University of Bristol

Annual General Meeting of Convocation

Draft Minutes

Saturday 9 July 2016, 11.15 am to 12.30 pm

Reception Room, Wills Memorial Building

The President of Convocation, The Rt. Hon. the Baroness Hale of Richmond DBE PC (Hon LLD 2002) presided over the meeting. Also in attendance was Mrs Julie Goldstein (BSc 1978), the Chair of Convocation, Mr David Clarke, the Treasurer of Convocation and Ms Tracey Beck, the Clerk to Convocation.

The Chancellor welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their dedication.

The AGM was attended by 78 members of Convocation and was quorate.

Mr Faik Mohammed Abdul Aziz (BSc 1957); Miss Nicola Julie Alfonsi (BA 1988); Miss Jacqueline Rosemary Aslan (BA 1977); Mr John Edward Barnbrook (BSc 1974, Certificate in Education 1975); Dr Edward Joseph Beech (BSc 2012, MBChB 2015); Dr David Frank Billett (BSc 1964, MSc 1966, PhD1972); Mr John Harold Binsted (BA 1954); Mr Sumit Kumar Biswas (BSc 1984); Mrs Ann Ruth Bradford (née Milner) (BSc 1964); Professor Hugh R Brady (Vice Chancellor); Mr Robert John Bromham (BSc 1960); Dr Derek George Brooks (BSc 1952); Mrs Lilian Edna Brown (née Oakman) (BA 1951, Certificate in Education 1952, Honorary MA 2005); Mr Andrew John Burkitt (BSc 1971, MSc 1972); Mr Peter Maurice Burling (BA 1955); Mr Christopher Terence Burns (BSc 1977); Dr Jennifer Irene Burston (née Lewis) (MB ChB 1962); Mr David Alan Clarke (BA 1965); Dr Anthony Arthur Codd (MB ChB 1958, MD 1972); Mr Rab Adam Brisbane Cross (BA 1984); Dr Martin John Crossley Evans MBE, JP (BA 1978, PhD 1990); Mr Christopher Andrew Didcote (BSc 2008); Dr Helen Dorothy Donoghue (BSc 1967, PhD 1971), Mr David Neill Ewart (BSc 1977); Mr Anthony William Franks (BA 1959); Mr Andrew Franks (MEng 2010); Dr Theresa Bernadette Regin Freeman-Wang FRSA (MB ChB 1989); Dr Tom Harrison Frewin (MB ChB 1971); Dr Anu Ganapathy (MSc 1999, PhD 2009); Ms Sarah Goodwin Gilbert (BA1980, Diploma 2000 MSc 2002); Dr Stuart Andrew Goldsmith (BA 1966, Honorary LLD 2007); Mrs Julie Ann Goldstein (née Lee) (BSc 1978); Mr Charles Matthew Mcm Manus Gunter (BSc 2006, Certificate in Education 2007, MSc 2009); Mr John Ernest Hemken (BA 1956); Mr Paul Arthur Herbert (BSc 1961); Mr Trevor Frank Bertram Jaggar (BSc 1946, Certificate in Education 1952); Mrs
Margaret Eiry Jenkins Jaggar (née Davies) (BSc 1955); Mrs Gillian Rosemary Beamon Jones (née Jackson) (BA 1964, Diploma 1965); Mrs Janet Mary Kirk (née Bolwig) (BSc 1968, Certificate in Education 1970); Mr Philip George Lake (BSc 1978); Dr John Cyril Manley (PhD 1982); Mr Adrian Joseph Mezzetti (LLB 1965); Dr Tim John Fitzmaurice Mitchell (MB ChB 1980); Mr Graham Mullan; Mr Stephen O’Connor (Director of Alumni Relations); Mr Owen Bryce Peachey (BSc 2008); Mrs Patricia Price (née Moir) (BA 1953); Mr Christopher Laurence Row (BA 1968); Ms Cornelia Christina Elfrieda Rulf (BA 1976); Mr Timothy John Scaife (BSc 1976); Mr Alastair Francis Douglas Scott (BSc 1965); Dr Michael Ernest Sheard (MB ChB 1957); Dr Vincent Jervis Smith MBE (PhD 1969); Mr Leon R Smith (BA 2005); Mr David Raymond Snoxell (BA 1966); Mr Dennis Roy Stinchcombe MBE (Honorary MA 2010); Dr Ivan Thompson (MB ChB 1957); Mrs Kathleen Thompson (née Guite) (BSc 1957); Dr Jane Lesley Thompson DL (Certificate in Education 1986, PhD 1995); Mr Roger James Wilson Tucker (BA 1968, Certificate in Education 1969, BA 1973); Mr John Turner (BA 1966); Mrs Jill Kay Wakefield (née Sadler) (BA 1961); Mr Michael Alan Wakefield (BSc 1961); Mr Patrick Keith Leonard George Walesby (BA 1981); Mr Keith Walton (BSc 1972); Mrs Julia Margaret Wathen (née Richardson) (BSc 1972); Dr Jillian Mary White (Honorary DMus 2003); Mr Ian Frank Whiteman (BA 1964); Mr Stephen Thomas Wiggan (BA 2002); Mr Richard Guy Willis FRSA (BSc 1974, Certificate in Education 1975); Mrs Helen Maureen Willoughby Hempsall (BA 1951, Testamur 1952, Honorary MA 1999); Dr Stuart Kevin Paterson Wilson (BSc 1979); Mrs Linda Jane Wilson (LLB 1982); Mrs Sylvia Ann Wilson (née Welding) (BVSc 1980); Mrs Alison Mary Wilson (née Gomm) (BA 1966); Mr Lawrence de Villamuil Wragg (BA 1966); Mr Grant William Wray (MSci 2014).

