MEETING OF SENATE
MINUTES
Monday, 16 October 2017

1400, Reception Room, Wills Memorial Building

Present: The Vice-Chancellor (Chair), Professors Banting, Barnes, Barr, Basker, Benton, Birdi, Canagarajah, Cini, Conaghan, Cristianini, Dermott, Dymock, Elliott, Fry, Harrow, Heslop, Hutton, Ireland, Jordan, Ladyman, Linthorst, Macfarlane, Marklof, Nabney, Nix, Nobes, Norman, Orpen, Orr-Ewing, Payne, Potter, Purdy, Robinson, Scarpa, Squires, Szczelkun, Walter; Dr J Agarwal, Mr M Anmar, Dr M Azarpeyvand, Mr S Bullock, Dr D Damen, Dr L Dickinson, Ms C Fraser, Dr C Fuller, Ms L Hatherall, Dr H Heath, Dr I Hers, Ms H Inman, Dr A James, Dr K Lampe, Dr P Langton, Dr E Love, Mr J Mcalinden, Dr S McGuiness, Dr T O’Toole, Dr R Oulton, Dr S Proud, Dr S Quadflieg, Mr S Singh, Dr M Stam, Dr K Whittington, Dr V Zajko.

In attendance: Ms L Barling (Clerk), Prof D Cliff, Ms P Coonerty, Mrs M Gillway, Mr G Gregory, Ms K Gullon, Ms A O’Grady, Ms L Robinson, Prof C Rogers, Mr N Skelton.

1. Minutes of the previous meeting 12 June 2017
1.1 APPROVED: the minutes of the meeting of 12 June 2017 (on file).

2. Chair’s Report
2.1 RECEIVED and NOTED (SN/17-18/001).

   Sector update
2.2 The Vice-Chancellor provided Senate with an oral update in respect of the current political situation, including in respect of student visas, the government’s ‘partnership paper’ for post-Brexit collaboration on science and innovation, and changes to the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).

   Other updates
2.3 The Vice-Chancellor thanked all staff involved in the recruitment and welcoming of new students to the University over the past few weeks, and congratulated staff on the significant amount of work being done around the provision of support for student wellbeing and mental health. The University would also be reviewing staff support and mental health in a similar vein, in due course.

2.4 Proposals for a future student support model in residences were being developed, with the aim of being able to implement the new model from the beginning of the 2018/19 academic year. Senate would receive further updates in due course.

3. Vice-Chancellor’s question time
3.1 An update on PGR Student Admissions would be included in the Chair’s Report to Senate at its next meeting.

3.2 In the context of support for staff wellbeing, the University was considering the implications of the removal of the Hawthorns Staff Club (as a result of the implementation of parts of the Tyndall Place project), and whether a dedicated staff club/facility would be useful.
4. Written questions
4.1 None had been received.

5. Report of the Standing Committee of Senate

6. Faculty Board recommendations
6.1 None had been received.

7. Annual Presentation of Bristol SU Sabbatical Officers Priorities and University response*
7.1 RECEIVED and NOTED: a presentation from the Bristol SU Sabbatical Officers on their priorities for academic year 2017/18 (on file), and the University’s response to those priorities (SN/17-187/003).

7.2 The presentation from the Sabbatical Officers and the report from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) highlighted the following key points:
   • It was extremely helpful for the University to get a sense of what the Sabbatical Officers’ focused priorities were, and it was heartening to see how clearly those priorities overlapped and resonated with the University's priorities in the Education Strategy.
   • The University emphasised the importance of effecting real change by working in partnership with the SU and speaking to students’ needs and ambitions.
   • A key priority was to embed the new Student Wellbeing Service, as well as other mental health support, effectively in order to deliver these ambitions.
   • It was important that the Sabbatical Officers worked together with Faculties on their “Liberating the Curriculum” priority, and to recognise and celebrate the fact that there had already been a great deal of improvements made over the previous five years at the University. An inclusive curriculum was at the heart of Bristol Futures initiatives.
   • The “All Bristol Forum” would be launched in due course to provide an opportunity to all students to discuss issues that were important to them.

7.3 Senate members were encouraged to review in detail the Sabbatical Officers’ priorities, and to engage their own Course Representatives in supporting those priorities.

