

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Friday 05 July 2019

Burges Salmon, One Glass Wharf, Bristol, BS2 0ZX

MINUTES

Present: Mr J Boyer (Chair), Professor H Brady (Vice-Chancellor), Ms K Ashley, Professor A Carr, Ms J Cecil, Professor S Ellwood, Ms L Fletcher, Dr M Hamlin, Mr N Joicey, Dr J Khawaja, Mr J Palmer, Professor G Macdonald, Mr J McAlinden *part meeting*, Ms N McCabe, Mr M Saddiq, Professor J Squires (Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC) and Provost), Professor K Syrett.

In attendance: Professor J Iredale (Pro-Vice Chancellor (PVC) – Health) *part meeting*, Mr R Kerse (Chief Operating Officer (COO)), Professor G Orpen (DVC New Campus Development) *part meeting*, Ms L Parr (Registrar & Secretary), Ms H Quinn (Clerk and Head of Governance)

Apologies: Dr J Manley, Mr A Poolman (Treasurer), Dr A Raffel,

1 WELCOMES, APOLOGIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1.1 The Chair declared the meeting as quorate and welcomed the trustees to the meeting
- 1.2 The Board APPROVED on the recommendation of the Nominations Committee, the appointment of Mr Jack McAlinden and Mr Jason Palmer as student trustees from 1 July 2019 until 31 June 2020.
- 1.3 It was noted that the Chair had APPROVED using Chair's powers, the appointment of Prof Sarah Purdy as the new Bristol Students' Union (SU) Nominated Trustee from 1st July 2019 to 1st July 2022.
- 1.4 The Chair reminded the Board of the papers which had been circulated electronically and informed the Board that the COO would combine agenda item 9 with parts of item 13 to enable all discussion of pensions within the Pensions Update (item 9). It was also agreed that items 16 and 18 would be reordered.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- 2.1 Mr N Joicey declared an interest in item 9. Dr M Hamlin & Mr M Saddiq declared an interest in item 14.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- 3.1 The minutes were APPROVED as a fair and accurate record of the meeting of 31 May 2019 subject to amendments.

4 MATTERS ARISING AND ACTIONS

- 4.1 Minute 9.2 – the requested presentation on Campus Heart and New Library is planned for the November meeting.
- 4.2 It was noted that the Executive have scheduled time at the UMT residential to strategically prioritise future developments

5 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT (reference BT/18-19/081)

5.1 NOTED:

- There has been little evidence of civil service preparation, or political traction in relation to the 'Augur' report. It was unlikely that recommendations will be implemented until after a general election, if at all. However, there would be a danger that selected recommendations could be implemented without any replacement

funding commitment. The Russell Group have focussed on building evidence for investment in quality, explaining the cost of provision, providing evidence of the impact of the freeze of the unit of resource and developing thinking on alternative funding systems.

- Confirmation has been received that EU students starting in 2020/21 will have home fee status and access to financial support. BEIS have been developing plans for alternative research and innovation schemes if the UK does not associate with Horizon Europe. Chris Skidmore has commissioned, and the Russell Group have contributed to, a report to consider alternative funding bodies. This report is likely to recommend three new funding streams: a Discovery fund (proposed £1bn over 7 years), a Global Collaboration Fund on grand challenge and an Innovation Fund supporting entrepreneurship. While it is encouraging that options have been explored, the Russell Group position is that this would be an inferior arrangement.
- That recent political discourse has suggested that the next Prime Minister would support a more permissive immigration regime for students and staff. There has been strong cross-party support to re-introduce Post-Study Work Visas and remove students from the net migration target. The Home Secretary has requested a review of the £30,000 salary threshold Tier 2 visas.
- That UCU rejected the UCEA pay offer and are balloting for industrial action and this will be further addressed in item 9.
- Board members expressed concern about EU research collaboration in light of Brexit and discussed possible mitigation. The Vice Chancellor also answered questions regarding current political unrest in Hong Kong, loss of key quantum physics posts to the US and the Augur report.

