MEETING OF SENATE
MINUTES
Monday, 11 June 2018

1400, Helen Wodehouse Building, 35 Berkeley Square, 4.10

Present: The Vice-Chancellor (Chair), Professors Banting, Barnes, Barr, Basker, Benton, Birdi, Cristianini, Dymock, Elliott, Fry, Gallagher, Hammond, Heslop, Hutton, Iredale, Ireland, Jarrold, Jordan, Linthorst, Macfarlane, Marklof, Nix, Norman, Novitz (on behalf of McGuiness), Orpen, Orr-Ewing, Payne, Potter, Purdy, Ridley, Robinson, Sandy, Squires, Tavare, Williams, Wilson; Dr J Agarwal, Miss L Amber (on behalf of Kent), Mr S Bullock, Dr L Dickinson, Dr N Farwell, Dr A Fraser, Ms C Fraser, Ms M Gillway, Dr H Heath, Dr I Hers, Dr C Hindson, Dr E Lithander, Dr E Love, Dr T O’Toole, Dr S Proud, Dr A Pullen, Dr S Quadflieg, Mr S Singh, Dr N Timpson, Dr K Whittington, Dr V Zajko.

In attendance: Ms L Barling (Clerk), Ms P Coonerty, Ms A O’Grady, Ms L Robinson

1. Minutes of the previous meeting on 23 April 2018.
1.1 APPROVED: the minutes of the meeting of 23 April 2018.

2. Chair’s Report
2.1 RECEIVED and NOTED (SN/17-18/040).

2.2 The report was introduced by the Chair.

Use of Chair’s Powers
2.3 NOTED: that on 11 May 2018, the Vice-Chancellor approved, on behalf of Senate, an amendment to the Examination Regulations (“the Regulations”) under the power to take decisions between meetings conferred on the Chair by Senate. This amendment was made in order to recognise and mitigate the potential impact on students and staff as a result of recent industrial action. The amendment was a temporary removal of the rule in section 11 of the Regulations which provides as follows:

A student may not have a degree or other academic qualification conferred until all his or her outstanding examination or assessment appeals have been resolved. If the degree or other qualification has already been conferred, whether the student has attended the graduation ceremony in person or not, no appeal will be considered.

2.4 In the context of anticipated delays to Examination Board meetings and consequent pressure on graduation dates, it was considered that removing this rule would assist students and their families to make firm plans to attend graduation ceremonies and would prevent any difficulties arising should ceremonies have to be scheduled within the appeal period. It would also reduce staff workload in the Faculties and the Graduation Office. For the avoidance of doubt, it was not proposed to extend the 15 working day appeal period, which would normally run from the date of notification of the Examination Board decision as usual. If a student’s degree classification was changed as a result of an appeal, the award would be rescinded and a new certificate issued. A second graduation ceremony would not take place in these circumstances.
2.5 This amendment was approved under Chair’s powers on behalf of Education Committee on 9 May 2018 and also approved by the Board of Trustees under Chair’s Powers (and reported to 25 May 2018 Board meeting).

Sector developments

Review of post-18 education and funding

2.6 Members were reminded that the Government was currently conducting a major review of post-18 education funding. The Vice-Chancellor emphasised that it was now looking unlikely that there would be any additional, or re-allocation of, funding that would be favourable to the HE sector. This, together with rising inflation, pay inflation, rising pension costs, and the net erosion of income more broadly, would have a negative impact on the University’s finances. Senate would receive updates on the University’s mitigation plans at future meetings.

Brexit

2.7 There remained uncertainty as to whether non-UK/EU students arriving in September 2019 would have access to the loan system. However, the Universities Minister had recently made a commitment that Irish students would have such access, and therefore it was anticipated that a similar commitment would be made for other EU nationalities for the 19/20 academic year.

Office for Students (OfS)

2.8 Members were reminded that on 30 April 2018, the University submitted its application to register with the new regulator, the Office for Students (OfS). In July/August, it was anticipated that the OfS would write to the University to confirm:

• The date of our registration and the date on which they intended to publish our details on the Register.
• That we satisfied the initial conditions of registration.
• The general ongoing conditions of registration that would apply to us.
• Whether the OfS would impose any specific conditions of registration.
• Whether the OfS would put in place any enhanced monitoring.