Item 1: Apologies for absence
Apologies have been received from Dr Eric Albone (Cert Ed 1979), Roy Barlow (BSc 1972) and Robert Foster (BSc 1978)

Item 2: Minutes of the meeting held on Saturday 11 July 2015

The Minutes were adopted as a true and correct record. There were no matters arising.

Action: Chancellor to sign minutes as an accurate record.

The Chancellor welcomed the Vice-Chancellor Professor Hugh Brady to his first Annual General meeting of Convocation and the Alumni Association.

Item 3: Report from the Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor advised that when he came to Bristol a strategic planning process was embarked upon to determine the future direction of the University. He explained that a “Blue skies” consultation process had been undertaken before Christmas, and a draft proposal was produced in the New Year which led to the approval by the Board of Trustees of a new Strategic Plan at the end of May. He noted that when looking at the QS ranking of top universities, Bristol is currently ranked 37th in the world. He remarked that the University is an interesting success story; virtually all the top 50 universities are either ancient, large, well-endowed or
capital city based. However even though Bristol falls outside of any of these categories, over the decades it has succeeded in competing with the very best in the world. The questions which needed considering were what parts of the University should continue as business as usual, and what are the measures we need to take to make sure that we can continue to compete at the very top level. The discussion on these matters has been very interesting and he advised that he found the level of engagement very inspiring, from students, staff, and from alumni who contributed in a most constructive way to these conversations. The sessions which included alumni and friends across the globe, in Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong had been very inspiring, and a real passion for the University had been displayed. A great ambition, honesty about the challenges facing us and some really interesting ideas and suggestions had been made as to how we can move forward in the next phase of the evolution of the University’s success.

The new strategy was launched internally in June and an external launch will be held in the autumn. Some of the highlights and priority actions were described by the Vice-Chancellor as follows.

**Education and the student experience**

The University’s international reputation is based on excellence in research, and all our rankings reflect this very well. A piece of work is needed on education and the student experience to bring these up on par with the standards of research: where rankings ignore the quality of research Bristol does not do as well as might be expected. The fundamentals are very strong, when students are asked if they are stimulated intellectually by their course and degree programmes we perform well. It is the feedback on softer areas such as facilities and the environment where we do not do well. There is a focus up front in the plan to address education and the student experience with a determination to bring these up to a higher level.

A new curricular initiative which many alumni have advised on will be introduced. All students from 2017 on will have access to one of three personal and development pathways. The core research rich disciplinary curriculum is unequivocally protected and will continue. However students, parents and employers are looking for breadth and depth of experience, flexibility and resilience in the background of our graduates.

