitored and there would now be a more robust focus on ethnicity where it was more difficult to interrogate data due to lower numbers and the lack of longitudinal data.
- The process had also considered the impact of COVID 19 on different groups.
- 76 percent of applications had included an equalities statement and mentioned impacts of COVID, and data suggested that those who made a statement were slightly more successful than those who did not.
- Part time applicants had also been slightly more successful than full time.
- EDI statistic had been shared with Senators at the request of Senator Professor Michelle Spear.

## **11. APPOINTMENT OF VC AND PRESIDENT - UPDATE**

11.1 RECEIVED: paper ref: (SN/21-22/029).

11.2 The Registrar and University Secretary introduced the paper.

11.3 NOTED the update on the VC Appointment Process and that the final stages would a staff and student stakeholder panel and media assessment.