2.9 The Vice-Chancellor informed Senate that at its meeting in October 2018, Senate would receive a briefing on what the new regulatory framework means for the University (and HE sector more broadly), and the implications for Senate as the University’s academic governing body.

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)

2.10 Members were reminded that on 1 April 2018, as set out in the Higher Education and Research Act, the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) came into existence, and it was now up and running. It was anticipated that its focus would be on larger multidisciplinary programmes where there was an industry lead or a heavy industry component. Senate would receive regular updates on developments around UKRI, and more specifically, members noted that in October 2018, it would receive a more detailed presentation from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) on how the University was establishing and building its relationships with the new regulatory body.

University updates

Update from the Board of Trustees

2.11 Senate noted that at its meeting on 25 May 2018, the Board was informed that the two new Academic members of the Board of Trustees from 1 August 2018 were Professor Sheila Ellwood and Professor Keith Syrett. Senate members congratulated them on their appointment.
2.12 The Vice-Chancellor informed Senate that at the recent Board of Trustees meeting, he had appraised the Board of the University’s top priorities for the upcoming 18/19 academic year. These were as follows:

- **Education and student experience** – the ongoing work being undertaken by the Education Committee and Bristol Institute of Learning and Teaching (BILT) around assessment and feedback would continue. The objective of this piece of work was to reform the assessment and feedback system so that, without losing the rigour that was important, the load on staff was lightened, and the pressure was simultaneously reduced on students. Members of Senate were encouraged to fully engage with this extremely important process and to actively encourage their colleagues to do so also. Similarly, there would be a continued focus on pastoral care which had such great importance for the University’s students, and for its reputation.

- **Research** – it would be essential to continue to gear up for the REF, as the REF outcome had both financial and reputational implications, and the University was working with the Research and Enterprise Development (RED) Division to redeploy resources to the industrial strategy particularly.

- **Internationalisation** – there would be a continued focus on UG student recruitment and the expansion of the international foundation programme.

- **Staff** – there would be a focus on staff health and wellbeing, including mental health. It was clear that staff were feeling under pressure, and the senior management team had made a commitment to work with staff to build a stronger community based on mutual trust, and to improve staff morale. The Vice-Chancellor also made the commitment to continue to improve collaborative decision making and communication across the institution.

- **Infrastructure** – the implementation of the Student Lifecycle Support Programme (SLSP) was a priority, as was ensuring that the University had adequate teaching spaces. For example:
  - It was important to ensure that the Fry building would be in action as soon as practicably possible.
  - Development work on the new Humanities building was now in progress, and the University was working with Bristol City Council to gain permission for a teaching development in Priory Road and in Royal Fort Gardens.
  - The University would be redeploying Senate House as a teaching and student support facility from September 2018, with a view to providing a high-quality facility over a five-year rolling programme of work.

- **The delivery of the new Temple Quarter Campus.**

2.13 In light of the continued focus on education and student experience and on the delivery of big-ticket strategic items such as TQC into the next academic year, Senate NOTED that the Board of Trustees had approved, by special resolution, an increase in the number1 of PVC’s/DVC’s from six to seven. After detailed consideration, the Board had approved this increase in recognition that it represented an opportunity to ensure that the Senior Management Team had appropriate capacity at a crucial time in taking forward the development and execution of the University’s strategic plan, whilst maintaining performance levels and driving continuous improvement. The details were as follows:

- **The introduction of a new fixed term post (paid for from the TQC capital budget) for a Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Temple Quarter (Professor Guy Orpen).** This post would lead the development and delivery of the Temple Quarter campus (and other new University venues such as Bristol and Bath Science Park) as an integrated part of the University strategy.

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1 Ordinance 11 of the University constitution applies
• The creation of a new post of Pro Vice-Chancellor for Student Experience, to lead the development and management of the undergraduate and postgraduate student experience across the University.
• The current Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost role would be refocused on leadership, planning and management of the academic activity on the existing campuses.
• The role of Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) would be focused on the leadership of the development and management of undergraduate and postgraduate education across the University.