8. White Paper: Governance Review *
8.1 RECEIVED and NOTED: a presentation on the University Governance Review (on file), together with a supporting paper (SN/17-18/004).

8.2 Senate considered the Governance Review White Paper, and the Proposals made therein, in relation to Senate and its committees.

   Proposals 1-3

8.3 Senate considered the following Proposals:
   1) Senate should conduct a review of its role, purpose and composition;
   2) The powers of Senate should be removed from Statutes and placed in the University’s Ordinances, to ensure that they can be amended more flexibly to react to changes in the higher education sector (i.e. without Privy Council approval); and
   3) The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) should propose to the Board of Trustees the appropriate manner to give the Board assurance regarding the quality of the academic experience and student outcomes, as required by HEFCE, for 2018 and beyond.
8.4 Senate members expressed broad support for the Proposals, and the following points arose in discussion:

- The University was keen to move away from having a high level of detail in Statutes and Ordinances as a general matter of principle. Statutes would remain in situ, but the level of detail would be moved to Ordinances. Any changes to academic-related Statutes and Ordinances (including in respect of the powers, composition and workings of Senate) would continue to require the consent of Senate.
- Senate would receive more detail in respect of Proposals 1 and 3 in due course, with a view to those then being considered by the Board of Trustees.

Proposal 4
8.5 Senate considered the Proposal that the Standing Committee of Senate be disbanded, for a trial period of a year.

8.6 Senate NOTED the recommendations made by Standing Committee itself in this regard (SN/17-18/002) and APPROVED the Proposal, to be implemented as follows:

- The Standing Committee of Senate would ‘pause’, for a trial period for the remainder of the 2017/18 academic year.
- For the rest of the academic year:
  - It would cease to play a role in the agenda setting, prioritisation of items and quality-control of reports/papers for Senate. That function would be performed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost, with support from the Governance Team.
  - It would continue to shortlist, on behalf of Senate, candidates for academic staff positions on the Board of Trustees for interview and appointment by the Board itself.
  - Other nominations by Senate, notably to the University IT and Ethics of Research Committees, will be approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Senate and reported to Senate.

8.7 Senate NOTED that it would be asked to reflect on the trial disbandment, and to agree whether this should be made permanent, in due course. Senate further NOTED the range of ways in which members could bring items of business to Senate meetings. The Clerk would circulate this information by way of reminder.

Action: Clerk

Proposal 6
8.8 Senate considered the Proposal that the Terms of Reference of Education Committee and its sub-committees should undergo a ‘root and branch’ review.

8.9 Senate NOTED that the Education Committee had already had an initial discussion of this Proposal, and that a Green Paper on Education Governance would be developed and presented to a future meeting of the Education Committee. The paper would include proposals on any transitory arrangements and a timeline for implementation.

Proposal 7 and 8
8.10 Senate considered Proposal 7, that the Graduate Studies and Undergraduate Studies Committees should be merged to form a ‘teaching and learning committee’ (precise nomenclature to be determined).

8.11 Senate NOTED the following:

- Education Committee had been broadly supportive of this change in principle, but it was unlikely to be implemented until 2018/19, pending delivery of aspects of the Education Strategy (which was predicated on the current structures for delivery).
• This topic would be brought back to Senate for formal approval (including consideration of allocation of Graduate Studies Committee’s current responsibilities in respect of PGR students) when the timing for implementation was appropriate.

8.12 Senate considered Proposal 8, that responsibility for PGR matters should be transferred from Education Committee to Research Committee, with the following supporting enablers:

- Faculty Education Director (FED) and Faculty Research Director (FRD) job descriptions should be reviewed
- The Bristol Doctoral College (BDC) Board and Research Committee terms of reference (ToR) to be revised to encompass responsibility for PGR issues (including the PGR student experience), ensuring that there are no gaps or areas of duplication
- Responsibility for PGR student matters should be transferred from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research).

8.13 Senate NOTED that this proposal had been considered by both the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research), and by the University Research and Education Committees. Based on their feedback, there did not appear to be any appetite to take forward the main elements of this Proposal at this time. Feedback to date suggested that improvements could be made in specific areas without overhauling the University’s governance structures. For example, it was important to clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of those involved in PGR student recruitment and experience – a piece of work that would be carried out by the Pro Vice-Chancellors for Education and Research.