The three pathways comprise

1. innovation and enterprise;
2. sustainable futures and
3. intercultural understanding and global citizenship

This initiative, known as the ‘Bristol Futures’ curriculum has been considered in the light of recent events including the Brexit vote to see if it is fit for purpose, and it would seem that it is even more appropriate now than when it was first formulated.

A reshaping of the postgraduate portfolio will take place particularly around the masters courses which have traditionally been a taster prior to PhD training. The majority of masters students coming to the University are now looking for an additional string to their employability bow, so a major initiative around the taught
masters portfolio, particularly around business education and the interface between business education and the stem subjects of science, engineering, computer science and mathematics for example. There is great enthusiasm from within the institution to create a space where we can nurture the excellent community of innovators in teaching and learning, to encourage and support their growth – to scan the horizon to see what is happening elsewhere, take best practice from within our University and disseminate it across the institution. A Bristol Institute of Learning and Teaching will be created for this purpose.

There will be a major capital investment around Tyndall Avenue to create the Tyndall Place precinct, with the aim of creating a student centred hub at the heart of the University. Bristol is not a campus university but by investment around a new University library on the Hawthorns site, coupled with some work on the existing library building and public realm works, some of the benefits of a campus university can be captured without compromising the attractiveness of our city university features.

The Vice-Chancellor showed an illustration of what Tyndall place may look like, and advised that interactions have taken place with the City. However consultation must also take place with local residents, thus no time line is in place at the moment for the development.

Finally and very importantly, we will establish a real step up to achieve diversity among the student body. We have some of the best scholars in the world in the University. Steps have been taken in the past to diversity our student population but it has been found to be very difficult to progress in this area. There are several initiatives within the plan, perhaps the most significant of which is the Bristol Scholars Programme, where we have been working with the principals of schools within Bristol to offer five unconditional places to each of those schools. We will work with the Principals and teachers within the schools to identify as early as possible students who would thrive within the University. This is a significant widening participation initiative. As many of you will recall, there was some controversy around ten years ago when it was felt that these initiatives were displacing students from independent schools. The circumstances have changed now as there is no cap on student numbers, so no-one will be displaced. This is a strong signal of our intent to address the issue of diversity within the student body.

Research, innovation and partnerships

In the area of research our challenges are remarkably different, we need to build on our success. We have world class scholars in all of our disciplines, so what we are looking to do is identify a certain number of areas where we either have existing scale or the potential to develop scale. In those areas we will look to build PhD numbers, create new VC scholarships and new staff appointments. In certain areas we will create specialist research institutes to give them enhanced visibility on the international stage.

With our partner institutions in the City region we will also identify areas where we can work together to make a significant contribution to the economy, prompted by the government science and innovation audit which challenged us to work with our
neighbouring universities in the city and the region, and with industry. This seems especially relevant now given the recent circumstances. Our particular focus is on the digital economy, where Bristol's contribution in terms of job creation and productivity is on par with the very best. With our academic expertise and partnerships in this area, the University has the potential to serve as a catalyst for the next phase of the development of that economy.

Our staff

The Vice-Chancellor highlighted the area of diversity, commenting that the Russell Group universities have a relatively low proportion of females, for example within our professoriate and within senior leadership roles. The experience elsewhere has been that if such posts are advertised openly, encouraging the brightest and the best to apply both internally and internationally, one can attract a more diverse field. The University Plan commits to doing this.

Internationalisation and global relations

We are redoubling our efforts, especially in the light of recent events, to build relationships in partnership with other international universities to create more opportunities for our students to study or volunteer abroad, and to diversify the international mix of students on the Bristol campus. This will replicate the world of work and society that our graduates will enter upon graduation.

Physical and digital infrastructure and sustainability

The Vice-Chancellor noted that the development of Beacon House and the Life Sciences building were very important investments for the future. There is a rolling programme of infrastructure upgrades planned that will include Biomedical Sciences, Geography, and the Victoria Rooms. The two major new infrastructure investments in the plan are the Tyndall Avenue development, including a new Arts and Social Sciences Library, and a new campus. Campus facilities are currently at overflow capacity with the 21,000 students we have now. We are already a distributed campus with Langford, the Science Park with the National Composites Centre, our NHS Trust partners and the Engine Shed at Temple Meads. Many of our residences are now down in the town centre, and they are particularly popular with international students.