2.14 The Board also noted the following with regards to the appointment process:
• The vacancies and associated job descriptions would be advertised in such a way as to encourage the widest pool of relevant applicants from within and outside the University.
• The Vice-Chancellor, in accordance with the University’s constitution, would establish an appointment committee that would comprise:
  o the Vice-Chancellor (or their nominee), as Chair
  o two members of the academic staff appointed by Senate
  o at least one lay member of the Board of Trustees
• The appointments committee, established by the Vice-Chancellor, would produce a shortlist, taking due account of the University’s commitment to diversity and inclusion.
• A selection process would take place, to assess each candidates’ ability to meet the strategic, academic, leadership, and citizenship requirements of the roles.
• The Chair, advised by the appointment committee, would make a recommendation for appointment, through Senate, to the Board of Trustees.

2.15 Senate would receive a further update at its meeting in October 2018, and where any communication with Senate was required in the interim summer period, this would be conducted electronically.

Other senior staff appointments/arrangements

2.16 CORRECTION: It was noted that the report referenced an incorrect start date for the incoming Head of School for Arts, Professor Mary Luckhurst. Professor Luckhurst’s term will begin in January 2019.

2.17 In addition to those listed in the Chair’s report, Senate NOTED the following:
• Professor Jens Marklof had recently been appointed as the new incoming Dean of the Faculty of Science. He would serve from 1 August 2018 for a period of four years (until 31 July 2022).  
• In light of upcoming senior management departures, there would be a slight restructuring of the roles of the Registrar and Chief Financial Officer. The Chief Financial Officer would become the Chief Operating Officer, with Finance, HR, Estates and IT Services Divisions within his portfolio. The Registrar and Secretary would have responsibility for all other professional Services divisions. This would provide better allow the University to be more focussed on the provision of the services it needs for the best quality staff and student experience and the best quality education and research outcomes.

3. Vice-Chancellor’s question time

3.1 In response to a query regarding when the Fry Building was likely to be fully occupied, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost confirmed that there would be a two-phased approach to the delivery of the building programme. It was anticipated that the first phase...
of occupation would be around Easter 2019, and the second phase in which the fire-
damaged parts of the building would be completed was anticipated to be September
2019. However, the DVC emphasised that there may be further delays, given the
damage that had been caused by the fire and disruptions to the programme. Senate
would be kept abreast of developments.

3.2 As referenced above (see para ref 2.10), members noted that, in response to a query
from a member of Senate, that Senate would receive a detailed presentation from the
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) on how the University was establishing and building its
relationships with the new regulatory body, UKRI.

3.3 With regards to SLSP, a member of Senate queried whether the University had lost
confidence in the company that had been brought into deliver the programme of work
and whether it was delivering well in terms of core build or not. In response, the Deputy
Registrar (Academic Services) confirmed that whilst there is confidence in the company
and its core product as well as in the delivery of the core build, there were some
concerns around integration with other systems, and delivery of a system able to work
in the cloud. A meeting was due to take place with the SLSP Board this week to urgently
discuss the concerns and agree the best way to resolve the technical issues going
forward. Senate will receive an update in due course.

4. Written questions
4.1 None had been received. Members of Senate were reminded that they were able to
submit written questions in advance of each meeting, for discussion.

5. Faculty Board recommendations
5.1 None had been received.

6. Green Paper: Structure of the Academic Year (SAY)*
6.1 RECEIVED and NOTED (SN/17-18/041).

6.2 The report was introduced by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) and the Academic
Registrar.

6.3 Members of Senate welcomed the paper, carefully considered the series of reflections
contained in the paper and broadly supported them. Senate then APPROVED the
setting up of an oversight group to oversee consultation on, and preparation of, a White
Paper for further consideration by Senate in the 2018/19 autumn term, with a view to
implementation of reforms to the Structure of the Academic Year (SAY). The White
Paper would outline the timeframe for the implementation.

6.4 Members of Senate provided the following feedback:
   • Members were pleased to see that the paper had considered the integration of the
     proposals with the wider thinking around pedagogic innovation and creativity.
   • The University would be mindful of the importance of considering both undergraduate
     and postgraduate teaching provision.
   • The removal of the January assessment period would require careful consideration.
   • Members were enthusiastic about the move towards programme-level assessment,
     currently being supported by BILT and to be steered via Bristol Futures phase 2.
     Members noted that it would be important for all Programme Directors to review their
     programmes to identify whether there was any scope to move to more innovate
     approaches to programme delivery. This was extremely important given the clear
     feedback received from students that unit level assessment can cause undue anxiety
     and stress, and the negative impact on staff in terms of the heavy workload pressures.
• In light of the discussions Senate had been having around staff wellbeing, it would be important for the University to acknowledge how difficult it was for staff to take periods of annual leave at certain points in the year.
• PGT dissertation deadlines should be reconsidered in order to address student concerns on this point.