8.14 Members of Senate observed, in respect of Proposals 7 and 8, that it would be important to acknowledge the disparate nature of the PGR (and PGT) student cohort, and provided the following specific comments:

- Integrated Masters Undergraduate Programmes (i.e. UG programmes that had shared units with graduate Masters programmes) should be included as part of discussions in respect of PGT students, as should Professional Doctorates with a very large taught component.
- The University was growing PGT numbers but not growing them equally across each Faculty and therefore the portfolio of Graduate Education Directors was different across the Faculties.
- Potentially, parts of Faculty Education Director roles could be allocated to Professional Services staff in order to create more space for innovation and education enhancement work, rather than caseload work.
- Doctoral Training Partnerships and Centres would need to be carefully considered as part of any discussion of the allocation of responsibility for PGR matters, as they delivered taught programmes as part of PhD programmes.

Proposal 9

8.15 Senate APPROVED Proposal 9 of the White Paper, that the International Committee should be disbanded, noting that:

- There would be more regular meetings arranged between International Office and Faculty staff and the Faculty International Directors, and two open forums per year would be held for the discussion of international matters.
- The Pro Vice-Chancellors Education, Research and International were currently working together to consider how Education and Research could be appropriately internationalised.
- Senate would receive a presentation at its December meeting from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) and Pro Vice-Chancellor (International) on their delivery plans in the year ahead for research and internationalisation.
Proposal 17

8.16 Senate considered Proposal 17, that a standard structure for committees, their terms of reference, composition and officer roles and responsibilities at School/Faculty level should be developed, and adopted by all Schools and Faculties.

8.17 Members noted that the University was currently compiling a ‘master list’ of committees, in consultation with School Managers, and this would be published in due course.

8.18 Members also noted the following:
   • Plans to develop such standard structures had been paused for now, pending consideration of other Proposals. It was anticipated that, in due course, the University would achieve commonality of structures - particularly in order to assure institution-wide practice in respect of quality assurance matters.
   • In the shorter term, the Governance team was working to surface areas of duplication and/or lack of clarity of committee remits in order to reduce the administrative/committee burden that the University imposes upon itself. The Governance Team would be engaging with Schools and Faculties over the coming months to identify areas of duplication/redundancies in their committee structures, with a view to identifying any 'easy wins' in this regard.

8.19 Senate supported the Proposal and made the following comments:
   • Once the “master list” of committees had been completed, it would be helpful, if possible, to publish a diagrammatic representation of University Committees and their reporting structure.
   • Schools varied dramatically across the University, and it was therefore sometimes difficult to ensure that communications were rooted to the most appropriate responsible officer in a School, particularly as there was not always a clear understanding of officer roles and responsibilities. It would not be possible or desirable to take a strict ‘one size fits all’ approach, but it was important to ensure that the University had commonality in its standards (and Senate was reminded that this had been commented on in the University’s most recent Higher Education Review), to ensure and demonstrate quality assurance.

Proposals 19 and 20

8.20 Senate considered Proposal 19, which was that template documents should be provided centrally for Terms of Reference, reports, policies, agendas, action registers, minutes and other committee-related documentation. These should be adhered to across the institution, with a view to creating greater consistency and more easily identifying overlaps or gaps between committees and groups.

8.21 Senate supported Proposal 19, noting that it would be important for members of Senate to lead by example in embedding these behaviors, and adhering to the templates, if the university was going to be able to make significant changes to streamline governance processes.

8.22 Senate also considered and broadly supported Proposal 20, which was that the University should adopt certain behaviours in respect of committee meetings, as standard, across the institution. Members of Senate were clear that papers should be focussed so that debate could be effective, and committees could achieve high quality discussion and decision-making. It would be important, however, not to be too prescriptive and unintentionally to stifle debate.

Proposals 25 and 26
8.23 Senate considered Proposal 25, which was that the title and responsibilities associated with Faculty-level management roles, and the administrative support provided to them should be reviewed and refreshed.

8.24 Senate members supported the Proposal, noting that it was in the early stages of consideration by the Pro Vice-Chancellors for Education, Research and International. Senate would be engaged in discussions in due course.

