MEETING OF SENATE
MINUTES
Monday, 23 April 2018

1400, Reception Room, Wills Memorial Building

Present: The Vice-Chancellor (Chair), Professors Annett, Banting, Barnes, Barr, Basker, Benton, Birdi, Bond, Canagarajah, Cini, Cousins, Cristianini, Dermott, Dymock, Gallagher, Harrow, Heslop, Hutton, Ireland, Jarrold, Ladyman, Macfarlane, Marklof, Nabney, Nobes, Oliphant (on behalf of Conaghan), Orpen, Orr-Ewing, Payne, Potter, Purdy, Ridley, Robinson, Sandy, Squires, Szczelkun, Williams, Wilson; Mr M Ammar, Dr D Damen, Dr L Dickinson, Dr N Farwell, Dr A Fraser, Ms C Fraser, Ms R Geller, Dr H Heath, Dr I Hers, Mr P Kent, Dr K Lampe, Dr P Langton, Dr E Lithander, Dr E Love, Dr S McGuiness, Mr J Mudie, Dr T O’Toole, Dr S Proud, Dr A Pullen, Dr S Quadflieg, Dr J Rose, Mr S Singh, Dr M Spear (on behalf of Dr C Fuller), Dr M Stam, Dr K Whittington.

In attendance: Ms L Barling (Clerk), Ms C Buchanan, Ms P Coonerty, Mr R Kerse, Ms L Robinson

1. Minutes of the previous meeting on 26 February 2018 and the extraordinary meeting on 22 March 2018

1.1 APPROVED: the minutes of the meeting of 26 February 2018, subject to an amendment which explicitly records the attendance of Dr James Thompson and two students who joined the meeting for a short period of time to represent staff and student views on the pensions dispute.

1.2 APPROVED: the minutes of the extraordinary meeting of 22 March 2018.

2. Matters arising: Delivering the 2018/19 and 2019/20 timetables

2.1 RECEIVED: a presentation from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Academic Registrar (on file), and a supporting paper (ref SN/17-18/039).

2.2 The presentation highlighted the following:

- A review of the staff constraints process revised in 2017 was currently in its early stages, and HR had begun an equality assessment of that process. Improvements planned for 2018 included:
  - More time allocated for process;
  - ERP system to enable assessment of impact of refused requests on subsequent volume of Flexible Working Arrangements;
  - HR to track reasons for constraint submission by gender for full equality analysis;
  - Focus on improving communication between HR, Heads of Schools and individuals regarding constraints outcomes and;
  - HR/Timetabling to implement the process for late requests by new starters.

- Mitigations suggested in the March meeting but not pursued included the use of Wednesday afternoons for teaching (not pursued due to lead in time, and issues around consumer protection legislation, student satisfaction, and impact on market position), and overbooking of rooms at >100% seat capacity (not pursued due to health and safety concerns, and concerns about reputational damage).
• Suggested changes included:
  a) Live streaming into multiple rooms. It was noted that this was feasible but there were costs and student experience risks associated with delivering it and it would put more pressure on medium sized teaching spaces (where the most acute demand problems exist). It was also noted that live streaming was a solution for dealing with an unexpected demand, but that it should not be pursued as a large-scale solution.
  b) Staff/student opt-in to use of atypical times: it was noted that the effectiveness of this solution would be almost entirely dependent on the scale of uptake and engagement of teaching staff, and would require all staff teaching on a lecture series to opt in. Large-scale adoption would require staff and student consultation.
  c) Bristol Futures Options: it was noted that the University could review the number of Bristol Futures optional units to be introduced to reduce complexity.
  d) Programme structure: It was noted that large-scale unit redesign was not feasible to alleviate pressure for 18/19 due to required lead-in time. However, redesign of a smaller number of units was possible.

• The University should review programme structures to reduce complexity and enhance educational delivery. There was agreement to piloting programme redesign with several schools next year to reduce unit complexity.

2.3 Members noted that the above suggestions did not represent sufficient mitigations to remove the risks around timetabling for next year, however they would pave the way for improvements in the medium-term and would additionally represent exciting and transformative innovations in teaching and learning strategies at the University.

2.4 Members noted that the view of the Academic Registrar was that increased space, either by way of additional footprint or additional hours, was the only way to address the short-term challenge. However, given the express view of Senate that an extension to the teaching week was not appropriate at this time, this was not an option that would be pursued nor consulted upon.