Many of you will be aware that we have been working with the City to identify additional sites to futureproof the University for the next twenty to thirty years. The one which is most attractive at the moment is the development of the Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone which already hosts our Engine Shed enterprise incubator. However, we are also exploring other options. A challenge will be how to connect the additional campus with the ‘mother ship’.

The University over the last 10 – 15 years has grown at approximately 2% each year, and that growth is not sustainable for the Clifton campus. By identifying an additional campus we will both unlock future potential and decompress the existing campus, ensuring a top quality experience for students and staff.
In Closing

The Vice-Chancellor noted that our plan, as with any strategic plan, is a framework for the next phase of the University of Bristol's development. It contains multiple dependencies, checks and balances and so called 'go or no-go' check points. Clearly, we must be sure of our various income streams before making major capital investments. The plan should be resilient and responsive to the external environment. We hope that the plan, when launched, will inspire alumni and other partners to invest in us.

He spoke about the plan in the light of the recent outcome of the Brexit referendum, and asked members of Convocation to use all of their contacts to influence an outcome that will provide a stable future for our students and staff. He related his experience when leading an institution in Ireland through the financial crisis which started in 2008 and went on to 2013, and the challenges that had to be faced.

With regard to the referendum, UK students are very concerned about Erasmus opportunities and EU students want to know if they have access to the student loan book. Jo Johnson, Minister for Universities and Science, has given reassurance to existing EU students and for new EU students coming in September, but not beyond that. There are many EU students who were contemplating coming in 2017 who are now wondering what kind of system they might come into. International students have contacted us, following publicity on social media, to ask if the UK is now safe to come to. These are serious concerns from the student point of view, and the situation from the staff perspective is equally serious. In what is usually a very tolerant city, staff have suffered racial abuse, and across the country more serious incidents have occurred. Leading international staff across Europe who we are trying to recruit have pulled out and have concerns about access to European Union programmes.

The University is doing everything it can to calm concerns although it may take several years for the full consequences to be clear. Government needs to be persuaded to give international staff and students the reassurances they need. Many leading researchers across the UK have reported being frozen out of major EU research consortia, not through malice but due to the perceived risk attached to including them.

Certainty is needed surrounding long term access to European Union programmes. The UK universities are working to secure reassurance. The Vice-Chancellor asked our proud and accomplished alumni to work with the University using all of their connections to influence this agenda.

The Chancellor thanked the Vice-Chancellor and noted he would be available for the question and answer section. The Vice-Chancellor received a round of applause.

The Chancellor asked Julie Goldstein (BSc 1978) the Chair of Convocation and Convocation Trustee to report, and noted that Julie had now been in post for a year.
Item 4: Report from the Chair of Convocation and Convocation Trustee

The Chair of Convocation and Convocation Trustee Julie Goldstein (BSc 1978) commented that it was good to see such a large number of alumni at the AGM and that she was honoured to be making her first report.

The Chair outlined the scope of her report (see Item 6 on the website for a copy of the Chair’s Report) which covers the range of exceptional initiatives undertaken by the Convocation and Alumni Association in close collaboration with the Development and Alumni Relations Office over the last year. She stressed the important contributions made by University volunteers all around the world including those in the local Bristol area. One of the most important strategic missions of the Convocation and Alumni Association is to further alumni engagement and to continue to build a sense of community amongst alumni. She reiterated the Vice-Chancellor’s words that alumni can add value and become involved in University initiatives.

Branches and informal networks continue to be core to alumni engagement both locally and increasingly so internationally. The Chair outlined the important work being undertaken in this area and the many alumni leaders involved. These groups are increasingly connected with the University, and members of the University senior team including the Vice-Chancellor often attend these group’s events to engage first hand.

