

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Friday 1st April 2022

Meeting held online via Zoom

MINUTES

Present: Mr J Boyer (Chair), Professor H Brady (Vice-Chancellor) until 1430, Ms G Bowen, Mrs K Bright, Professor A Carr, Ms J Cecil, Dr S Clarke, Ms L Fletcher, Dr J Khawaja, Mr A Poolman (Treasurer), Mr F Quek, Dr Andreas Raffel, Professor C Relton, Mr M Saddiq, Mr S Robertson, Professor J Squires (Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC) Provost), and Mr K Sithamparapillai

In attendance: Hannah Quinn (Head of Governance), Robert Kerse (Chief Operating Officer), Lucinda Parr (Registrar and University Secretary), Keith Woolley (Chief Information Officer) for item 7, Professor Pat Capps (Faculty Research Director SSL) for item 8, Professor Therese O'Toole (Head of School, Sociology, Politics & International Studies) for item 8

Apologies: Dr M Bhabuta, Mr N Joicey

1 WELCOMES, APOLOGIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1.1 The Chair welcomed members and noted apologies.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

2.1 There were none.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

3.1 The minutes of the previous meetings of the Board of Trustees on 4 February and 16 March 2022 were APPROVED as a fair and accurate record.

4 ACTIONS & MATTERS ARISING

4.1 NOTED progress on outstanding items

5 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT AND QUESTIONS

5.1 The following points were NOTED:

5.1.1 That in relation to the pandemic, the South West was seeing high case rates and rising hospitalisations but ICU admissions were not of significant concern.

5.1.2 That in relation to the situation in the Ukraine, partnerships with Russia and Ukraine had been reviewed and support for students and staff provided. There was a broader sectoral issue about the management of collaborations with autocratic regimes, which was also being considered by government. UUK had commissioned Peter Matheson, a previous Dean of Health Science at Bristol to advise.

5.1.3 The importance of Horizon Europe association even within post-Brexit limits. The need for the UK to be part of a larger community of research for access to funding, technology and partners. That full association with Horizon Europe had not been achieved, despite it being a government objective and this was linked to the Northern Ireland protocol. That full association was still possible and desirable. There was sectoral frustration at the time taken to resolve the issue, and the limitations of the government underwrite and the Russell Group would continue to lobby government around these issues.

- 5.1.4 The new UKRI strategy which had an equal focus on discovery and applied research. Areas of focus aligned well with the University strategy with an increased focus on national networks and clusters. Innovate UK had seen an increase in funding and there was a real focus on how we translate our discoveries and scale up partnerships. The importance of collaboration locally and nationally and the importance of the Bristol Innovations initiative.
 - 5.1.5 The new Wellcome Trust strategy which aligned well with Bristol's strategy in three key areas - climate & health, anti-microbial resistance and mental health. That the University had significant activity in Neuroscience and Neurology, which could be focussed and shaped to meet the mental health area.
 - 5.1.6 The Registrar & University Secretary provided a further update on Covid response. During weekly reporting of case rates throughout March, staff and students had shown a lower case rate than the national picture. That reporting had been paused from 1st April due to the removal of free testing. On campus measures including hand sanitizers and specialist cleaning would be retained, and guidance on face coverings would be aligned with government advice.
 - 5.1.7 Recent national media around unacceptable behaviour of medical students at a student ball, organised by the medical student society Galenicals. A small group of students with direct involvement have been identified and would be subject to Fitness to Practice proceedings by the Faculty. An incident review was being undertaken.
 - 5.1.8 The DVC & Provost noted the measures in place to support the situation in Ukraine. A website had been established for guidance and resources, support sessions had been arranged in the Global Lounge and all students studying in Russia for language placements had returned. The hardship fund and Sanctuary Scholarships fund had been increased. The University was also working with established schemes for academics and with Bristol City Council on a city-based approach to hosting refugees.
- 5.2 The following points were DISCUSSED:
- 5.2.1 The importance of strategic research partnerships and how they were identified
 - 5.2.2 The welcome focus on mental health and the need to understand how Bristol could find a unique space in the sector.
 - 5.2.3 The sea change in relation to Innovate UK funding and new mechanisms which may be less familiar.
 - 5.2.4 The importance of including levelling up in our work, including how we can meet societal changes and find parity.
 - 5.2.5 The importance of the appointment of Associate PVCs in the research space, and the need to ensure our focus on investment is clear and evidence based. The challenges of moving quickly with Bristol Innovations and a balance of consultation and agility. That the Board was supportive of the initiative, and that it would be considered alongside the strategy prioritisation process.
 - 5.2.6 The recent Audit Committee meeting and tour of NCC, including concerns about the shortfall in the research pipeline. The Vice-Chancellor acknowledged the impact of the pandemic on research was shared across the sector, and had led to fewer bids being made.
- 5.3 The COO and the Vice-Chancellor spoke to the approach to pay, supported by a presentation. The following points were NOTED:
- 5.3.1 That Brexit, the pandemic, the situation in Ukraine and the recent Industrial Action had led to a significant staff morale issue which needed to be addressed
 - 5.3.2 That alongside the need to address staff workload, there was a real concern about pay, on which the Board's advice was sought.
 - 5.3.3 That the sector was currently in consultation with UCEA for the next pay award. **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**
 - 5.3.4 That the pay award for staff was made up of two elements, the cost-of-living increase which was negotiated nationally via UCEA and the automatic pay scale increment on the anniversary of joining the institution. However, 40% of staff were already at the top of that scale and would only be eligible to receive the

