



**MEETING OF SENATE
MINUTES
Monday 25 April 2022
14.00, virtual Zoom meeting**

Present:

Professors: Allen, Banissy, Barbour, Blom, Butts, Cater, Cristianini, Chapman, Dermot, Dillingham, Faul, George, Grierson, Hickman, Howarth, Jessop, Juncos, Key, Kunutsor, Linthorst, Malik, Manley, McGirr, Mundell, Nairn, Neild, Oliphant, Parkin, Peters, Piggins, Powell, Pleydell-Pearce, Purdy, Ridley, Ross, Savery, Schwarzacher, Smart, Squires, Tahko, O'Toole, Tormey, Wilding, Wilson, Yon

Mr J Barrie, Dr N Carhart, Dr N Dahnoun, Dr V Erlandsson, Mr E Fay, Dr C Fricker, Dr T Hodos, Mr Rowan Humphrey's, Ms J Inglis, Dr J Khawaja, Ms L Macey, Dr J McManus, Dr R Murray, Dr K Opie, Ms L Parr, Dr D Poole, Dr S Proud, Dr M Werner, Dr L Zuccolo

In attendance:

Mr J Bigwood (Director of People and Organisational Development), Ms T Brunnock (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager), Ms C Buchanan (Chief People Officer), Professor I Craddock (Academic Trustee), Mrs S Elliott (Faculty Special Projects Manager on behalf of Ian Bond), Dr M Gillway (Director, Centre for Academic Language and Development), Ms S Johnson (Clerk), Mr R Kerse (Chief Operating Officer), Mr Barra Mac Ruairi (Chief Property Officer), Professor Chris Preist (Academic Lead for Sustainability), Professor Caroline Relton (Academic Trustee), Professor D Wilson (Deputy Dean, Social Sciences and Law)

Apologies:

Miss S Bain, Professor R Bickers, Professor I Bond, Professor H Brady, Mr R Burford, Professor E Clark, Professor M Clatworthy, Dr N Davies, Dr M Dudley, Professor J Foot, Mr D Freda, Professor S George, Dr F Ginn, Dr S Hannuna, Professor M Luckhurst, Mr O Madhloom, Professor P Manzini, Professor J Marklof, Dr D Morgan, Professor M Munafò, Professor J Norman, Professor R Pancost, Mr A Pearce, Professor E Raven, Professor J Robbins, Professor A Schönle, Professor M Spear, Professor J Tavare, Professor P Taylor, Professor K West, Dr K Whittington

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING ON 7 FEBRUARY 2022 AND 24 MARCH 2022.

- 1.1 APPROVED the minutes of the meeting of 7 February 2022.
- 1.2 APPROVED the minutes of the meeting of 24 March 2022, subject to the amendment from Dr N Davies.

2. CHAIR'S REPORT

- 2.1 RECEIVED: paper ref: (SN/21-22/031).
- 2.2 NOTED the report of the Vice-Chancellor and the following key issues:
 - Negotiations in relation to Horizon Europe were still underway, with no resolution currently in sight. Work is ongoing to secure an agreement, and also to explore an alternative should the negotiations not succeed.

- The Higher Education Freedom of Speech Bill was now likely to be carried over to the next parliament. It may include a clause which would require universities to disclose the name of foreign donors for amounts greater than 50k to the Office for Students. This would increase the burden of reporting for universities.
- Consideration was being given to the issue of students from Russia, Ukraine and China not being able to return home in the summer to get their visas for their UG studies. Other universities were providing free accommodation and short courses to comply with visa requirements.
- Support was being provided for students to get visas for autumn graduations.
- In relation to COVID 19 and face coverings the University was following Government workplace guidance. Coverings were no longer required on campus apart from in crowded or enclosed areas. The messaging on this needed to be clearer and even though there had been communication on this there would be further messaging to ensure clarity for staff and students.
- In relation to the UCU ballot on industrial action in relation to pensions and pay Bristol had not reached the required threshold to support this. 24 Institutions had voted for action in relation to pensions and 38 institutions in relation to pay.
- The University had issued a joint statement with the UCU in relation to pensions.
- The DVC & Provost invited Senate to put forward 3 nominations to sit on the Staff Pensions Working Group.
- An academic trustee of the Board of Trustees (Professor Ian Craddock) had now joined the Pensions Task and Finish Group. The views of Senate expressed at the special meeting on the 24th March 2022 had been put to the Board of Trustees.