She highlighted the contributions to international alumni engagement that the Development and Alumni Relations Office are taking regarding the different ways alumni around the world communicate. The CAAC flagship events, the Alumni Association Student Awards and the annual Convocation Lecture also provide key opportunities both for alumni to get together, and for them to connect with students. Convocation strives to maintain a relevant agenda in association with the University, and the Chair noted that this is particularly important with the introduction of the new strategy.

The alumni magazine Nonesuch continues to grow both in focus and visibility, and she noted her amazement at the level of interest and engagement with the features and stories. Nonesuch is a great source of information about what is happening in the University. The Chair thanked the team who put the publication together and encouraged alumni to use it to keep up to date with developments and events. She encouraged all present to vote in the upcoming elections when the Deputy Chair of Convocation, Convocation and Alumni Association Committee members and Convocation Representatives on Court will be contested.

The Chair outlined the key areas which are relevant to Convocation’s future in relation to the new strategy. It is important that the Convocation and Alumni Association Committee looks to develop its goal and objectives in alignment with the new University strategy to find ways to take a more active collaborative role, and this will be a focus of the first meeting of the year in September.

She thanked all the members of the Convocation and Alumni Association Committee for their hard work during last year, particularly the support they have given in her first year as Chair. She thanked the Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar and the members of the senior team who have been generous with their time and wise
counsel and she expressed special thanks to the Chancellor and President of Convocation for her guidance and commented it been an enormous privilege and pleasure to support her in the interests of the Convocation and Alumni Association.

The Chair referred to Paper C, Standing Orders of Convocation: Council title update. The title change from Council to Board of Trustees reflecting the new structure and name was noted.

**Item 5: Convocation Trustee – paper for the consideration of Convocation**

The Chair explained that she is both Chair of Convocation and the elected Convocation Trustee. The Convocation Trustee serves a three year term, and in two years’ time the position will be up for election. At the AGM in 2015 it was brought to the attention of Convocation that the mechanism for selecting the Convocation Trustee would be changing. The proposal in Paper D, Convocation Trustee: Discussion Paper, has been brought to Convocation for further consultation. The proposal brings forward suggestions as to how nominees can be brought forward to a nominations committee of the Board of Trustees who will select the Convocation Trustee from the candidates put forward. The paper gives full transparency to the process suggested by the Convocation and Alumni Association Committee to put forward candidates for the very important position of Convocation Trustee.

The Chair asked for comments and questions.

The Chancellor indicated that Convocation should be grateful to the University and the Board of Trustees for their readiness to have the continuing involvement in University governance of a Convocation Trustee. She noted that the objective of the proposal put forward is to bring the appointment of the Convocation Trustee into line with the process to appoint all the other Trustees. This process involves a Nominations Committee who will want to identify a skill set that will be most needed in the reduced board membership. Convocation will be invited to put forward two or more candidates to the Nominations Committee for selection. The proposal for consultation in front of the AGM is the method to put forward those candidates from Convocation to the Nominations Committee. Questions and comments were invited.

Keith Walton (BSc 1972) asked about the process for feedback and comment to be provided by the date within the paper of 29 September.

The Clerk to Convocation explained the mechanism; an item will be included in the monthly August e-newsletter to all alumni inviting comment, and for those present a leaflet is available at the back of the Hall providing the email and postal address for comments and feedback. She encouraged those present to take a copy.

Dr Edward Beech (BSc 2012, MB ChB 2015) asked for clarification as to the powers and responsibilities of the Convocation Trustee on the Board and what the likely preferred skills would be.

The Chair of Convocation outlined the structure of the Board, which is made up of 20, one of which is the Convocation Trustee. The responsibility of that person is to review the agenda and activities carried out by the University, as any member of a governing board. The Board of Trustees role is separate from the Chair of
Convocation. As Convocation Trustee the alumnus/a in this position can bring the perspective of a member of Convocation and the Alumni Association when considering the business of the University.

Jill White (Honorary DMus 2003) asked about the number of meetings of the Board. The Chair of Convocation informed that there are six meetings and they are notified on the University website. Members also sit on a variety of sub-committees.

The Chancellor commented on the substantial time commitment required to be a member of the Board of Trustees. It oversees the work of the University and the Vice-Chancellor reports to it.