- cost-of-living increment. The ability to revive additional discretionary pay scale points for colleagues who were at the top of the scale.
- 5.3.5 The position of the Trades Unions who were seeking a pay award of at least inflation (RPI) plus 2%, on all pay points, a minimum wage of £12 per hour for all (our lowest is £10.50 (Real Living Wage)), an increase in all pay-related allowances including London weighting. The University had already met two of the demands which were to become Living Wage Foundation accredited employers and a 35-hour working week for all staff.
 - 5.3.6 That options included the award of discretionary pay points, and/or an unconsolidated pay award to staff this year. **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**
 - 5.3.7 That Home Undergraduate tuition fee rate would not increase before 2025, however, there was significant inflationary pressure on staff pay.
- 5.4 The following points were DISCUSSED
- 5.4.1 Trustees questioned whether there would be a one size fits all solution, and whether the initiatives discussed met the needs of all colleagues impacted. It was suggested that a more segmented solution would be appropriate.
 - 5.4.2 That issues with workload would not be solved by a pay related initiative
 - 5.4.3 The pilot underway in the Medical School to provide bridge funding between externally funded contracts, which had been oversubscribed.
 - 5.4.4 **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**
 - 5.4.5 That the two elements of pay should not be conflated. An acknowledgement that staff worked incredibly hard through difficult circumstances and to not be able to offer the cost-of-living increase would be at odds with our commitment to staff.
 - 5.4.6 That the cost of reviving the discretionary increments was relatively small in comparison to the ongoing impact on staff morale.
 - 5.4.7 Whether there was any way to consider benefits alongside pay, and to monetise relevant benefits
 - 5.4.8 Trustees expressed a reluctance to use structural solutions to temporary problems.
 - 5.4.9 Staff Trustees echoed the morale of the staff, acknowledging that a poor outcome from the UCEA negotiations would have further impact. That any loss of morale could take significant time and effort to be addressed.
 - 5.4.10 The need for parity with academic and professional services interventions, noting that while academic progression had continued, the merit pay scheme for professional services staff had not re-opened.
 - 5.4.11 The Board agreed the importance of recognising the contribution of staff.