8.25 Senate also considered Proposal 26, which was that Faculty Quality Enhancement Teams should be removed and replaced by a University-wide Quality Enhancement Team, reporting to an Academic Standards and Quality Committee.

8.26 Members noted that this Proposal was in the early stages of consideration by University Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC), which would in turn make a recommendation to Education Committee.

8.27 Senate emphasised that there should be clarity about the arrangements for those individuals who might carry out these roles, and that this should be included in the considerations by the AQSC.

Closing remarks

8.28 Senate would receive regular progress updates about the Governance Review, and members could send their feedback/comments either to the Head of Governance, Ms Katy Gullon, or to the Clerk to Senate, Ms Lucy Barling.

9. Green Paper: Structure of the Academic Year (SAY) Review*


9.2 The Academic Registrar introduced the Green paper, which included proposals for some interim solutions in advance of wholesale change to the SAY, and which could lay the foundations for more significant change in due course.

9.3 The following was highlighted:

- The Research and Education Committees would be considering the principles and decisions required in order to deliver a better structure, based on the requirements of the University’s education and research agendas.
- In the meantime, it would be important to create a more flexible implementation of the existing structure during this academic year.
- It was important that the University’s ambition was not only to position its students for success in education and to support their wellbeing, but also to help staff manage their education and research workload, and wellbeing, by balancing the demands of both.

9.4 Members made the following comments:

- The most pressing concern for staff was a loss of time to think about their work. External pressures were a constantly changing reality, but the needs for time in research and scholarship had not changed, and academic staff needed to free up time to do it.
- It would be important to develop a revised approach to assessment, as this could also help to free up staff time.
- It was pleasing to see that Pathway 1 recognition and reward was being considered as part of the SAY Review, and the Green Paper clearly captured the complexity of the matter.
• With the launch of the Temple Quarter Zone, there would be implications for teaching methods i.e. multiple points of entry, and this must be considered as part of the SAY Review.
• Whatever the future decisions would be on this matter, it was hugely important to manage the communication of it appropriately – making these changes would be a real challenge and care would be needed to be taken with staff so that this did not just become another process change that they had to face.

9.5 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) emphasised that it would take a whole academic year to review this process, and whilst the University Management Team shared staff concern about workload capacity and the ability to cope with significant amount of change, the SAY review was vital enabling work, crucial to the University in delivering on its strategic ambitions and regulatory requirements and affectively manage workload pressures. It would not be appropriate to continue to hold on to existing unsustainable practices, and there was a real opportunity for positive impact on staff and student experience if changes were implemented effectively.

9.6 Senate APPROVED the setting up of a SAY Steering Group to develop a White Paper which would outline the principles and propose an approach (including timings) for a new Structure of the Academic Year.

10. Review of Academic Staff Promotion and Progression*
10.1 RECEIVED: details of the arrangements for the review of Academic staff promotion and progression (SN/17-18/006).

10.2 Senate considered the progress update, and NOTED that the recommendations from the four work streams would be finalised by mid-October to enable the Steering Group to consider them and to draw together an integrated set of proposals for consideration by the University Management Team (UMT) in early November, with a view to bringing proposals to Senate for comment on 11 December 2017.

10.3 Members of Senate made the following comments:
• It would be important to ensure that the ‘empowering of staff’ element was made a more agile process, rather than one that starts in October, with feedback being received in August.
• The Green Paper should incorporate the findings arising from the current work of the ‘Gender Pay Gap in the Professoriat’ group.

10.4 It was anticipated that the implementation of proposals, once agreed, would be phased in over a two-year period.

11. Research Strategy 2017-2023 *

11.2 Senate would receive a presentation at its next meeting from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research), on the delivery plan for the Research Strategy.

12. Policy on Recording Educational Activities *
12.1 RECEIVED and APPROVED: the University Policy on Recording Educational Activities (SN/17-18/008).

13. Report of the Education Committee *

13.2 Senate APPROVED the following:

13.2.1 The Education Committee Terms of Reference and membership for 2017/18 (Annex A of the report).

13.2.2 The plan for reviewing and approving the University’s Annual Provider Review for HEFCE (Annex B of the report). Senate also:
- AGREED the evidence that should be included in the Annual Provider Review report to the Board of Trustees; and
- DELEGATED AUTHORITY to the Education Committee to approve the final report at its meeting on 1 November 2017, for submission to the Board of Trustees on 10 November.