6 STRATEGIC ITEM 1 – DRAFT PEOPLE STRATEGY 2020-25 (reference BT/18-19/082)

6.1 NOTED:

- That the strategy is in the early stages and has been brought to the Board for insight and feedback. It addresses the Staff and Ways of Working theme in the University strategy and provides a strategic framework for the People Plan (which has already been approved by Senate).
- That the external context was well explored, but clarity is required in relation to how the themes relate to the context, and in defining the goals and objectives and how they will be measured. The strategy will not be completed within the two remaining years of the University Strategy.
- That consistency and interaction between each of the 6 sub strategies had been taken forward by the DVC and this would be embedded in planning processes. The six sub-strategies will be in place by March 2020, but this one could be in place earlier. The Board recommended benchmarking best practice in this area, including outside of the sector.
- That even if a separate professional services charter were developed, a partnership approach is required and values and behaviours should apply consistently to both groups of staff.
- The proposed next steps include the further consultation on the Strategy to ensure that it aligns with and facilitates the objectives in the other five themes in the University Strategy, plus development of a Delivery Plan and Monitoring Dashboard.
- The Board were reassured that there would be full consultation with staff and Unions, and that their comments regarding measurable outcomes and internal communications would be addressed.

ACTION: Board members were encouraged to send detailed feedback to the DVC & Provost and the Chief People Officer

7 National Student Survey (NSS) (reference BT/19-19/097).

7.1 NOTED:

- This year's results were released on the 3 July and the Board are receiving an initial analysis only at this point. The NSS results are an influential source of public information which are publicly available as well as contributing to league tables and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).
- Results have improved for overall satisfaction and across all question sets, almost back to 2016 levels, and are one point above the sector average. **[REDACTED: information intended for future publication]**.
- The NSS results contribute three years of data to the TEF on a rolling basis. Until the relevant benchmark is published, it is not possible to predict the full impact of these results, however it is likely that negative flags would remain in the same three areas, leading to a prediction of an initial hypothesis of a Bronze award. **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**.
- The PVC (Education) will lead an evidence-based process with Faculty Education Directors, focussing on 12 programmes, to enable them to intervene meaningfully in support of a better educational experience for students. **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**.
- The Board commended an evidence based, local approach and noted the importance of linking this work to other activity and to available feedback and management information.

ACTION: PVC Education to circulate full analysis and plans for action electronically to the Board once complete.

8 DENTAL SCHOOL OPTIONS (reference **BT/18-19/083**)

8.1 **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**

8.2 **[REDACTED: information intended for future publication]**

9 PENSIONS UPDATE (reference **BT/18-19/084**)

Secretary's note: substantive discussion on the pensions issues have been recorded as per the agenda under agenda item 13.3. Mr N Joicey withdrew for this item

9.1 RESOLVED: the Executive to proceed with the implementation of the Pensions Strategy, specifically to give further consideration to enrolling new staff into UBGPP at a higher contribution rate and encouraging existing staff to increase their contribution levels

10 BOARD AND BOARD COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE (reference **BT/18-19/085**)

10.1 APPROVED the Terms of Reference as attached in Appendix 1 subject to the following amendments;

- Addition of the Prevent agenda to the list of Policies & Procedures
- Addition of Equality & Diversity to the Statement of Primary Responsibilities
- Addition of reference to Sustainability

10.2 APPROVED the Standing Orders as attached in Appendix 2.

11 DVC & PROVOST REPORT (reference **BT/18-19/086**)

11.1 NOTED.

- Professor Simon Tormey has been recruited to replace Professor Paddy Ireland as Dean of Social Sciences & Law.
- Changes in educational governance, specifically the separation of postgraduate research (PGR) and taught programmes with a new Associate PVC PGR, had been implemented.
- Senate had approved the Academic Promotions Framework
- Improvements in representation of female academic staff at Associate Professor and Professorial levels had been made following this year's promotions cycle.

11.2 APPROVED the extension of the term of office for Professor John Iredale as the PVC for Health from 18 January 2020 until 18 February 2022.

12 REGISTRAR'S REPORT (reference BT/18-19/087)

12.1 NOTED:

- Across UG programmes, we were continuing to perform well against target and sector though there would be a need to balance numbers in high and lower performing programmes and to review near miss applications and those received in clearing in order to meet target.
- PG home recruitment remained challenging but that international applications were buoyant.
- Philanthropic giving continued to perform above target.
- A Schedule of delegation was currently being developed and would be presented to a later meeting

13 COO UPDATE REPORT (reference BT/18-19/088)

Secretary's note: Mr N Joicey withdrew for this item

13.1 NOTED:

- The COO confirmed that the financial results reflect significant decisions required around the USS pension (Item 9). End of year results will be in line with the budget and financial strategy and he confirmed that although appropriate action is being taken, student recruitment will be the key in-year issue for 2019/20.
- **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests].**

13.2 APPROVED: the parameters for the conclusion of the 2018 UBPAS valuation and DELEGATED AUTHORITY to the COO to negotiate and sign the valuation agreements in line with the position presented in the report