6 STRATEGY RISK FOCUS: PENSIONS (reference BT/21-22/043)

- 6.1 RECEIVED the paper. The Chief Operating Officer (Robert Kerse) introduced the item.
- 6.2 The following points were NOTED
 - 6.2.1 That there were two dimensions to the pensions risk – financial and in relation to staff morale and being a good employer.
 - 6.2.2 That the University's defined contribution scheme which was open to lower grade staff, had made changes to its benefit structure to provide opportunity for achieving employer contribution equity with USS and investment strategy which had been well received.
 - 6.2.3 That defined benefit schemes were increasingly expensive to operate and subject to additional regulation. Shortfalls had been reported since the 1990s changes to valuation methodologies and market positions. The USS pension scheme was one of the University's most significant risk to people and finances.
 - 6.2.4 That some of our staff were also enrolled in the NHS pension scheme, which was government backed.
 - 6.2.5 The UBPAS scheme which had been set up in the 1970s to mirror the USS scheme and had been closed. The strategy was to pay down the deficit on that scheme, then purchase an insurance policy to take over the remaining liabilities,

likely be within the next 10 years. Despite the high levels of hedging assets and liabilities, there was still a level of volatility in each valuation of the scheme. The scheme had changed the trustee from individuals to a professional trustee company. There was a risk in relation to the 2021 valuation, which would return to FIC.

6.2.6 That UCU were balloting for further industrial action in relation to benefit changes and pay. The 2020 valuation had shown a significant deficit and valuations were only representative for a particular point in time. That it was a significant exercise to revalue a scheme and it was not beneficial to do this too frequently. That trustees were under pressure to manage the current deficit and reduce the risk of it increasing.

6.2.7 That Defined Benefit schemes were rare outside of the public and quasi-public sectors, but were hugely valuable to staff, and a key attractor for some professional services staff who wouldn't be able to access a similar scheme anywhere else. That there was significant institutional value but the scheme needed reform and change, particularly in three areas – governance, solutions for lower earners and alternatives for risk sharing.

6.3 The following were DISCUSSED

6.3.1 The collective nature of the USS pension scheme where all employers issued a cross guarantee for all liabilities, although this was low risk as there was implied government support for the sector. That 200 of the 340 members of the pension scheme were not HEIs and were not asset-backed. Should these smaller members become insolvent, it would increase the share of liabilities for other members. The USS Trustee had a veto on larger members leaving the scheme if it was not considered to be in the interest of the scheme members.

6.3.2 The rationale for changing the trustee for the UPBAS. That the chair had stepped down and that trustee retention and selection was increasingly challenging. Many solutions had been considered and a professional trustee company was now in place, with two named individuals, who were actuaries, as trustees. That Bristol was further ahead in relation to peer institutions and had closed its scheme in advance of others.

6.3.3 The recently published interim USS monitoring report which suggested that the pension deficit had been significantly reduced, and how this could impact discussions. That the report was not a full actuarial valuation and therefore should be considered with some caution. USS had separately indicated an increase in costs of providing future defined benefits. That a joint statement had been issued with UCU, calling for a new valuation. If there were any improvement in position, this should be passed back to staff.

6.3.4 That the University were making our voice known in different ways including directly to the USS Trustee and had proposed solutions and attempted to shift the discussion.

6.3.5 The implications of the inflationary environment on this risk. That benefits were inflation linked and this had led to part of the increase in future costs.

6.3.6 The moratorium on leaving the scheme which was set at 20 years

6.3.7 That although the financial risks were measurable, there were really significant effects on staff satisfaction and morale. That the cost of USS pension contributions was equivalent to a year's worth of home undergraduate tuition fees, and that fee income would not change for at least three years.

7. STRATEGY RISK FOCUS: CYBERSECURITY (reference BT/21-22/044)

7.1 RECEIVED the paper. Keith Woolley, the CIO, spoke to this item.

7.2 The following issues were NOTED:

7.2.1 That despite the challenging environment, progress had been made in controlling the risk. That threats had been seen across the sector, although Bristol had not been the subject of a successful targeted attack. That the Board could be assured that all appropriate action was being taken.

7.2.2 Disaster recovery capabilities, which were significantly improved from 2019, still had significant further developments to be delivered. **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]** While Bristol was in a better position than many, there was still work to do.

