MEETING OF SENATE
MINUTES
Monday 28 October 2019

1400, Room 4.10, 35 Berkeley Square

Present: The Vice-Chancellor (Chair), Professors Barnes, Barr, Blom, Bond, Canagarajah, Cooper, Flecker, Heslop, Ireland, Jordan, Linthorst, Oliphant, Orpen, Pancost, Pollmann, Raven, Ridley, Robinson, Timpson, Macfarlane, Marklof, Nabney, Nobes, Sandy, Schonle, Smith, Squires, Szczelkun, D Wilson, E Wilson; Dr J Agarwal, Dr D Aldamen, Dr M Allinson, Dr M Barbour, Mr C Brasnett, Dr S Fox, Ms W Guo, Dr K Lampe, Dr S McGuinness, Mr T Metcalfe, Mr S Singh, Dr M Stam, Dr S Quadflieg, Dr S Proud, Dr L Walling, Mrs S Newbold.

Apologies: Ms S Crossley, Prof C Jarrold, Dr S Fitzjohn, Miss R Hudson, Prof J Iredale, Mr P Kent, Ms R Kent, Dr N Millner, Prof S Neild, Prof J Norman, Prof T Payne, Prof K Pollmann, Dr D Poole, Prof S Purdy, Prof J Robbins, Prof R Carazo Salas, Prof F CT Smith, Prof M Spear, Prof S Tormey.

In attendance: Ms L Barling (Clerk), Mr E Davis and Prof G Feder (for item 11 on the agenda).

1.1 APPROVED the minutes of the meeting of 10 June 2019.

2. CHAIR’S REPORT
2.1 RECEIVED and NOTED: paper ref: (SN/19-20/001).

2.2 The Chair welcomed new members of Senate to their first meeting of the 19/20 academic year.

2.3 Senate members gave a heartfelt thank you to the outgoing Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & Enterprise) (PVC RE)), Professor Nishan Canagarajah, who was due to leave the institution at the end of October 2019. It was noted that Professors Peters and Ireland would share the role of PVC (RE) in the interim, whilst a permanent replacement was sought. An external advert for the permanent position was due to go live this week.

2.4 In addition to the report, the following was highlighted:

Augar Review
2.4.1 Despite the complexities around BREXIT, there was still a chance that some elements of the Augar review report recommendations would be taken forward by the Conservative party. The Russell Group would continue to lobby for a significant commitment from government to ‘plug the gap’ which would arise from a significant reduction in tuition fees.

TOFC
2.4.2 There was now a revised programme plan with a target campus opening date of September 2023.

2.4.3 [REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests].
2.4.5 There had been some significant University Research awards (listed below) over the summer period. The Chair, on behalf of Senate, thanked all colleagues who had worked hard to deliver on these:

- £1.5m from Research England to expand the University’s enterprise activity in UNITE DX as part of its University Enterprise Zone [UEZ] programme. The grant was an endorsement of the enterprise activity that was beginning to emerge from the South West, particularly recognising the University of Bristol as a key player in both physical and life sciences.
- The Wellcome Trust awarded the University of Bristol over £10 million in funding for two prestigious PhD programmes in the faculties of Health Sciences and Life Sciences.
- Professor Nic Timpson had secured the successful renewal for the next five years of the ALSPAC programme. This proved the high success of ASLPAC and shows confidence in the University to deliver an extremely ambitious programme.
- PhD training across the biosciences had received a massive boost thanks to a £18.5 million funding award from the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC, part of UK Research and Innovation) to the University of Bristol-led South West Biosciences Doctoral Training Partnership (SWBio DTP).
- Professor John Foot in the Faculty of Arts won a British Academy Award.
- The University won three large ESRC grants in arts, social sciences and humanities.
- BBSRC very recently announced the renewal of the GW4 DTP partnership – this was an excellent result for the University’s overall DTP offering.
- The European Research Council awarded a prestigious Synergy Grant worth €7.6 million to the University of Bristol and Swiss partners, the Friedrich Miescher Institute for Biomedical Research (FMI) and the ETH Zurich, for a joint research project looking at the molecular mechanisms of viral infection.
- The Faculty of SSL recently won a £4.7m network plus grant (ESRC GCRF).
- An ERC (European Research Council) Synergy grant of €11 million over six years (2020-2026) had been awarded to an international group of scientists coordinated by the University of Bristol to examine the role of glacier algae in progressively darkening the Greenland Ice Sheet surface in a warming climate.

