



**MEETING OF SENATE
MINUTES
Monday 12 December 2022
14.00, virtual Zoom meeting**

Present: Professors: Allen, Banissy, Barbour, Bickers, Birdi, Cater, Clark, Clatworthy, Dermott, Dillingham, George, Juncos, Linthorst, Manley, Manzini, Marklof, McGirr, Munafò, Mundell, Nabney, Nairn, Neild, Oliphant, O'Toole, Powell, Purdy, Raven, Ridley, Robbins, Roberts, Rust, Savery, Schwarzacher, Smart, Spear, Squires, Tahko, Tavaré, Taylor, Tether, Tormey, Warburton, Welch, Wilding.

Ms T Adeniyi, Dr P Allen, Dr M Allinson, Mr J Barrie, Mr S Buffonge, Dr N Carhart, Dr A Clayton, Dr S East, Dr V Erlandsson, Mr E Fay, Dr C Fricker, Dr H Gadelha, Ms A Garr, Dr F Ginn, Dr G Hemani, Ms L Macey (Postgraduate Education Officer, Bristol SU), Dr B Main, Dr J McManus, Mrs M Millard, Mr M Munafo, Dr M Gillway, Dr D Pamunuwa, Dr B Pohl, Dr S Proud, Dr J Ross.

In attendance: Ms L Barling (Deputy Head of Governance and Clerk to Senate), Ms P Coonerty (Executive Director for Education and Student Experience and Academic Registrar), Professor C Relton (Academic Trustee),

Apologies: Ms Y Ankaine, Mr J Boyer, Ms J Bridgwater, Professor C Chapman, Mr X Chen, Dr S Das, Professor N Edwards, Dr T Ellson, Professor C Faul, Professor R Glynn, Professor T Hodos, Dr J Howarth, Professor O Madhloom, Professor R Martin, Professor T Parkin, Professor C Sandvoss, Professor N Timpson, Dr K Trimmis, Dr M Werner, Mr S Williams (UG Student rep).

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING ON 10 OCTOBER 2022.

1.1 APPROVED the minutes of the meeting of 10th October 2022.

2. CHAIR'S REPORT

2.1 RECEIVED: paper ref: (SN/22-23/006) (on file).

2.2 NOTED the report of the Vice-Chancellor and ask any follow up questions in the VC's Q&A session at the meeting.

2.3 NOTED the use of Chair's action taken between Senate meetings (on file).

2.4 The following was highlighted:

2.4.1 In October, the Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP was appointed as the new Secretary of State for Education and on 8 November it was confirmed that the Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP was now the new minister for skills, apprenticeships and higher education, becoming the third minister responsible for universities this year. On the research side, The Rt Hon George Freeman MP has been appointed as the Minister of State in the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

2.4.2 The Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill passed its third reading in the House of Lords without further amendment - and was now set to return to the Commons for consideration of amendments. These amendments included the removal of the statutory

tort (clause 4). In her speech, Baroness Barran noted that ministers were still considering the implications of this decision - but continued to feel the arguments for retaining the tort “have genuine force and validity”. On the measures added to ban the use of non-disclosure agreements, she reported that this government supported the amendment and that it “will be celebrated” on return to the Commons. Therefore it was very likely that this Bill would become law in due course, and the University would need to make sure that staff were well trained and understood how to work with this new legislation.

- 2.4.3 With both countries having been shut out of Horizon Europe, a UK-Swiss science deal was described in November by Swiss ambassador Markus Leitner as a “political signal”, for researchers to deepen existing ties and find new projects.

REDACTED: Section 2(43) Commercial interests

- 2.4.4 Bristol City Council had recently launched a [consultation](#) on its budget for next year – it was online and open to all and the Vice-Chancellor encouraged members of Senate who lived in the city to respond. The cuts to BCC’s budget were significant and the Executive group were currently considering how it could best support and help its civic partners to reach those parts of the city that most needed it, without taking on the duties of the city council itself. For more information on the budgets that the Council manages, please visit this [web page](#).