7.3 The following issues were DISCUSSED

7.3.1 The impact of the situation in Ukraine and additional hostile traffic to the sector. Two recent fishing attempts purporting to seek help for Ukraine. Geo-isolation had been used to block hostile traffic from known addresses in Russia and the situation was subject to 24-hour monitoring

7.3.2 The ability to deal with increasing demands from the research community in relation to the use of big data and bespoke computing. The CIO noted a skill set challenge and the recruitment of the CSO from the academic community to encourage working across boundaries and engagement with the academic community. The need to consider the University as a research and development organisation and address individual requirements in different areas. The difficulty of recruiting colleagues with particular skills and work with HR colleagues to address this. The intention to rebuild the customer service offering and to ensure that Faculty IT Services Teams were operating at the required level to support academic colleagues. Focus groups had been held with academics to better understand what was needed.

7.3.3 The target timeline for recovery of key systems and the ability to meet it. The CIO noted consultation about expectations for recovery, some of which had been impractical. Further discussion was underway to refine timelines in terms of what was deliverable, and in prioritisation of service recovery. More understanding of the ability to meet expectations would be available after the conclusion of testing, which would be externally facilitated and provide honest feedback to support the development of the approach. That any new systems were built to comply with disaster recovery objectives.

7.3.4 That the Log4j issue was now addressed. That multifactor authentication was in place for all staff, but still being deployed to students.

7.3.5 The vulnerability around end-of-life devices. The CIO noted a new programme plan to accelerate progress. Despite significant improvement, this it remained an issue in some areas.

7.3.6 That the CUC Audit Chairs group considered cyber as a significant risk to the sector, and the Audit Committee were pleased to see the progress made in this area since 2019, particularly given the challenges of the pandemic.

7.3.7 That Bristol had contracted a third-party to provide 24-7 support whilst most peers had insourced this activity. That policy, process and culture were managed internally, while protection was delivered externally. This mixed model has worked well and Bristol had not been as affected as other institutions in relation to cyber-attacks and ransomware.

7.3.8 The recruitment of a communications manager dedicated to educating and engaging colleagues. The importance of the right volume and pace of change for each initiative based on our understanding of our community.

7.4 The Chair thanked the COO and CIO on behalf of the Board, and noted the tangible and critical progress made.

8. SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH

8.1 The DVC & Provost (Judith Squires) introduced the item. Professor Pat Capps (Faculty Research Director SSL) and Professor Therese O'Toole (Head of School, Sociology, Politics & International Studies) attended for this item.

8.2 The following issues were NOTED:

8.2.1 That Professors O'Toole and Capps were presenting on behalf of colleagues in the School of Sociology, Politics & International Studies who were taking Industrial Action.

- 8.2.2 That the Global Insecurities Centre was an interdisciplinary research group in Social Sciences & Law which brought together strengths in politics, international relations and sociology to consider contemporary global insecurities. Their work included resilience, social justice and climate change and consisted of 22 academics, PGR students and a diaspora of emeriti and former employees.
 - 8.2.3 The key initiative around maritime security, including the Safe Seas portal which presented research to security professionals and practitioners, and guidance for policy makers in partnership with the University of Copenhagen. This work had been presented as impact case studies to REF 2014 and 2021 and had attracted funding from ESRC, Impact Acceleration and GCRF. The team had advised policy makers at high levels including the Department for Trade on the 2022 strategy for maritime security and given evidence to the select committee on migration in the English channel, and the role of the military in migrant crossings. The Navy had used some of this evidence to argue against their involvement.
 - 8.2.4 The Centre focussed on participatory and developmental Research with an emphasis on principles of co-production. For example the Somali First initiative which had been running since 2014 with backing from private sector and government to run a series of projects, looking at development through co-production with communities. The initiative was underpinned by GCRF funding which had enabled a generator effect enabling further collaboration and partnerships backed by the Somali government, and dozens of projects including research with Somali nomads, research in the local dialect on the pandemic, an eco-school, professional development for teachers and training Somali researchers to engage with policy makers.
 - 8.2.5 Interdisciplinary work with colleagues in History on a collaborative project for social justice with women's groups in Peru. Quipu developed a collective memory archive for thousands of people, mostly indigenous women, who were sterilised in the 1990s without their consent. 150 testimonies had been collected so far and the project had worked with Amnesty International and local women's groups and had been featured in the media, including a Guardian documentary.
 - 8.2.6 The theme of peace building, which included several projects around the world, including AHRC funded projects with arts-based methods. A major project focussed on West Africa, looking at women's leadership in conflict resolution.
 - 8.2.7 Research on climate change, which was often interdisciplinary with colleagues in STEM subjects. This included the Tomorrow's Cities project with colleagues in Engineering and Earth Sciences which looked at how urban development could be more resilient. A focus on disaster recovery and response, and the launch of a new Masters programme in Climate Change policy and society.
 - 8.2.8 Collaboration and interdisciplinary work around food insecurity and sustainable consumption, working with colleagues in Arts.
 - 8.2.9 The strong international connections and interdisciplinary character of the Centre
- 8.3 The following issues were DISCUSSED
- 8.3.1 The range of funding which the Centre attracted and any concerns or opportunities in relation to the funding environment. Professor O'Toole acknowledged that while the primary source of funding had been from UKRI, they were seeing a diversification of funding streams. A recent ESRC Centre of Excellence had been awarded, and NIHR funding had led to an increased collaboration with the Medical School. A cross faculty bid around gambling addiction had also been submitted.
 - 8.3.2 Any indications of the future direction of the Centre. Opportunities with health research and policy impact were noted. There were aims to grow the Group and create strength at Faculty level, noting the recent award of an ESRC Centre. The potential to work with other URIs including Cabot to progress interdisciplinary research around the environment.
 - 8.3.3 The focus on working with, not for, communities was commended, as was the contribution of the Centre to the Global Civic agenda. The role of Policy Bristol in communicating with policy making audiences was key and there was an ambition to do more in this area, reaching broader audiences.