2.5 Senate APPROVED the recommendation from the EFM Transformation Board for the following name changes: School of Accounting and Finance, School of Economics, and University of Bristol School of Management (or variations thereof).

2.6 Senate APPROVED the proposal from the University Research Committee for a new University Research Institute: Bristol Digital Futures Institute.

2.7 Senate NOTED the name change for the Centre for English Language and Foundation Studies (CELFS) to: ‘Centre for Academic Language and Development’.

2.8 Senate NOTED that over the summer the Chair approved updates to some of the University Ordinances to reflect the changes in educational leadership roles to align UG and PGT governance and separate and unify PGR governance. This included the introduction of a faculty-level PGR Director role and changes to the number and remits of Associate Pro-Vice Chancellors, moving from two Associate PVCs with remits covering UG and PG to four Associate PVCs with remits covering: Learning and Teaching; PGR; Innovation and Enhancement; Education Quality and Standards.

3. SENATE MEMBERSHIP 2019/20
3.1 RECEIVED AND NOTED: paper ref: (SN/19-20/002).

4. VICE-CHANCELLOR’S QUESTION TIME
4.1 The Vice-Chancellor introduced question time.

4.2 The following was highlighted:

4.2.1 In response to a question about students being housed off campus in geographically disparate locations such as Newport, and the impact this could have on student experience, members noted the following:

- Due to challenges in the Accommodation Office and a student recruitment overshoot this year, the University had referred students who had come through clearing (who did not have an ‘accommodation guarantee’), an option of housing outside Bristol - this included (high-quality) accommodation in Newport, or at the Vet School in Langford. The Accommodation Office offered to offset the rent owed to the Newport operator if the student was subsequently housed in UoB property.
- Only a small proportion of students were affected, and they had received support from members of the Residential Life team to help ensure they felt part of the wider University community in those first important weeks. Most of those students had now been housed in Bristol accommodation but some had decided that they would stay on in the Langford or Newport accommodation on a longer-term basis.
- Planning for next year’s student recruitment activity was already underway and the University was undertaking significant scenario planning in order to mitigate future overshoot risks.

4.2.2 In response to a question about rent levels in the City, members were informed that student rents in the private sector were not regulated. The University had in place significant partnerships with private sector organisations in the City in order to keep rents lower for students – this was done by entering into long-term deals with those partners.

4.2.3 Members raised a concern about last minute changes to timetabling in the first few weeks of term which was having a negative impact on both student and staff experience. Senators were keen to ensure that in future the timetable was agreed much further in advance in order to mitigate against these issues. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) noted the concerns and whilst a fix could not be guaranteed for next year, she suggested that these matters would be discussed in the round with Schools and Faculties as part of the programme of work being led by Associate PVC Learning & Teaching, which was around addressing programme complexity and curriculum enhancement. Senate noted that it would receive early sight of options/proposals in the form of a Green Paper during the course of this academic year.

4.2.4 Professor R Pancost raised a question about progress against the actions contained in the BAME & STEM report which was written after an event held in the early part of 2019 to address improving the academic achievement of BAME students. In response the DVC confirmed that most of the actions contained in the action plan were already in train via the University’s BAME Action Plan (from page 21 onwards in the BAME & STEM report) or incorporated into the University’s Race Equality Charter work. Details of the response to the recommendations had been shared with Professor Pancost. Progress highlights included the following:
• **Race equality training for staff:** The Student Inclusion Team had commissioned Advance HE to deliver 8 days of Intro to Race Equality Training for staff in 2018/19 & 2019/20. Evaluation of this training and its lasting impact would take place at the end of 2019/20 after which, if effective, it would be rolled out more widely.

• **Rolling programme of BAME events:** The Be More Empowered for Success programme was launched in May 2019 and fully implemented from the start of 2019/20. The Events Team of advocates were responsible for developing and delivering a programme of events focused on BAME students. This began with partnership working to develop the Black History Month programme with BSU. The University was also developing a role models resource, and planned to develop other initiatives over the coming year in partnership with BAME Staff Network.

• **Encourage the reporting of microaggressions and discrimination:** a ‘report and support’ tool was already in place, and more work was underway in this area.