- 2.4.5 Members of the Executive group had met staff on the picket lines recently and heard about pay-related issues but also particular concerns about whether or not the University would continue to remain competitive for individuals wanting to join academia, above all from overseas. The University had put forward very positive the notion that UCEA should accelerate the 23/24 pay negotiations which would have normally happened in April, and these have now been brought forward to January. During that time UCU had asked members not to necessarily take action short of a strike in a way that would be damaging and in turn UCEA had noted the request that employers did not want to aggravate the situation by making over-punitive deductions to pay. The Vice-Chancellor was pleased to have played a part of that calming down of industrial relations so that proper negotiations could ensue.

- 2.4.6 The University’s [Legacy of slavery report](#) had recently been launched with almost 3000 responses received to date. Senators were encouraged to respond. Senate noted that the absolute common theme recurring throughout was that whatever the University did, it must explain understand and communicate it’s past and also be aware of what consciously and unconsciously it may have inherited from that past. Individuals emphasised in their responses that it was about what the University did going forward that mattered.

- 2.5 During discussions, the following was highlighted:

- 2.5.1 The University had decided that it would retain the formal crest which required Privy Council approval to change, but the logo itself would be reviewed and refreshed as part of the overall University brand refresh.

- 2.5.2 BCC’s funding cuts had major ramifications not just for outreach projects and public engagement but also for grant-funded projects. If those projects were not to get off the ground or were to be cancelled, this would pose a major challenge to some of the University’s ongoing funding plans particularly from the perspective of research grants. There would also be a negative impact on Bristol heritage, including its stewardship of

some internationally significant collections. Senate members were keen to work together with their partners and were pleased to hear of the Vice-Chancellor's commitment to support the University's stakeholders across the City during such a difficult time.

3. FACULTY OF ENGINEERING ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW: SCHOOL NAMING PROCESS

3.1 RECEIVED: paper ref: **(SN/22-23/007)** (on file)).

3.2 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost (Judith Squires) introduced this item, highlighting to Senate the extensive internal consultation carried out across all areas in relation to the Faculty Organisational Review.

3.3 The Dean of Engineering emphasised that the names were supported by staff, and that they would primarily be internally-facing. More externally-focused names may be considered in the future.

3.4 **ENDORSED** and **RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES** the approval of the four proposed school names for the Faculty of Engineering.

4. GREEN PAPER: ACADEMIC SENIOR LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE OPTIONS

4.1 RECEIVED: paper ref: **(SN/22-23/008)** (on file)).

4.2 The Vice-Chancellor introduced the Green paper, and outlined the rationale for undertaking a review of our academic structures as this point in time. Following the launch of an ambitious University strategy it was timely to review our academic structures (as well as our systems and processes) to ensure that we are equipped to deliver on our aims. The University of Bristol was now a large organisation operating in a challenging external environment. It required structures that could deal with the complexity of the external HE environment in an agile and effective way, fostering innovation and inter-disciplinary work while streamlining overly complex and fragmented practices.

4.3 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost outlined that the Senate Working Group met for the first time on 21 November and that all members of the Group had provided helpful reflections. The views of that Group were summarised in the paper as were the views of the equivalent Professional Services leaders group which also met in November to consider the same issues and answer the same questions. Their views were also included in the paper (Appendix 2).

4.4 Senate members were encouraged to discuss the Green Paper with their colleagues across the University between now and the next meeting of Senate in February. The Working Group was scheduled to meet again in January to take into account the views of Senators from today's meeting.

4.5 During discussions, the following themes emerged:

4.5.1 It would be helpful in the next iteration of the paper to provide more specific examples about how changing the faculty level structure would significantly improve the University's ability to work with more interdisciplinarity in both teaching and research – for example, the friction between Schools and Faculties was one of the biggest blockers to interdisciplinarity particularly in teaching and Senators were keen to understand how the new structures would address this.