2.5 A full and detailed discussion ensued about the proposed ways forward as referenced in the paper. Highlights from the discussion are as follows:
• A review of Programme structures and the pedagogical innovation that this would entail was a positive response to a difficult challenge and provided the opportunity and impetus to take forward new initiatives, and to explore ideas that had, until now, not been put into fruition. Members noted that this would be excellent for student learning as well as for staff teaching.
• Members were supportive of the temporary use of Senate House for teaching and commented that not only was it very accessible for all kinds of teaching activities, but it offered the university some real breathing space whilst a longer-term solution was being sought. Members noted that the use of Senate House would be as an alternative to building modular teaching capacity in Royal Fort Gardens (as previously considered).
• Student members emphasised the importance of ensuring that the University commitment to repurpose Senate House for student uses (including the establishment of a Global Lounge) was sustained. The University senior management team re-affirmed their commitment to the project, recognising the strength of feeling amongst students. It was also noted that, as a result of the proposals, during academic year 2018/19 students should be given early access to Senate House for study and other use, and the Global Lounge would also be run on a pilot or pop-up basis during that year.
• Senate was clear that communication with students about these changes to the use of Senate House were of utmost importance, and it was noted that the University would also be engaging students in the development of pedagogic innovations.
• Members welcomed the equality and impact assessments review was being enacted and were informed that plans were being put in place for the future modelling of the timetabling demand. Members noted that new software would allow the University to extrapolate what the impact of changing teaching modes would have on the University's capacity to deliver.
• Senate members emphasised the importance of ensuring that there was a long-term plan for sustaining the new technologies that were being introduced.
• Members were reminded that the University’s Integrated Planning Process included focus on the impact of changes on teaching and learning, the accommodation of staff, and the review of other space requirements, in order to ensure the effective delivery of teaching, learning and research).

2.6 Given the above, Senate ENDORSED the proposed ways forward, which included:
• The creation of additional teaching space capacity using, in the short-term, Senate House for additional teaching and learning spaces (i.e. revisit the current capital programme) in order to alleviate pressure for the upcoming academic year.
• Investment in staff and student skills capacity, and the digital environment.
• The launch of a programme of curricular and pedagogic innovation through BILT (piloting and early adopters in 18/19, with a wider roll-out thereafter).

3. Chair’s Report
3.1 RECEIVED and NOTED (SN/17-18/033).

3.2 The report was introduced by the Chair.

Structure of the Academic Year (SAY) Review
3.3 Members noted that UMT had agreed at their meeting on 16 April 2018, that the Easter vacation dates in 2019 would not be changed. At the same meeting UMT approved the 2019/20 Almanac and agreed that the consultation process for future Almanacs would be more clearly defined.

3.4 Senate also noted the following:
• A green paper on the SAY would be presented to Senate at their meeting on 11 June 2018 for discussion. The green paper would focus particularly on what the core principles ought to be for deciding what the structure of the academic year ought to be.
• It had been discussed and agreed by Senate that in the future UMT would be responsible for setting the academic year, and the process would therefore be owned by the University Governance team. UMT also agreed that Trade Unions and Bristol SU would form a part of the process for setting academic year dates.
• Setting term dates in future would take into account local school holidays and religious festivals and would involve consultation with staff and student unions.
• Members were reminded that Easter holiday dates for academic year 18/19 were discussed at the Education Committee meeting in November 2016 and were discussed again in January 2017 by both Education Committee and Research Committee where four distinct proposals were put forward about the best pedagogic approach to that academic year. Those proposals were further discussed at the Senate meeting in February 2017 and agreed by Senate at that meeting.

3.5 Senate noted that it was problematic for the dates to be changed at this time, and members were therefore asked for their suggestions as to possible mitigations that could be put in place as a result.
3.6 Members of Senate made the following comments:

- Utilising the second week of assessment in January 2019 as a potential mitigation would not be appropriate given the impact this would have on student wellbeing and the student experience. This would also negatively impact on staff who would be put under extreme pressure to undertake teaching as well as assessment/marking.
- A potential local mitigation could be for Schools to introduce a reading week in the last week of term. As such, Heads of School agreed to consider whether this would fit with their relevant programmes.
- Schools agreed to consider whether they might be able to reschedule activities in the final week of Easter to the post-Easter revision period (subject to whether there were any formal exams scheduled in the revision week). Schools would also do a sense-check of any impacts this mitigation option might have elsewhere. Members recognised the urgency for agreeing appropriate mitigation plans.
- Members emphasised the pressure that staff felt of needing to be present and available much more than they had been in the past and highlighted the importance of the university management team recognising this and assisting Schools and Faculties to build-in more flexibility for staff about when they could take their annual leave (or not).
- Members emphasised the importance of communicating with staff the reasons why the Easter holiday dates for 2018/19 cannot be moved and to reassure them that everything was being done to accommodate holidays where possible.

**Industrial action**

3.7 Members were reminded that although no further industrial action would be taken at this time in connection with the pension dispute, there was a considerable amount of work associated with the impact to date which must occur. Mitigations would continue to be applied as further details of particular impacts became clearer. These would be applied using the ‘Guidance Notes and Decision Frameworks’ already circulated to colleagues.

3.8 The logistical consequences of such mitigations will continue to be monitored, in particular the risk to the timings of any of the scheduled Board of Examiners. The potential impact on any graduation ceremonies would be reviewed regularly, and if necessary the University Taught Examination Board would meet to support the achievement of such deadlines.

3.9 A set of activities to support local and faculty examination boards would be undertaken including guidance notes and frameworks, briefings for chairs, training for secretaries (particularly in the matter of minute taking) and the development of a suite of additional examination reports to support academic decision-making in individual and cohort cases.