• **Provide a diverse curriculum that includes BAME contributions to science and ensure diversity on teaching committees:** PVC Education was leading work in relation to curriculum enhancement, one aspect of which included reviewing curricula to be more inclusive. A workshop took place on 23 October 2019 with Education Directors and BME Success Advocates in the Reviewing Team, to explore how Schools could make use of the advocates to improve inclusive practice.

4.2.5 Structures were in place to monitor progress of the above, and the rest of the actions contained in the plan, and the University would make sure that the progress was also reported back to the organisers of the event. A copy of the report would also be circulated to members of Senate electronically along with the action plan.

4.2.6 Members noted that given the departure of Professor N Canagarajah, the University was taking a distributed approach to EDI leadership – the Chief Operating Officer, the Registrar and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost - these individuals would collectively provide leadership for EDI across the professional services and academic areas, with the DVC & Provost leading on the Race Equality Charter. There were also a series of champions for EDI for each of the protected characteristics across the institution.

4.2.7 Finally, members noted that the Board of Trustees had recently established an EDI Oversight Group whose key purpose was to assist the University in moving further on its journey and meeting its ambitions to achieve a more diverse and inclusive staff and student community. As part of that the Oversight Group would also be looking to ensure that the University’s priorities and plans were not just about current activity and goals but were sufficiently proactive, ambitious and resilient going forward.

5. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS**
5.1 There were no written questions.

6. **FACULTY BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS**
6.1 None had been received.

7. **ANNUAL PRESENTATION FROM BRISTOL SU SABBATICAL OFFICERS**
7.1 RECEIVED and **NOTED:** presentation (on file) led by the PG Education Officer and the UG Education Officer.

8. **VISION FOR A CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK**
8.1 RECEIVED AND **NOTED:** paper ref: SN/19-20/003 and presentation (on file).

8.2 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) introduced the report by way of a presentation.
8.3 The following was highlighted:
• Whilst there was a clear acknowledgement of the link between space and pedagogy and the fact that some traditional spaces did to a certain extent constrain innovative approaches, there were ways of overcoming those constraints through curriculum changes and enhancements and by empowering individuals to teach differently regardless of the space.
• The University would review again the expectations around personal and academic tutoring and how best to create a balance between welfare, wellbeing and academic advising/mentoring. In particular, coming to a collective understanding of the roles and responsibilities for academic and professional services staff around wellbeing.
• In Arts, the positive impact of innovative group performance work was being reduced due to a lack of attendance, and some members of Senate were keen for the University to introduce compulsory attendance. The University informed Senate that a piece of work was underway currently which was looking at an interim approach to attendance monitoring, which recognised the tensions and necessities, and that Senate would receive an options paper in due course.

8.4 Senate was supportive of the Framework and APPROVED the Framework for implementation with programmes from 2019/20.

9. SLSP UPDATE
9.1 RECEIVED and NOTED: presentation (on file).

9.2 The Deputy Registrar (Academic Services) led the presentation.

9.3 The following was highlighted:
• There were some initial data cleansing issues which were to be expected on first roll-out and these were being resolved. This had impacted on the ability of some staff to access systems.
• There were system performance issues which the Chief Information Officer was aware of and dealing with.
• There were some issues with attendance monitoring which was being investigated by the programme team.
• In some parts of the University the way in which schools were having to monitor attendance could have implications for fitness to practice.
• Programme deliverables for 2020 were outlined and would include basic support for extenuating circumstances, plagiarism and appeals. A more substantial piece of work around these processes would be undertaken in the future but would not be completed in time for the 2020 roll out of SLSP.

9.4 All the above comments would be taken back to the SLSP team, and any further questions should be submitted to the Deputy Registrar or Academic Registrar.

10. WP & VENTURERS TRUST UPDATE
10.1 RECEIVED AND NOTED: paper ref: SN/19-20/004.

10.2 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost introduced the WP report and the Deputy Registrar (Academic Services) provided the update on the Venturers Trust.

10.3 Senate NOTED the University’s progress on WP and developments in the Venturers Trust and the following was highlighted:
• Senate would receive, at different points during the year, updates on progress in relation to our core WP targets, including success and progression targets.
• In response to a concern about WP targets not being met in the Faculty of Arts, members noted that there were now some significant strands of work going on in Humanities to decolonise the curriculum, including a review of staff profile.