- 8.3.4 Engagement with the Everyday Integration project for Bristol and relationships with the City and city partners.
 - 8.3.5 The real opportunities to engage in collaborative, interdisciplinary work around the health policy agenda.
 - 8.3.6 The value of Faculty support including the Professional Liaison Network in SSL to provide links for students and colleagues to engage with professionals.
- 8.4 The Chair thanked Professor O'Toole and Professor Capps for their contribution, on behalf of the Board, and noted the value of the item to Board members.

9. HEALTH & SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT (reference BT/21-22/045)

- 9.1 RECEIVED the paper. The Chief Operating Officer (Robert Kerse) introduced the item.
- 9.2 The following issues were DISCUSSED
- 9.2.1 Reference in the appendices to the report of underpopulation of buildings and the impact on fire assistance, egress and access routes. The COO confirmed that access routes had to be kept clear. In relation to fire wardens, there had been a significant change in how we utilised buildings and cover was being reviewed, however this was not considered a direct risk to building inspections undertaken by Avon Fire & Rescue, but was an integral part of our fire safety plan.
 - 9.2.2 The University's position in relation to cladding. The COO reported that there were no residual issues and the University had taken a cautious approach to cladding, particularly in relation to residential properties. The cladding at Clifton Hill House had been replaced even though it was not legally required, and several residential lease properties had cladding replaced three years ago. Noted the new building safety bill and potential actions to address, which would be reviewed in more detail.
 - 9.2.3 The trial of the lone worker system in the Bristol Medical School, which aimed to address a historic lack of consistent approach, but had been paused for six months and was due to be relaunched.
 - 9.2.4 Trustees commended the positive and pragmatic approach taken by colleagues in Health & Safety particularly during the pandemic.
- 9.3 APPROVED the Health and Safety Annual Report 2020/21.

10. ANNUAL QUALITY & STANDARDS REPORT (reference BT/21-22/046)

- 10.1 RECEIVED the paper. The DVC & Provost (Judith Squires) introduced the item
- 10.2 The following issues were DISCUSSED
- 10.2.1 The postgraduate student surveys (PRES and PTES) and how these would be shared with the Board. The DVC & Provost noted the inability to benchmark these results but that they would be included in SPI data presented to the Board.
 - 10.2.2 The usefulness of the Blue unit feedback as a likely lead indicator for performance, and how it might correlate with the NSS. The DVC & Provost indicated that this would return to the Board in more detail in the longer term, once enough data was available, and would be included in the SPI data in the shorter term.
 - 10.2.3 Whether the NSS taskforce, which had been stood down in some areas, would be restarted. This was an annual decision based on risk and workload and would be reviewed after the NSS results were received.
 - 10.2.4 Whether the lack of proctoring and the degree mitigation package might unusually inflate degree classifications and whether attempts to remove mitigations would lead to concerns from students. The DVC & Provost confirmed that proctoring was only made available where required for accreditation purposes and this was felt to be the correct balance, but there had been an increase in plagiarism cases. That mitigation had moved from the original safety net model to the current, more robust approach. The

change in terminology and removal of the term “safety net” had not been immediately popular. In relation to grade inflation, it had been less significant than other institutions and should transition out.