3.10 A task and finish group to deal with Appeals was being set up to consist of staff from Faculties, Academic Registry and the Secretary’s Office as it was anticipated that the number of appeals was likely to be large. Members noted that the University had yet to establish its modus operandi but it was likely to include greater cross-department working to ensure that appeals are dealt with fairly, consistently and efficiently.

3.11 The Vice-Chancellor thanked those academic and professional services staff who continued to work on the aftermath of the industrial action to safeguard students’ outcomes.

3.12 Further, members noted that many students had their learning and preparation for assessment disrupted this year by industrial action. To help remedy this, the University was putting on a number of extra activities and services to support their studies,
including financial assistance, study and study skills support, understanding fair assessment and the strike, careers support, and mental & physical wellbeing support for academic success. The Programme had been drawn up from student suggestions and was being funded by the salaries withheld during the recent industrial action. More information could be found on the website: www.bristol.ac.uk/students/support-2018.

Re-designation of the Centre for Applied Anatomy
3.13 Senate NOTED that the proposal to re-designate the Centre for Applied Anatomy within the Faculty of Health Sciences was rejected by UMT at their meeting on 16 April, pending confirmation from the Governance Review Steering Group as to what constitutes a Centre versus a School. Senate were therefore not required to recommend the proposal to the Board of Trustees at this stage.

Research grants and awards
3.14 The Pro Vice-Chancellor Research informed Senate of some research grants and rewards, which were in addition to those included in the Chair's report. They were as follows:

- Five senior researchers from the University of Bristol have been awarded over €10M in European Research Council (ERC) Advanced Grants in recognition of their ‘excellent science’ and potentially ground-breaking research. This figure places the University 3rd in the UK in terms of the number of Advanced Grants awarded from the 2017 call. The five researchers are: Professor Ian Manners (School of Chemistry), Professor Julia O’Connell Davidson (School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies), Professor Mark Szczelkun (School of Biochemistry), Professor Michael Benton (School of Earth Sciences) and Professor Volker Heyd (School of Arts). Finally, a collaborative H2020 project under the Future and Emerging Technologies (FET) theme has also been awarded to Sabine Hauert (Dept. Engineering Mathematics) as a partner, worth €407,000.
- Medical Research Council (MRC) Career Development Fellowship for Borko Amulic (CMM), £1.2m awarded (April 2018).
- Two of our three applications to the Academy of Medical Sciences Springboard Award (Round 3) were successful – Lavinia Paternoster (BMS) and Danielle Paul (PPN).

4. Vice-Chancellor's question time
4.1 There were none.

5. Written questions
5.1 None had been received. Members of Senate were reminded that they can submit written questions in advance of each meeting, for discussion.

6. Faculty Board recommendations
6.1 None had been received.

7. Industrial Strategy: University progress*
7.1 RECEIVED and NOTED: a presentation from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) (on file)).

7.2 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) emphasised that the best approach to succeed in the UK Industrial Strategy and the new funding opportunities it offers was to put resource into engaging with industry, understanding what their needs were, and articulating what the University did.
7.3 Senate agreed to reflect on and provide feedback outside of the meeting on the University priorities in relation to the UK Industrial Strategy, and how best the University could benefit from the Strategy.

8. **Financial presentation**

8.1 RECEIVED and NOTED: a presentation from the Chief Financial Officer on current and future University budget (on file). [REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests].

8.2 Members of Senate noted the financial context in which the University was operating [REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests].

9. **Report of the Standing Committee of Senate**
9.1 RECEIVED and NOTED (SN/17-18/034).

10. **Report of the University Education Committee**
10.1 RECEIVED and NOTED (SN/17-18/035).

10.2 Members noted that the transition to a central University Quality Team approach was as a result of the clear steer given to the University by the Higher Education Review (and the University's recent Governance Review) that this was a requirement to ensure the University had robust university level quality assurance processes. The new approach would be implemented during the next academic year and guidance would be issued when appropriate. Members noted that 2018/19 would be a transitional period for the new process.

11. **Report of the Ethics of Research Committee**
11.1 RECEIVED and NOTED (SN/17-18/036).

12. **Board of Trustees Report**
12.1 RECEIVED (SN/17-18/037).

13. **University Committee Schedule 2018/19**
13.1 RECEIVED and NOTED (SN/17-18/038).

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

15. **Equality of Opportunity, including consideration of Equality Related Risks**
15.1 Senate were invited to record any particular issues regarding Equality and Diversity that it had considered at the meeting. These included, in particular, the issues around staff constraints, timetabling, and Easter holiday dates in 18/19.

16. **Communication and Consultation**
16.1 Senate were invited to record any particular issues regarding communication/consultation that it had considered at the meeting. These included, in particular, communication around the Easter vacation dates in 2018/19, and the consultation on the Structure of the academic year review.

17. **Quality Assurance**
17.1 Senate were invited to record any particular issues regarding Quality Assurance that it had considered at the meeting. These included, in particular, the report of the Education Committee, specifically the new UQT approach.
18. **Date of next meeting**

18.1 The date of the next meeting of Senate is due to take place on Monday 11 June 2018, 1400, in the Helen Wodehouse Building, 35 Berkeley Square, 4.10.