3.3 NOTED the Senate Forward Plan for 2021/22.

3. EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

3.1 RECEIVED: paper ref: **(SN/21-22/032)**.

3.2 Senate were shown a short video from the PVC Research which highlighted some of the key questions facing the University in terms of reaching Net Zero for scope 1 and scope 2 emissions by 2030 – a very challenging task. Some of the questions and issues highlighted included:

- The need for behaviour change and investment, looking at our Estate and energy systems.
- What was the University willing to change in pursuit of this target?
- Should the University be more selective about research? Should it change the way it carried out research?
- Could each member of staff be given a carbon budget and once that was used, they could no longer carry out work which produced CO2 emission?
- What about making more use of offsetting?

3.3 Professor Chris Preist, Academic Lead for Sustainability gave the presentation.

3.4 NOTED the presentation and report.

3.5 DISCUSSED the outcome of the on-line survey undertaken at the meeting in relation to what more could be done to intensify a focus on sustainability in education.

- The top 3 things to be done were:
Freshers Training
Pump Priming
Interdisciplinary Units

- In relation to what the University should not do the top 3 answers were:

Do nothing
Degree Reporting
With Sustainability Degrees

- Concerns about resourcing to carry out additional activities and impacts on workload and capacity both for staff and students.
- Going forward there will be a greater expectation to include sustainability as a core competency of degrees.
- There was a need to ensure that students had a basic understanding of what sustainability actually means and have a base level of literacy around the issue. This could be assisted by the production of basic materials which could be used across different disciplines. Concerns that there was too much volume and not enough depth in some degree courses, and this was an issue being considered under the Curriculum Enhancement Programme.
- It would be a greater challenge to include some of these actions at PGT level.

4. FACULTY OF ENGINEERING REORGANISATION

4.1 RECEIVED: paper ref: (**SN/21-22/033**).

4.2 The Faculty Special Projects Manager and Faculty Manager introduced the paper.

4.3 ENDORSED and RECOMMENDED to the Board of Trustees the creation of four schools, from the current two Schools that exist within the Faculty of Engineering. School names will be submitted subsequently.

4.4 NOTED that funding for new posts required to support the new structure is being progressed through the normal Integrated Planning Process (IPP). Posts would ideally be recruited by August 2022.

4.5 The names of the Schools were working titles only and there had been discussion with the Industry Advisory Board. Internal and External stakeholders would be consulted.

4.6 Creating the right culture and identify would be key going forward and the Heads of School would work with staff and students to develop a clear vision going forward.

5. STRUCTURE OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR

5.1 RECEIVED: paper ref: (**SN/21-22/034**).

5.2 The PVC Education introduced the paper.

5.3 NOTED the revised model which incorporated feedback from the green paper consultation.

NOTED that the next iteration would be a White Paper for consultation and that the Education Committee, Research Committee and University Executive Board would be formally consulted alongside other consultees such as Faculties and Trade Unions. The final decision lay with the Vice Chancellor as Chair of Senate.

AGREED that the White Paper should contain a paragraph on the views of Senate expressed at this meeting and in particular concerns about the proposal for Saturday assessments.

NOTED that Senate would be consulted again in June and any views expressed by Senate and other consultees would be taken into consideration by the Vice-Chancellor in making a final decision.

NOTED the importance of agreeing an improved structure of the academic year in order to resolve existing workload challenges.