10.2.5 That completion rates for Blue would return to the Board as part of the Curriculum deep dive.

ACTION: DVC & Provost

10.2.6 The likely impact on NSS scores from graduating students this year in view of their disrupted experiences, and whether there were any mitigations that could be offered. The DVC & Provost noted that there were no real actions at this point which could mitigate the cumulative impacts of the pandemic and industrial action. While staff had done an excellent job to deliver in exceptional circumstances, this had not always met student expectations and would be expected to be reflected in NSS results.

10.2.7 The level of Board discussion of NSS results over time, with a lack of significant improvement. Whether more could be done to share good practice around the institution. The DVC & Provost noted the significant amount of activity in this area, including curriculum festivals and sharing best practice through the Curriculum Enhancement and Student Experience Programmes. It was noted that challenges persist including the scale of delivery, particularly when managing unplanned growth impacts the ability to respond positively to student demand.

10.2.8 The issue of quality of feedback, which was key to our top 10 ambitions. The DVC & Provost confirmed that assessment and feedback was a key focus of all the curriculum work we do, including TESTA. A consultation was underway in relation to the structure of the academic year, which would move the academic calendar to two 10-week teaching blocks and 2 assessment periods, streamlining and reducing the volume of assessment.

10.3 APPROVED the annual report on quality assurance to the Board of Trustees.

11. TEMPLE QUARTER UPDATE REPORT (reference BT/21-22/047)

11.1 RECEIVED the paper. The Chief Operating Officer (Robert Kerse) introduced the item.

11.2 The following issues were NOTED:

11.2.1 That the initial RPIF money had been spent by the deadline and a further £2.3m RPIF grant had been awarded to improve sustainability. A donation of £1m had been secured from Garfield Weston