**Item 6: Report from the Director, Development and Alumni Relations Office**

The Chancellor introduced Mr Stephen O'Connor to the meeting as the new Director of the Development and Alumni Relations Office.

Stephen noted that this was his first Convocation AGM and thanked those present for their warm welcome. He is now entering his fifth month at the University and said how much he had enjoyed meeting Bristol Alumni in the UK and internationally.

He noted that there are increasing opportunities for alumni and friends to engage and become involved with their alma mater. There are of course challenges too, not least rising to the communications challenge of connecting and communicating with a diverse worldwide community, in the digital age. (See Item 5 on the website for a copy of the Director’s Report)

Stephen too reflected on the growing importance of philanthropy for our University and described an event the previous day unveiling a shield in the Wills Building in honour of the Wolfson Foundation in recognition of their committed philanthropic support for the University over the last 40 years. There is a long history of philanthropy at Bristol and he noted the foresight of leading benefactors and local civic leaders whose support established this great institution and ensured that today it is amongst the top 50 in the world. Every year thousands of donors choose to support the University as one of their charitable causes; Bristol is seen as a trusted partner through which people can help to change the world for the better. From clinicians working on heart research to climate change research advanced by the Cabot Institute. Philanthropic support for scholarships enables talented students to benefit from the transformational experience of a Bristol education regardless of their background, and also gives the University a degree of independence at a time when the funding model for universities has changed forever, and traditional sources of funding are diminishing. It enables the University to undertake new projects which would otherwise not have been possible, to do things better and faster and to a higher quality. Philanthropy enables the University to leverage significant investment, particularly when partners are able to see the commitment of alumni and donors to projects – it makes a strong case when seeking matched funding and investment of scale.

In the last 12 months Bristol has received over £7m in donations. Income across the sector has increased to £861m and Bristol is keen to secure a greater share to support our plans for growth. Stephen reflected that support could be attracted internationally as well as in the UK for example around 140 major donations had been made to UK
projects by trusts and foundations and individuals from Hong Kong, half to higher education establishments, but sadly none to Bristol. The University is seeking to increase awareness of the world leading work we do today and seeking to engage with leading philanthropists who want to make a transformational difference. Bristol has a story and a vision which captures the imagination and will resonate with many more potential donors from across the world. Bristol aims to build further on our fundraising success in the years to come.

Stephen thanked all those present who have supported the University with a generous gift or legacy. The impact of gifts and the difference they make is important to beneficiaries; and at Bristol our supporters have helped leading research which addresses some of society’s biggest problems and challenges. It has assisted early careers academics through post graduate scholarships and students who face financial hardship through unexpected life changes and initiatives such as the Big White Wall initiative which promotes positive mental health within the student body. The new Vice-Chancellor’s Fellowships, which will be launched later in the year, will be key to attracting and retaining even more talented academics to Bristol.

The Development and Alumni Relations Office is always delighted to work with volunteers and alumni groups, and Stephen commented on the visit to South East Asia with the Vice-Chancellor and academic colleagues in April which was very successful in building alumni engagement. Over eight days the travelling group met over 400 people, including large receptions and individual meetings with alumni and donors. The visits took in Tokyo, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur and ended in Singapore at an event at the Raffles Hotel which was attended by a very enthusiastic group of alumni and friends.

He noted that alumni have had a major part to play in shaping the new University strategy, assisting with student recruitment and inspiring undergraduates through mentoring and guest lectures. Stephen described a recent event at the Design Centre in London, where leading alumni from business heard presentations from budding entrepreneurs and offered their invaluable support and advice to students and recent graduates. The event typified the University’s commitment to cultivating an environment which supports innovation and reflected the huge entrepreneurial ability of Bristol students.

In closing, Stephen thanked Tracey Beck for the amazing job she had done as Acting Director for over a year and has now taken up her substantive role as Deputy Director. He also thanked Julie Goldstein the Chair of Convocation for her wonderful support and advice during his early months in post. He also thanked all members of the Convocation and Alumni Association Committee for their tremendous support, and all alumni and friends who have supported Bristol so generously with their time, expertise and donations.
Item 7: Questions and Answers

Owen Peachey (BSc 2008) commented that the students of the University had been noted at length during proceedings but that there was not a voice for students at the AGM, and that he could not see any current students in the room. He asked that an opportunity be made available in future for a student representative to address the AGM and that an item be added to the agenda in the future. He added that the Chancellor would be very much missed after she steps down.