5.4 DISCUSSED

- Green Paper consultations to date had been used to refine the updated proposal.
- No single proposal would meet everyone's approval, but this was the most supported approach and addressed issues of concern such as staff workload, time for research, assessment arrangements.
- In the next phase of White Paper consultation there needed to be a clearer setting out of the rationale for the proposed changes in particular relating to the new University Strategy and the objectives of reducing staff workload and positively impacting on mental health of both students and staff.
- The paper should be clear about the length of the academic year and the gap between Semesters.
- An Equality Impact Assessment would need to be carried out on the proposals.
- Assessment and curriculum reform were also essential to the revised SAY with a need to reduce complexity and bureaucracy to support a better staff and student experience. The two issues needed to be considered in tandem. Reform of assessment and curriculum could impact positively on the SAY. A bold approach to assessment and curriculum reform could potentially mean less need for reform of the SAY. The timing of Exam Boards also needed to be looked at as part of the assessment reform.
- The messaging around the SAY proposals needed to emphasise the positive impact and some of the negativity around changes may also be linked to 'change fatigue'.
- Concerns about Saturday assessments and that fact that they could negatively impact students who are parents or carers, students with part-time jobs and discriminate against certain faith groups. Saturday assessments would also impact on student participation in sporting activities. There would also be an impact on Professional Services colleagues.
- The potential to align TB1 Reading Week with school half terms.
- Potential negative repercussions for research as many key conferences were scheduled for early to mid-September.
- Whether there was a risk to having a standard reading week - unaligned reading weeks could allow sharing of specialist labs across schools and faculties. Timetabling and specialist space optimisation needed to be considered when deciding on a standard reading week.
- Concerns about whether 1 marking week was sufficient.
- In terms of benchmarking the University had looked at the SAY in other research-intensive public universities. A request was made for further benchmarking against international top 50 research institutions. It was confirmed there would be dialogue with other Universities who already have 10-week teaching blocks and higher student satisfaction.
- Whether the model was radical enough and the impact of recorded lectures and freeing up of space.
- Should Sente not feel that the options in the forthcoming White Paper improved on what is currently in place then this view could be put forward to the Vice Chancellor prior to them making a decision.
- An implementation group would be established following a decision on the SAY and this would include Faculty representatives with a view to implementation being from 2024.

6. ADVANCE HE CHARTERS

6.1 RECEIVED: paper ref: (SN/21-22/035)

6.2 The Chair introduced the item.

6.3 NOTED the progress with the Athena Swan and Race Equality Charter institutional submissions.

6.4 Athena Swann would be submitted in November and the Race Equality Charter (REC) the year after. In relation to the REC this was a challenging process and the University needed robust data to back up progress being made. The University was making progress in tackling historical data quality. It was essential to be clear what data was needed and to have consistent and quality data. This would also assist Faculties and Schools going forward and avoid duplication of effort. School would continue to apply for their own Athena Swann awards.

7. EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

7.1 RECEIVED: paper ref: (SN/21-22/036).

7.2 NOTED the report.

8. RESEARCH COMMITTEE REPORT

8.1 RECEIVED: paper ref: (SN/21-22/037).

8.2 NOTED the report.

APPROVED the Terms of Reference and NOTED there would be a final update in the summer.

9. APPOINTMENT OF VC AND PRESIDENT

9.1 RECEIVED: paper ref: (SN/21-22/038)

9.2 The Registrar and University Secretary introduced the paper.

9.3 NOTED the appointment of Professor Evelyn Welch as the next Vice-Chancellor and President of the University of Bristol, from the 1st September 2022, to succeed Professor Hugh Brady.

9.4 NOTED the appointment of Professor Judith Squires, as Acting Vice-Chancellor from the 1st – 31st August 2022

9.5 Stakeholder mapping was underway to determine the order Professor Welch would be seeing people in and there was a transition group in place. Professor Welch had visited the Campus and attending a Board of Trustees meeting at Langford.

10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Monday 20th June 2022, 1400