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

11.3 The following issues were DISCUSSED

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

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

12. CHAIR'S REPORT (reference BT/21-22/048)

12.1 RECEIVED the paper. The Chair of the Board, Jack Boyer, introduced the item.

12.2 NOTED the update from the Effectiveness Review.

12.3 ORDERED the Vice-Chancellor to enact Ordinance 9 (previously Ordinance 17).

12.4 NOTED the decisions taken between meetings.

3. REPORT FROM COO (reference BT/21-22/049)

13.1 RECEIVED the paper. The Chief Operating Officer (Robert Kerse) introduced the item.

13.2 The following items were NOTED

13.2.1 The challenges of inflation and increased pay, energy and construction costs.

- 13.2.2 That the next few months were a critical period of decision making and direction setting. FIC and the Board would consider Faculty future plans as part of the Fit for the Future programme and the budget would be presented to Board in May, also via FIC.
 - 13.2.3 Potential volatility in recruitment and a lack of information in relation to A Levels this summer. Challenges in relation to China's approach to managing Covid **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**
 - 13.2.4 Tax implications in relation to delivering online education into China and the need to manage this situation carefully alongside any other activity in China.
- 13.3 The following points were DISCUSSED:
- 13.3.1 The financial performance for the seven months ended 28 February 2022 and the forecast financial outcome for 2021/22
 - 13.3.2 The ongoing industrial disputes in relation to pay and pensions, which represented both a significant risk to student experience and staff morale.
 - 13.3.3 **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**
 - 13.3.4 The good take up from staff of opportunities for national Mental Health Day
 - 13.3.5 The difficulty in filling vacancies, while staff turnover remained low.
 - 13.3.6 That Bristol UCU was the 6th largest branch in the country, and was a community with strong solidarity. That industrial action was part of the history and values of the city and Bristol was often quicker to action.
 - 13.3.7 Whether the Executive intended to continue to withhold pay for Action Short of a Strike for future periods of strike action. The COO confirmed that this would be reviewed for each phase of action with the objective of protecting the student experience.
 - 13.3.8 That there remained the need to resolve hybrid delivery for students unable to travel and any tax implications
- 13.4 APPROVED the proposed amendments to the Financial Regulations.
- 14. REPORT FROM DVC & PROVOST (reference BT/21-22/050)**
- 14.1 RECEIVED the paper. The DVC & Provost (Judith Squires) introduced the item.
- 14.2 NOTED the report of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost.
- 14.3 The following points were NOTED:
- 14.3.1 That the Faculty of Engineering restructure would be considered at the next Board meeting.
 - 14.3.2 The progress in graduate outcomes
 - 14.3.3 The Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap reports.
 - 14.3.4 Progress on research bids. Notwithstanding the challenges, there had been success with large research bids and the next phase of the research pipeline showed more positive movement.
- 14.4 The following points were DISCUSSED:
- 14.4.1 Progress in recruitment for the Head of the Business School, which had not yet concluded.
 - 14.4.2 Whether there would be any reconfiguration of the TESTA project. This was considered to be unlikely as it has performed well.
 - 14.4.3 The level of staff engagement in the Curriculum Enhancement Programme. The DVC noted that this varied by School, particularly those which have struggled with unplanned growth.
 - 14.4.4 That while excellent progress had been made in relation to pay gaps, there was still progress to make. Noted the reduction of the median ethnicity pay gap to 0% and sought a disaggregated breakdown of the data. The DVC & Provost confirmed that disaggregated data was being analysed and discussed internally to consider differences within the BAME group, enabling targeted interventions. The disaggregated data was not being shared more widely due to the small numbers of colleagues in some areas and the risk of

identification. Trustees discussed the importance of both reports having the same priority.

- 14.4.5 The award of impact acceleration accounts, which was a useful and substantial sum and had increased.
- 14.4.6 The development of the SPIs and whether they could be presented in a way that would clarify the progress required to become top 50. The opportunity to incorporate the statements of intent approved by University Education Committee (4.1 of the report).

- 14.5 CONSIDERED the minutes of the additional Senate meeting (Appendix 4).
 - 14.5.1 This meeting had been called by Senators in relation to the USS pension. It had been a difficult meeting, and was an indicator of the strength of feeling and hardening of views. The Academic Staff Trustees had been in attendance and reflected the strong feelings shared.
 - 14.5.2 Trustees discussed the disproportionate impact of the pension changes on early career colleagues, and noted their engagement in the campaign.
 - 14.5.3 Further to the Senate meeting, a joint statement with UCU had been agreed and published, which articulated a commitment to work together to resolve the issues.
 - 14.5.4 Trustees questioned whether more consideration was required of highlighting the benefits of contribution schemes rather than benefit schemes, and noted that some lower grade staff had requested to switch pension scheme. The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the workforce was well informed on pension schemes, but the current situation also reflected deep held beliefs about how Universities should run, and concerns about the marketisation and funding of the sector also contributed to the current level of dissatisfaction.

15. REPORT FROM REGISTRAR & UNIVERSITY SECRETARY (reference BT/21-22/051)

- 15.1 RECEIVED the paper. The Registrar & University Secretary (Lucinda Parr) introduced the item.
- 15.2 NOTED the content of the report. NOTED progress in understanding the impact of Industrial Action over time and the provision of additional support for timetabling and HR to maximise data analysis. NOTED that while it was early in the postgraduate admissions cycle, there had been an increase in applications from the rest of the world.
- 15.3 NOTED the Student Union Code of Practice.
- 15.4 The following points were DISCUSSED:
 - 15.4.1 Positive progress against targets in philanthropy
 - 15.4.2 Encouraging indicators in overseas student recruitment and whether anything could be learned. Noted that while there was no shortage of interest, the key indicator would be conversion and arrival.
 - 15.4.3 **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**
 - 15.4.4 The level of engagement of students in the Your Priorities survey, and that the University had funded a post in the Students Union to support engagement with students and engage groups who hadn't responded as well. The survey had resulted in a rich data set which was in the process of being analysed. Outcomes would be assimilated and progressed.