4.5.2 Senators agreed that it would also be useful to better understand how making the Faculties larger would ensure more lean and effective decision making. Many members of Senate emphasised that their frustrations lay with systems and processes rather than structure and some raised concerns about what the impact of merging faculties might be on current curricula and assessment, amongst other things.

4.5.3 **REDACTED: Section 2(43) Commercial interests**

Whilst it was acknowledged that a restructure would represent a great opportunity to provide more autonomy to schools, the University would have to be realistic about the administrative support required and the added expense that would be associated with it.

4.5.4 Senators broadly agreed that any new structure should be able to deliver on the University Strategy, but requested more information on how a restructure was required, as this would provide staff with more confidence in the direction of travel and a clearer understanding of the benefits that the changes would bring to their ways of working.

4.5.5 Members of Senate also questioned the timing of the restructure: staff were still getting used to hybrid working; there were large projects currently underway such as the academic year changes, programme modifications, and preparing for next REF.

4.6 The Executive team emphasised that they wanted positive ideas and conversations to take place so that the University leadership could shape something that would provide the best systems, processes and structures that would be sustainable for the University going forward. Structures would not be the primary focus, and there was a very real understanding that systems and processes required review also. The important part of all of this was to ensure that the University had the best structures in place to deliver its Strategy in an externally challenging environment.

4.7 In conclusion, the following was **AGREED**:

4.7.1 Senators would share the Green Paper more widely with their colleagues across Faculties, Schools and URIs and seek their feedback, which would then be channelled through members of the Senate Working Group.

4.7.2 Heads of School would share with the Vice-Chancellor current system and process issues arising in their Schools, and some suggested solutions for those – this was particularly important given that Schools were being asked in the proposed new structure to have greater autonomy and accountability.

ACTION: All Senate members

5. WIDENING PARTICIPATION UPDATE

5.1 RECEIVED: paper ref: (**SN/22-23/009 and Presentation** (on file)).

5.2 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost (Judith Squires) introduced the paper and the Director of Home Recruitment and Conversion and the Deputy Director of Home Recruitment and Head of Education Partnerships delivered an associated PowerPoint presentation (on file).

5.3 **NOTED** the University's progress on a range of WP metrics, as well as those areas in which targets have not been met;

- 5.4 **NOTED** the Office for Students' (OfS) consultation on the future of Access and Participation Plans and the University's response;
- 5.5 Senators **CONSIDERED** the current and possible future allocation of higher fee income on access, student success and progression interventions.
- 5.6 During discussions, the following was highlighted:
 - 5.6.1 Excellent progress had been made to date and Senate congratulated the team on their achievements so far, noting that more would continue to be delivered in this space.
 - 5.6.2 Senators emphasised the importance of continuing to diversify the student community and to consider the language that was being used and the choices that the University was making to provide a safe and inclusive space for students. It was essential that students didn't feel 'othered'.
 - 5.6.3 More consideration should be given to how best to continuously communicate the variety of schemes available to prospective students e.g. into University so that these were embedded in students' decision-making processes. Ensuring that students know what was available to them, was extremely important.
 - 5.6.4 Senate members felt PGR WP initiatives needed further review. This was partly a governance problem in that it wasn't currently clear who owned PGR WP.
- 5.7 Senators **AGREED** to respond to the questions highlighted at the end of the paper as part of institutional consultation. It was noted that the deadline to respond was 16th January 2023, and responses should be emailed to doug.jennings@bristol.ac.uk.

6. **UPDATES ON DEVELOPMENTS FROM STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE**

- 6.1 RECEIVED and **NOTED**: paper ref: (**Presentation**) (on file)).
- 6.2 The Pro-Vice Chancellor Student Experience (Sarah Purdy) presented.
- 6.3 **NOTED**: a recent [research report](#) on student communities and sense of belonging at Bristol, produced by Research Bristol SU in partnership with the University.
- 6.4 Senators were reminded that this was Prof Purdy's last Senate meeting and members thanked her for her excellent work over the years and her insightful and helpful contributions to the University during her period as PVC Student Experience.