11. **FREEDOM OF SPEECH CODE OF PRACTICE & EXTERNAL SPEAKER POLICY**

11.1 RECEIVED AND ENDORSED: paper ref: SN/19-20/005.

*Freedom of Speech Code of Practice and External Speaker Policy*

11.2 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost introduced the Freedom of Speech Code of Practice & External Speaker Policy.

11.3 Members noted that Bristol SU had requested an amendment to the policy which related to the fact that it did not have oversight of all student events being organised by individual students.

11.4 Subject to the above revision, Senate **ENDORSED** the revisions to the University of Bristol Freedom of Speech Code of Practice and External Speaker Policy, to the Board of Trustees for approval.

*IHRA definition of antisemitism*

11.5 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost introduced IHRA definition of antisemitism, and was supported by Mr E Davis, the Chaplain, who provided helpful advice and guidance to assist Senate in its decision-making.

11.6 Following discussion, members endorsed the recommendation that the University **adopt the definition which states**: ‘Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.’ as one of our reference points, and to do so in parallel with the adoption of additional definitions relating to other minority groups that may feel vulnerable to discrimination or hatred. All such definitions would be applied by the University in a manner which is consistent with our responsibilities under Article 10, our Public Sector Equality Duties and the overall context.

11.7 After detailed consideration, on a show of hands, the proposal was supported by a clear majority.

11.8 Senate members emphasised that they found the issue to be complex and welcomed the Board of Trustees consideration of Senate’s recommendation.

12. **ANNUAL REPORT TO THE BOARD ON ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STANDARDS**

12.1 RECEIVED AND NOTED: paper ref: SN/19-20/006.

12.2 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost, supported by the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (TQ Education & Skills and Education Quality and Standards) introduced and summarised the report.

12.3 After due consideration, Senate **ENDORSED** the report to the Board of Trustees for approval.

13. **RESEARCH COMMITTEE REPORT**


14. **EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT**

14.2 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) introduced the report.

14.3 Senate APPROVED the terms of reference for the Education Committee for 2019/20, the changes to which were:

1. The introduction of ‘Deep Dive’ strategic discussions in addition to normal business
2. The Programme Board for Curriculum Enhancement had been evolved into the Education Committee as a way of mainstreaming the activity.

14.4 Senate ENDORSED minor changes to Ordinance 19 and RECOMMENDED the changes to the Board of Trustees for approval. The revisions were to correct the list of degrees awarded by each faculty as follows:

- **Master of Science by Research denoted by MScR** – The new Cabot Institute MScR programme is offered across all faculties and an amendment to Ordinance 19 is required to permit the MScR award in the Faculty of Arts and in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law.

- **Master in Liberal Arts denoted by MLibArts** – The award is incorrectly listed in Ordinance 19 as ‘Master of Liberal Arts’.

14.5 Senate NOTED the use of Chair’s powers over the summer.

14.6 Senate NOTED that the PVC Education had identified (in addition to the five broad areas previously agreed by the Committee) three longer term goals that related closely to the Education Strategy priorities but were more aspirational and would continue into 2020/21 and beyond. They were:

- Goal 1: Successfully embed curriculum enhancement across all taught programmes through a values-driven framework and collegiate process
- Goal 2: Inspire and support academic colleagues on all pathways to be creative and innovative in their teaching
- Goal 3: Robust assessment and feedback systems

15. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE UNIVERSITY PROMOTIONS COMMITTEE
15.1 RECEIVED AND NOTED: paper ref: SN/19-20/009.

16. SENATE FORWARD PLAN 2019/20
16.1 RECEIVED AND NOTED: paper ref: SN/19-20/010.

17. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS
17.1 Any proposed future items should 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 considered EDI related risks as part of the action plan from the BAME & STEM Report; the WP update, the Freedom of Speech Code of Practice & External Speaker Policy, and the IHRA definition of antisemitism.

19. COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION
19.1 Members of Senate were encouraged to share what was discussed today with colleagues across the University.

20. CONSIDERATION OF SUSTAINABILITY MATTERS
20.1 No specific issues or concerns were raised.

21. QUALITY ASSURANCE
21.1 Senate endorsed the Annual Report to the Board on Academic Quality & Standards.

22. Date of Next meeting: The date of the next meeting of Senate will be Monday 9 December 2019, in Room 4.10, 35 Berkeley Square.