16. REPORT FROM NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE (reference BT/21-22/052)

- 16.1 RECEIVED the paper. The Chair of the Nominations Committee, Jack Boyer, introduced the item.
- 16.2 APPROVED that Jane Khawaja is appointed to Finance & Infrastructure Committee as the Professional Services Member of the Board of Trustees, from 1 April with an initial end date of 31 July 2024.

- 16.3 APPROVED that Freddie Quek is appointed as an additional member to Finance & Infrastructure Committee from 1 April until 31 August 2022.
- 16.4 APPROVED that Freddie Quek is appointed as an additional member to Finance & Infrastructure Committee from 1 April until 31 August 2022.
- 16.5 APPROVED that Ian Craddock is appointed as the Academic Member of the Board of Trustees on the Pensions Task & Finish Group from 1 April until 31 July 2023.
- 16.6 NOTE the use of Chair's Action to renew the membership of Margaret Simmonds-Bird and Michael Pearson onto the Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Oversight Committee.
- 16.7 NOTE the use of Chair's Action to appoint Gillian Bowen to Nominations Committee.
- 16.8 NOTE the use of Chair's Action to appoint Jessica Cecil to Nominations Committee.
- 16.9 NOTED the use of Chair's Action to remove Andreas Raffel from Nominations Committee.
- 16.10 NOTED the use of Chair's Action to appoint Andreas Raffel to Remuneration Committee.
- 16.11 NOTED the use of Chair's Action to remove Jessica Cecil from Remuneration Committee.
- 16.12 NOTED the Report of the Nominations Committee.

17. REPORT FROM AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE

- 17.1 RECEIVED the verbal update. The Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee, Andy Poolman, introduced the item.
- 17.2 The following points were NOTED:
 - 17.2.1 That the Committee, and other Board members had visited the National Composites Centre, where the Committee meeting was held.
 - 17.2.2 The reduction to three red risks in relation to Cybersecurity, Research Income, and Student Wellbeing. There had been discussion of the research income risk and a shortfall in research income. The Committee had been provided with additional information since the meeting and would follow up to better understand the issues. Cyber would be considered in June and Student wellbeing in October.
 - 17.2.3 The Committee had APPROVED the revised Whistleblowing policy and noted thanks to Jane Bridgwater.

18. REPORT FROM FINANCE & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE (reference BT/21-22/053)

- 18.1 RECEIVED the paper. The Chair of the Finance & Infrastructure Committee, Andreas Raffel, introduced the item.
- 18.2 NOTED the report of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee meetings held on the 10 February and 24 March 2022.
- 18.3 The following points were DISCUSSED:
 - 18.3.1 [REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests].
 - 18.3.2 [REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]
 - 18.3.2 [REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]
 - 18.3.3 [REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests].
 - 18.3.4 [REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]
 - 18.3.5 [REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]

- 18.3.6 The change to FIC Terms of Reference and whether the Board was comfortable with the limits of authority.
- 18.4 APPROVED the change to Ordinance 4, FIC Terms of Reference
- 19. REPORT FROM PENSIONS TASK & FINISH GROUP (reference BT/21-22/054)**
- 19.1 RECEIVED the paper. The Chair of the Pensions Task & Finish Group, Andy Poolman, led on this.
- 19.2 NOTED the report of the Pensions Task and Finish Group held on the 16 February 2022 to consider the UCU proposal, which proposed no reduction in benefits but would have led to higher contributions over time. That the Group had considered representations made by email and from the Trades Union.
- 20. REPORT FROM REMUNERATION COMMITTEE (reference BT/21-22/055)**
- 20.1 RECEIVED the paper. The Chair of the Remuneration Committee, Mohammed Saddiq, led on this.
- 20.2 NOTED the report of the meeting which had been held to consider the remuneration of the incoming Vice-Chancellor. The offer had since been made and accepted.
- 21. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
- 21.1 NOTED the plans for the Board Development Day.
- 22. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETINGS: 26 and 27 May 2022.**