13.2.3 A set of recommendations as to future practice for the provision of undergraduate student access to examination scripts (Annex C of the report).

13.2.4 A series of principles and proposed revisions to clarify the policy and process for the reporting and certification of circumstances that affect a student’s performance in the examination period (Annex D of the report).

13.2.5 Recommendations for new programmes/pathways, changes to programmes/pathways and programme withdrawals:

a. New programme - accelerated graduate entry programme for Veterinary Science (BVSc)
b. New programme – MSc Banking, Regulation and Financial Stability
c. New programme – MSc Marketing
d. New curriculum – MBChB (changes to years 2, 3 and 4). Senate noted that the changes were approved in principle, subject to receipt of a positive report from the critical friend, which was not available at the time of the meeting. Senate therefore DELEGATED AUTHORITY to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education), as Chair of the Education Committee, to approve the changes to the MBChB curriculum on receipt of a positive report.
e. Programme suspensions - MSc Oral Medicine and Oral Pathology and the MSc Oral Pathology
f. Programme suspension - LLM Maritime Law
g. Programme withdrawal - four Teach First PG Certificates in Education programmes in English, Maths, Modern Foreign Languages and Science
h. Programme withdrawal - PG Certificate in Education (Citizenship)
i. Programme withdrawal - MRes Systems Neuroscience
j. Programme withdrawal - MA Classics and Ancient History

13.3 In relation to future practice for the provision of UG student access to examination scripts (see also paragraph reference 13.2.3 above), members of Senate NOTED that this was motivated by a desire to give students a parity of experience across the institution, and was a positive step forward towards ensuring that students feeling ‘ownership’ of the work that they produced. It would, of course, be important to work within current administrative constraints in the transitional period.

13.4 Senate NOTED the rest of the report.


14.1 RECEIVED and NOTED (SN/17-18/010) (on website). Please refer also to paper reference SN/17-18/004 regarding the disbandment of the International Committee, and paragraph reference 8.13 above.
15. **Report of the Research Committee**  
15.1 RECEIVED and NOTED (SN/17-18/011) (on website).

16. **Report of the Board of Trustees**  
16.1 RECEIVED and NOTED (SN/17-18/012) (on website).

17. **Annual Report of the Promotions Committee**  
17.1 RECEIVED and NOTED (SN/17-18/013) (on website).

18. **Annual Report: Grade M Professorial Selection 2016/17**  
18.1 RECEIVED and NOTED (SN/17-18/014) (on website).

19. **Membership of Senate for the 2017/18 session**  
19.1 RECEIVED and NOTED (SN/17-18/015) (on website).

20. **Future agenda items**  
20.1 Members noted that any future agenda items should be sent to the Clerk by emailing governance@bristol.ac.uk

20.2 Items for the 11 December Senate meeting agenda currently were: the delivery plan for the Research Strategy and for Internationalisation; WP activities progress update; Green Paper: Review of Academic Promotion and Progression; Governance Review.

21. **Equality of Opportunity, including consideration of Equality Related Risks**  
21.1 Members of Senate discussed relevant issues of equality and diversity in the meeting specifically in relation to student support in residences, the Review of Academic Staff Promotion and Progression, and the SAY Review and considered that matters submitted to it for consideration had taken due account of equality and diversity.

22. **Communication and Consultation**  
22.1 Members of Senate discussed relevant issues of communication and consultation during the meeting, particularly with reference to the review of Academic Staff Promotion and Progression, the Governance Review, the SAY Review, and the Research Strategy, and considered that matters submitted to it for consideration had taken due account of communication and consultation.

23. **Quality Assurance**  
23.1 Members of Senate discussed issues of Quality Assurance during the meeting, particularly with reference to items in the Education Committee report (and in particular discussions in respect of the Annual Provider Review), and the Green paper on the SAY Review, and considered that matters submitted to it for consideration had taken due account of quality assurance.

24. **Date of next meeting**  
24.1 Monday 11 December 2017, 35 Berkeley Square, Room 4.10.