Mr Peachey asked the Vice-Chancellor about the future of the residences and asked him to update the AGM about the residences in terms of the new strategy regarding the development of their staffing and personnel.

The Vice-Chancellor advised of a decision made recently to accelerate a rolling programme of refurbishment over the coming years at the residences. Over the last two or three years the University has taken part in collaboration with the private sector including Orchard Heights with Unite in partnership, to create residences with both rooms and social areas. The design of the social spaces has taken on board criticism in the past about private sector student accommodation. The Vice-Chancellor related that one of his first duties was to open such a hall, and the social spaces were very much appreciated by the students when seeing them for the first time. Lessons can be taken from this if a new campus is created – any new campus must be animated and the social spaces in residences will undertake an important role. In the future the development of student residences will be done in partnership with the private sector. The experience in working with Unite gives confidence that appropriate buildings can be created to enhance the student experience. A review is being launched to identify if student support in residences is fit for purpose, and the balance between the traditional Warden’s role and staff who may be professionally trained in such areas as mental health support will be considered.

Lilian Brown (BA 1951, Cert Ed 1952, Hon MA 2005) referred to Paper D, the opening sentence which reads “every member of Convocation shall be eligible to stand for appointment to the Board of Trustees as the Convocation Trustee”. She asked that bearing in mind the international reputation of the University and the financial stresses it has, if a qualified and well suited Chinese alumna was minded to stand, whether all expenses would be paid.

The Vice-Chancellor responded that if this happened it would be a test case but one which the University would welcome. The Convocation Trustee stated that travel expenses are paid for all members in accordance with the Board’s expense procedure. The amounts that current members receive are modest and she said she was not aware of any precedents covering persons travelling from outside the UK to take part in University Committees.

Christopher Burns (BSc 1977) asked the Chair of Convocation when looking at the timings of meetings in Bristol, for example the Volunteers Reception which preceded the AGM, to bear in mind that it is quite difficult to travel to Bristol from some of the northern outposts of Britain. In the current difficult times he noted that the University might look to accommodate people who do not live in Bristol or the south of England so they can attend events such as the extraordinary meeting of Court taking place in the afternoon following the AGM.
The Chancellor commented that the extraordinary meeting of Court is not likely to last more than 15 minutes and would not overlap with any of the Hall dinners. The Chancellor requested that members of Convocation attend the meeting of Court if they were able to.

The Chair of Convocation spoke about the programme for the Alumni Weekend, and said that the expectation was that people would join in for the whole weekend, commencing with the reception on the Friday evening. She advised that the scheduling of future events will however try to take into account people travelling from outside Bristol.

Leon Smith (BA 2005) thanked the Vice-Chancellor for the candour of his report. He asked if there is one message that alumni should take home which they can act upon to support the University in the difficult times ahead.

The Vice-Chancellor asked those with connections to government, politicians or senior civil servants to impress upon them the urgency of the guarantees needed to EU and international students and staff that their status in the UK is secure. Jo Johnson has given a guarantee about 2016 entrants to UG and masters programmes that they will have access to the student loan book and has promised to consider the 2017 entry as a matter of urgency. It is very important that staff receive unequivocal reassurances about their status in the UK.

Stuart Goldsmith (BA 1966, Honorary LLD 2007) asked if there had been any developments in the discussions about the structure of future Court meetings.

The Vice-Chancellor reported that following consideration of this matter the need for a longer period of consultation and reflection had been identified. The Chancellor advised that there is a commitment to having a useful University Court making a vibrant contribution.

The Chancellor thanked all for their reports and questions and answers.

**Item 8: Report from the Treasurer of Convocation (paper F)**

The Treasurer David Clarke (BA 1965) presented and explained the accounts for the year 2015/16 and brought attention to his report. Mr Clarke highlighted three things.