6.5 Members of Senate were encouraged to share the Green Paper with their colleagues and to await further updates/communications from the Academic Registrar and her team on the consultation, which was due to take place in the coming weeks.

7. Education Strategy: Education priorities for 2019/20*
7.1 RECEIVED and NOTED (SN/17-18/042).

7.2 The report was introduced by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education).

7.3 Members noted that the Education Strategy priorities for 2017/18 and 2018/19 had been agreed by the Education Committee with the advice of Senate, and in order to align to the next cycle of the integrated planning process, the Committee was seeking to agree priority actions for 2019/20.

7.4 Senate was supportive of the recommendation in the paper, which was that existing priority action areas should be maintained as priorities, though teaching spaces could usefully be pursued as a core university strategic priority rather than an education priority. Senate agreed that the following areas/themes should be considered by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) and the Committee when identifying any new priority areas:
  • Inclusion
  • BAME/WP student attainment and experience
  • International student attainment (note: this was dependent on further data analysis)
  • Student voice: communication to or with students
  • Support for the continuation of students
  • Pedagogy and curriculum innovation.

7.5 Members of Senate additionally provided the following feedback:
  • The Education Committee and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) should be mindful of quality assurance process and the fact that the University was about to move to a central University Quality Team structure.
  • With regards to inclusion, it would be important to take into consideration the whole community of students in order to ensure that the culture at the University was welcoming and inclusive, rather than focussing exclusively on those students who the University thought ought to be included. This very much aligned with the approach the University was taking on anticipatory adjustments i.e. looking at core practices to see whether they were excluusory and how the University could anticipate adjustments in order to create a more welcoming environment for a more diverse range of students.
  • It would be important to fully understand how Education Action Plans were working within Schools.

7.6 Senate note that UMT had agreed that the University would no longer conduct School reviews on a cyclical 6-year basis, and that they would instead be conducted by exception, when the need for a Review emerged from either:
  a) the integrated planning process;
  b) Faculty/School development programmes (as agreed by Academic Portfolio Board) and;
  c) a Dean and Head of School seeking a review.
7.7 Members of Senate were encouraged to share the Education Priorities paper and the discussions had at the meeting today with their colleagues.

8. **Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)**

8.1 RECEIVED and **NOTED** (SN/17-18/043).

8.2 The report was introduced by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education).

8.3 Senate carefully considered the proposals contained within the paper and **AGREED**, in principle, the following action:

- University entry to TEF 4 in principle (Institutional: 2018/19) or TEF 5 (Subject level: 2019/20): This would be contingent upon:
  - the University TEF 4 data (released October 2018);
  - the model of Subject level TEF to be adopted in TEF 5;
  - the Department for Education decision on whether TEF 4 awards would remain valid once Subject level TEF is introduced.
- the proposed TEF Strategy: for schools to use their Education Action Plans (EAPs) to plan TEF activities and to focus on areas in relation to negative/positive flags.

8.4 Members of Senate were reminded that TEF was a collective endeavour, and that therefore, collectively, all staff had to work together to prepare for the next steps in relation to subject-level TEF, which were highlighted to be as follows:

- Review subject level TEF data – how to remove negative flags, seek to achieve positive flags?
- Review Your Bristol Survey (YBS) outcomes *(available now)*
- Review National Student Survey (NSS) data *(27 July 2018)*
- Graduate outcomes *(early July 2018)*
- CREATE statistics *(available now)*
- Analyse the metrics and convert them into Action plans *(31 August 2018)*
- Develop action plans that align with IPP
- **Next TEF Institutional benchmark data was due to be released in October 2018**
- Having analysed the metrics and converted into Action plans:
  - establish Model B TEF leads (7 subject groupings)
  - review as Model A (CAH 2 subject groups) with a nominated TEF lead
- Implement plans, monitor, measure evidence of impact
- Involve students and feedback
- Gather examples of excellence
- Be prepared to draft your mock TEF subject level submission *(end March 2019)*

9. **Governance Review: Evaluation of trial disbandment of Senate Standing Committee (SSC)**

9.1 RECEIVED and **NOTED** (SN/17-18/044).

9.2 The report was introduced by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost.

9.3 **CORRECTION:** It was noted that the paper stated that Senate had approved the temporary disbandment of the Senate Standing Committee at their meeting in October 2018. This should read October 2017.
9.4 Senate carefully considered the proposal contained within the paper, taking into account all the evidence provided to them, and AGREED to permanently disband the Standing Committee of Senate, except for the specific purposes of:

- shortlisting academic members of the Board of Trustees;
- reflecting on Senate’s effectiveness over the preceding year. Members would provide their views to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost in order for improvements to be made to Senate effectiveness in the coming year and;
- acting on a purely consultative basis on an ad hoc basis, as and when required.