7. **UPDATE ON INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS AND RECENT INTERNATIONAL VISITS**

- 7.1 RECEIVED: paper ref: (**oral update**).
- 7.2 The Pro Vice-Chancellor Global Engagement (Agnes Nairn) introduced the item and the following was highlighted:
 - 7.2.1 The University's overarching objective as part of the International Strategy was to broaden global engagement by taking a more strategic approach to international research and relationships with international governments and businesses.

- 7.2.2 **REDACTED: Section 2(43) Commercial interests**

7.2.3 **REDACTED: Section 2(43) Commercial interests**

7.2.4 **REDACTED: Section 2(43) Commercial interests**

7.3 **REDACTED: Section 2(43) Commercial interests**

ACTION: All Senators

8. EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

8.1 RECEIVED: paper ref: **(SN/22-23/010)** (on file)).

8.2 The Pro Vice-Chancellor Education (Tansy Jessop) introduced her report.

8.3 Senate **APPROVED** a minor change to the CREATE Policy regarding staff participation.

8.4 The following was **NOTED**: the new University Assessment and Feedback Strategy 2022-2030; the work underway on the TEF submission; the other items for report from the October and November meetings of the Education Committee.

8.5 Senate congratulated the following members of staff:

8.5.1 Professor Andy Radford for winning the Times Higher Education Award for the most Outstanding Postgraduate Research Supervisor;

8.5.2 Associate Prof Francesco Fornetti for being highly commended in the Most Innovative Teacher of the Year category.

8.5.3 Both Andy and Francesco were recipients of Bristol Teaching Awards in the run up to these national awards.

9. ETHICS OF RESEARCH COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

9.1 RECEIVED and **NOTED**: paper ref: **(SN/22-23/011)** (on file)) and an oral update on the Forced Swim Test.

Forced Swim Test

9.2 Members of Senate were reminded that this oral update was being provided to Senate as a result of recent lobbying of some Senate members by the organisation PETA.

9.3 The Registrar & University Secretary (Lucinda Parr) introduced the item as the 'Establishment License Holder' with responsibility for ensuring that all of the Universities obligations under the Animal Scientific Procedures Act 1986 were followed. More details were then provided by Ms Sally Robinson, the current AWERB Chair in the Services Unit about what the swim test was, why it was controversial, and why it was important scientifically.

9.4 The following was highlighted during discussions:

- 9.4.1 The Forced Swim Test was justified legally, as well as being justified legally for scientific use at the University of Bristol.
- 9.4.2 There were a number of research areas where the forced swim test worked in the past but now it was no longer justified and the University had stopped doing it. The swim test was only used where there was compelling evidence that the test was useful for research.
- 9.4.3 There were strong governance structures in place at the University monitoring ethical research matters – in particular, the Ethics of Research Committee which reported to Senate (and was a subcommittee of the University Research Committee) was responsible for maintaining and implementing the University’s ethical research Policy and Procedure and fostering a research environment in which research ethics and integrity issues were firmly embedded in working practices.
- 9.4.4 Going forward, more engagement was required between the University and the Students’ union on the value of animal research, perhaps by way of the development of a Student Engagement Plan.
- 9.4.5 As part of the above, more comprehensive material should be produced for students and staff so that they better understood the importance of animal research. The material should cover off two dimensions – one was the use of animals in research, and the other was about when the University used animals, that the methods were ethical and that the University followed the relevant legal and regulatory frameworks.
- 9.5 Any member of Senate who received an email from PETA either in the past or in the future, should not respond directly, and should instead forward to the Registrar & University Secretary for an institutional response.

10. RESEARCH COMMITTEE REPORT

- 10.1 RECEIVED and **NOTED**: paper ref: (SN/22-23/012) (on file)).

11. REPORT ON PHILANTHROPICALLY FUNDED SCHOLARSHIPS

- 11.1 RECEIVED and **NOTED**: paper ref: (SN/22-23/013) (on file)).

SIGNED BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR (CHAIR):

**REDACTED: Section 2(40)
Personal Information**

DATE: 6th February 2023