- That the accounts show a deficit due to special expenditure on the purchase of Convocation medals and the Alumni Association Student Awards board which is now on display in the foyer of the Student Union building.
- An alumnus has committed to give an annual donation of £100 towards Convocation funds.
- The valuation of the Zutshi-Smith fund was causing some concern following market volatility, however at the end of June it is now £105k, up from £103 in March.

Questions were invited, no questions were forthcoming.
Approval of the accounts was proposed by Linda Wilson (LLB 1982) seconded by Dr Martin Crossley Evans MBE (BA 1978, PhD 1990). The meeting adopted the accounts.

The Chancellor thanked the Treasurer for all of his work throughout the year.

**Item 9: Elections and appointments (paper G)**

The Chancellor noted that the elections are taking place with members of Convocation voting electronically and in person. The results of the election will be announced in the week following the AGM.

The Chancellor informed the meeting that it needs to consider the appointment of an Independent Assessor of Convocation’s Accounts 2016-17.

Mr David Eastham Ratcliffe FCA (BA 1965) was proposed by Dr Stuart Goldmith (BA 1966, Honorary LLD 2007) and seconded by Mr Richard Willis FRSA (BSc 1974, Certificate in Education 1975)

The meeting appointed Mr Ratcliffe to the post. It was agreed that Mr Ratcliffe has served Convocation for the past 13 years in this role and that Convocation should send its formal appreciation for the work he has so judiciously undertaken.

**Action:** Chair to write to Mr Ratcliffe to thank him for his work.

**Item 10: Chancellor’s Business**

The Chancellor informed the meeting that she is embarking on a number of ‘last times’ as she takes part in University functions in her role as Chancellor.

She has already attended her last Charter day, this is her last Alumni Weekend and Convocation AGM; four degree ceremonies remain ahead and then the Alumni Association Student Awards and Court in December.

The Chancellor reflected on her role, saying that it has been a wonderful job, and she likened it to being a bit like a Queen. This meant that she could wear a pretty frock/robe and a fetching hat, give out prizes and awards, say thank you to everybody and make a series of uncontroversial speeches. She noted that there is also the conventional Monarch’s role in of giving advice and encouragement and on occasion warnings to the top staff of the University. The Chair of Council and the Vice-Chancellor have always felt it possible to come and share their thoughts, worries and plans as they know she has the University’s best interests at heart and has gained experience and insights over the past 13 years.

The Chancellor commented that 13 years was a good length of time, and one which was also the tenure of her predecessor. She had wanted to make sure the new Vice-Chancellor was firmly established before moving on. One more new challenge awaits her now as Treasurer of Gray’s Inn starting in the New Year. This role is not one of looking after the books, but another “Queenly” role and will involve even more eating and drinking than being Chancellor. She will be the second woman Treasurer following Dame Rose Heilbron, who was in her time the most famous barrister in the country. She noted that she was also the second woman Chancellor following Dorothy Mary Hodgkin, the Nobel laureate and brilliant scientist.
The Chancellor thanked all alumni for the way they engage so positively with the University. She gave special thanks to the three Chairs of Convocation she has worked with, Stuart Goldsmith, Bill Ray and Julie Goldstein, and to the Committee members and staff in the Development and Alumni Relations Office, with particular thanks to Tracey Beck.

Julie Goldstein presented the Chancellor with flowers as a token of appreciation from Convocation to a rousing round of applause.

Any other business

No other business was raised and the Chancellor declared the meeting closed.
Papers for the following items were referred to during the AGM and are published at:  http://www.bristol.ac.uk/alumni/the-alumni-association/annual-general-meeting-of-the-alumni-association/

They are also available by request from the Development and Alumni Relations Office.

Item A  Minutes of the meeting held on Saturday 11 July 2015

Item B  Report from the Chairman of Convocation and Convocation Representative on Council including the Convocation Member of Council: Consultation Document

Item C  Standing Orders of Convocation: Council title update, for noting

Item D  Convocation Trustee: Discussion paper

Item E  Report from the Acting Director of Development and Alumni Relations

Item F  Report from the Treasurer of Convocation

Item G  Elections and appointments