13.3 In relation to the USS Pension Scheme, the following was NOTED.

- USS valuation for 2018 was late and a further valuation is likely in 2020 as part of the preferred package to complete the current valuation.
- USS is a last person standing scheme, which means that employers are joint and separately liable. An independent firm has been engaged to make an assessment of the covenant and the strength of the employers. Trinity College Cambridge has recently announced its intention to leave scheme, and a moratorium is proposed so that no further employers can leave until the scheme rules relating to employer exit are reviewed as part of the next valuation.
- USS have requested debt monitoring information from employers and to be informed of any new secured debt (e.g. mortgage). The Board agreed with the Executive that this request is reasonable, but concurred with the COO that the proposed obligation for universities to grant security to USS on a pari passu basis if they take on further secured debt requires further exploration. The COO was asked to reduce the strength of the University's support for this proposal in the employer consultation response to be submitted to UUK.
- The Joint Evaluation Panel has not gained much traction with the USS trustees and there have been allegations of misconduct. More time is needed to allow for work of the Panel to develop.
- The University works through Universities UK (UUK) to advise on the USS position, and will continue to work collaboratively with the sector and lobby as a group. A commitment was made after the last industrial action to fight on behalf of employees and it is understood that staff value the USS scheme.

13.4 APPROVED the proposed submission to the UUK employer consultation, subject to reducing the level of current support for giving USS pari passu status with any new secured creditors.

13.5 **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests].**

13.6 **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests].**

ACTION: A presentation on IT, cybersecurity & disaster recovery would be scheduled for a future meeting.

14 CHAIR'S REPORT (reference BT/18-19/076).

Secretary's note: Mr M Sadiq and Dr M Hamlin withdrew for the first item.

14.1 APPROVED BY SPECIAL RESOLUTION the extension, by one further year, of the terms of office for Moira Hamlin and Mohammed Saddiq, from 1 January 2020 until 31 December 2020.

15 STUDENT MATTERS

15.1 University of Bristol Student Union Budget 2019/20 (reference **BT/18-19/090**)

15.1.2 APPROVED the Bristol SU budget for 2019/20

15.2 University of Bristol Student Union: Five-Year Review of Articles of Association (reference **BT/18-19/091**).

Secretary's note: Mr Jason Palmer withdrew from the meeting for this item, as an employee of the Students' Union

15.2.3 APPROVED minor updates to the Student Agreement for 2019/20

15.2.4 APPROVED minor updates to the Student Intellectual Property Policy for 2019/20

15.2.5 NOTED the Student Protection Plan 2019/20 which is un-changed following a review of its content.

15.3 Student Complaints Annual Report 2017/18 (reference **BT/18-19/093**).

15.3.2 NOTED the report.

- That the format and content of the report would be reviewed and in future should include reporting against specific groups, as well as over time, looking at the reporting from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) as best practice,

16 REPORT FROM THE REMUNERATION COMMITTEE (reference BT/18-19/094).

Secretary's note: The Executive withdrew from the meeting for discussion of this item.

16.1 NOTED:

- For future meetings, recommendations will only be considered if they include a clear analysis of progress made against objectives
- The Chair is undertaking to contact other Chairs of University Remuneration Committees to consider how Bristol compares in relation to the sector. This will allow for improvements to be considered in terms of justification, benchmarking and agreement on budget.
- The Committee had agreed an increase in the Vice Chancellor's pay in line with the sector median, noting that for the previous three years, the Vice Chancellor has only received the national pay award. The Board discussed the sector variation in Vice Chancellor pay and noted the challenge of normalising across very different institutions and alternative ways of rewarding excellence.

17 REPORT FROM THE NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE (reference BT/18-19/095).

17.1 NOTED:

- The committee had endorsed a list of organisations to form the 'Nominated Members' category on Court, noting the opportunity for 20 further additional members appointed on an annual basis
- The committee agreed a fit and proper persons process

- The recent lay member recruitment round was not successful and another round of recruitment will be undertaken.

17.2 APPROVED the role description and appointment process for Pro Chancellors and the Court terms of reference and member role descriptions.

18. IT COMMITTEE CLOSEDOWN REPORT (reference BT/18-19/096)

18.1 NOTED the report and thanks to the Chair and committee members.

19. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

19.1 Noted that the issue of recording meetings was with the legal team for advice

19.2 That a list of acronyms would be added to the Reading Pack for future meetings