9.5 Members noted that the current SSC membership would be merged into an ad hoc working group if/when the need for candidate appointments or when consultation/effectiveness discussions arise.

9.6 Members of Senate additionally provided the following feedback:

- It would be important to ensure that the recruitment process for the appointment of academic members to the Board of Trustees was communicated as transparently as possible to members of Senate at appropriate junctures.
- Any ad hoc working group would need to be time dependent, and a clear set of terms of reference and composition of that group would need to be communicated.
- Senate should always be kept abreast of any requirement to establish an ad hoc working group, and updates on the work of the group should be regularly provided to Senate as appropriate.

9.7 Senate was reminded that the governance process allowed for members of Senate to contribute to the Senate agenda-planning (by way of the provision of particular items that could be discussed at Senate), and were encouraged to do so via the Clerk, the Chair, or the Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost.

10. Report of the University Education Committee*

10.1 RECEIVED and NOTED (SN/17-18/045).

10.2 The Pro Vice-Chancellor celebrated the real and positive progress that had been and would continue to be made in terms of outreach activities. The changes the University had made to its offers and admissions processes, including the provision of a two-grade contextual offer policy was having a significant impact. Members also noted that the University was exceeding its Access Agreement progress measures for aspiring state school, ethnic minority and disabled, but had more work to do to meet its progress measure in relation to local, lower socio-economic class and mature students. Senate did acknowledge, however, the hard work that the University’s WP team, and colleagues in Schools, had been doing to try and improve in this area.

10.3 Members noted that the University was now focussing on supporting those students to succeed and progress, and to create an inclusive environment for them to thrive in.

11. Report of the Research Committee

11.1 RECEIVED and NOTED (SN/17-18/046).

12. Report of the IT Committee

12.1 RECEIVED and NOTED (SN/17-18/047).

13.1 Members noted that this report was not yet available on the website due to a tight turnaround between the Board meeting and today’s Senate meeting. It would be circulated to Senate in due course.

14. **Update from the Promotions Task & Finish Group**
   14.1 RECEIVED and **NOTED** (SN/17-18/049).

15. **Strategic Appointments policy and related Direct Appointment Policy***
   15.1 RECEIVED and **NOTED** (SN/17-18/050).

16. **Annual Report: Appointed Emeritus Professors and Honorary Appointments**
   16.1 RECEIVED and **NOTED** (SN/17-18/051).

17. **Future agenda items**
   17.1 Senate was asked for any proposed future items to be passed to the Secretary, or to the Governance Team (governance@bristol.ac.uk).

18. **Equality of Opportunity, including consideration of Equality Related Risks**
   18.1 Senate were invited to record any particular issues regarding Equality and Diversity that it has considered today, including items for further discussion. These included issues arising from the changes to the Structure of the Academic Year, the University’s Education Committee Report (particularly in relation to outreach activities), the promotions task and finish group update, and the strategic appointments policy and associated direct appointment policy.

19. **Communication and Consultation**
   19.1 Senate recorded any particular issues regarding communication/consultation that it has considered today. These included communication of ongoing progress around the Temple Quarter Campus programme, the SAY Green Paper, the TEF proposal, and the University’s Education Priorities for 19/20. The Senior Management Team would make sure that changes to the senior team structure would be communicated in a transparent and clear way, as would the permanent disbandment of the Senate Standing Committee.

20. **Quality Assurance**
   20.1 Senate recorded any particular issues regarding Quality Assurance that it has considered today, including items for further discussion. These included Education Priorities for 19/20, TEF, SAY, and matters contained within the Education Committee Report.

21. **Date of next meeting**
   21.1 The date of the next meeting of Senate is due to take place on Monday 15 October 2018, 1400, in the Reception Room, Wills Memorial Building.