

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Friday 20 September 2019

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

MINUTES

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

In attendance: Professor I Berger (part meeting), Ms L Collins (part meeting), Mr D Jennings (part meeting), Mr R Kerse (Chief Operating Officer (COO), Mr A Monk (part meeting) Mr S O'Connor (part meeting), Ms L Parr (Registrar & Secretary), Ms H Quinn (Clerk and Head of Governance), Professor D Woolfson (part meeting).

Apologies: Professor A Carr, Ms N McCabe,

1 WELCOMES, APOLOGIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1.1 The Chair declared the meeting as quorate and welcomed the trustees to the meeting, noting that the COO report would be moved up the agenda.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

2.1 No new interests were declared.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

3.1 The minutes were APPROVED as a fair and accurate record of the meeting of 05 July 2019.

4 MATTERS ARISING AND ACTIONS

4.1 Minute 19.1 – noted that advice has been received and that meetings will not be recorded

4.2 Minute 19.2 – a list of acronyms has been included in the reading pack.

5 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT (reference BT/19-20/001)

5.1 The Vice-Chancellor introduced the report.

5.2 NOTED that there has been significant political activity around Brexit which is still ongoing, and NOTED welcome changes to the immigration regime for students, including the re-introduction of the two year Post-Study Work Visa.

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

5.4 NOTED that the Senior Team had attended a residential session with Deans and Pro Vice-Chancellors to consider their strategic priorities. The three main priorities are a focus on assessment & feedback, reacting to research challenges and scaling up of international partnerships.

6 KEY UNIVERSITY RISK REVIEW: TEACHING EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK
(reference BT/19-20/002).

- 6.1 The Pro Vice-Chancellor Education introduced this item and the Academic Registrar joined for this item.
- 6.2 NOTED the Key University Risk associated with the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)
- 6.3 NOTED that the TEF was conceived to improve student experience alongside the introduction of tuition fees and consists of metrics and a narrative statement. Dame Shirley Pearce has been undertaking a review of the TEF which has now been delayed.
- 6.4 **[REDACTED: information intended for future publication].**
- 6.5 NOTED the planned interventions to support TEF improvements including Periodic Programme Revalidation, TESTA and Fast track TESTA, Curriculum Cafes and Bristol Futures Curriculum Framework. Directed, firm interventions have been aligned with the likely TEF award for that subject.
- 6.6 **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests].**
- 6.7 **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests].**
- 6.8 ENDORSED the approach taken to manage and mitigate this risk.
- 7 DEVELOPMENT & ALUMNI RELATIONS STRATEGY** (reference **BT/19-20/003**).
- 7.1 The Registrar & University Secretary introduced the item and the Director and Deputy Director of Development & Alumni Relations joined the meeting.
- 7.2 CONSIDERED and COMMENTED on the Development & Alumni Relations strategic direction, priorities and activity
- 7.3 NOTED the four priority areas of the strategic direction Alumni Engagement, Philanthropy, Marketing & Communications and Development Services and the strategic tensions and mitigation in each area.
- 7.4 NOTED the importance of working with Schools & Faculties and the development of an online platform that will allow them to fundraise on their own for specific requests – e.g. PGR studentships.
- 8 SYNTHETIC BIOLOGY RESEARCH AND ENTERPRISE AT BRISTOL: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE** (PowerPoint Presentation)
- 8.1 **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests].**
- 8.2 **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests].**
- 8.3 **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests].**
- 8.4 **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests].**
- 9 WIDENING PARTICIPATION** (reference **BT/19-20/004**)
- 9.1 The presentation was introduced by the Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor and presented by Lucy Collins (Director of Home Recruitment & Conversion) & Doug Jennings (Deputy Director of Home Recruitment and Head of Education Partnerships).
- 9.2 CONSIDERED and ENDORSED an update on the University's progress on widening participation, the Access and Participation Plan (APP) targets for 2020-2024 and the challenges faced to make the required progress.

- 9.3 NOTED that the institution has made significant progress in this area, with Widening Participation now at the heart of the institution. Bristol is sector leading in many areas, particularly in its admissions policies. The 2019 cohort will be more diverse than ever before, with over 70% of undergraduate students coming from state schools.
- 9.4 NOTED the Access & Participation Plan which has been approved by the OFS but who have required enhanced monitoring against our very ambitious targets.

10 MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING ANNUAL REPORT (reference **BT/19-20/005**)

- 10.1 The Pro Vice-Chancellor for Student Experience presented the item and the Deputy Registrar joined the meeting.
- 10.2 CONSIDERED and COMMENTED on the review of student mental health and wellbeing, the progress being made to implement the Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy Action Plan, and the proposed priorities for 2019/20.
- 10.3 NOTED that mental health affects young people across the country and a third of students come to Bristol with existing mental health problems. Marginalised groups and postgraduate students tend to be disproportionately affected. Bristol has contributed significantly to the national agenda, including the sector leading opt-in policy for contacting a designated individual when there are concerns about wellbeing.
- 10.4 NOTED the priorities for the coming academic year around prevention and community building, which will include establishing best practice around personal tutoring and the introduction of an attendance policy. A single point of contact will be introduced for students to contact support services, to enable triage and signposting
- 10.5 DISCUSSED the very low response rate to the student surveys, which, although not uncommon among students, does reduce the usefulness of the data. Further consideration would be given to the timing and ownership of the survey.
- 10.6 DISCUSSED the introduction of Serious Incident Review, which is best practice taken from the NHS. The University is working closely with the NHS to consider how to share best practice and how other institutions may be able to learn from us. The Pro-Vice Chancellor has also met with NHS commissioning groups, and is leading an OFS project on how Universities can work with the NHS.

11 CHAIRS REPORT (reference **BT/19-20/006**)

- 11.1 APPROVED the recommendation of the Nominations Committee, the terms of reference and member role description for the reformed University Court.
- 11.2 NOTED the rest of the report.

12 COO UPDATE REPORT (reference **BT/19-20/007**).

- 12.1 The Chief Operating Officer introduced the report.
- 12.2 NOTED the financial performance for the year ended 31 July 2019, and NOTED that the underlying operating budget had been met and CONSIDERED whether management are taking appropriate levels of action to address areas of underperformance (see section 1.0 & Appendix 1).
- 12.3 DISCUSSED the current issues and risks relating to the finalisation of the 2018 USS valuation (see section 2.0).
- 12.4 NOTED that UCU are currently balloting for industrial action on pay and pensions, and both Unite and Unison are balloting for industrial action over pay. The University has undertaken significant active engagement to communicate with and champion our staff, including leading the way in the sector in relation to anti-casualisation and

addressing the gender pay gap. There is also active engagement with the Joint Evaluation Panel with a view to generate a more accepted valuation.

- 12.5 DISCUSSED the 2018 USS valuation, which was concluded on the 19th September with no change to benefits. The cost of providing benefits and therefore both the University and individual contribution will go up. However, as the UCU has a mandate of no detriment to members, they are calling on employers to cover the cost of the increase for employees. Bristol would consider this recommendation if this would avoid industrial action. **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**.
- 12.6 NOTED that weekly planning meetings, as well as meetings with students, are being convened to attempt to mitigate any impact of potential industrial action.
- 12.7 NOTED that there is now a moratorium on any members leaving the scheme until the next valuation in March 2020.
- 12.8 **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**.
- 12.9 **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**.
- 12.10 **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**.
- 12.11 **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**.
- 12.12 **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**.
- 13 DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PROVOST'S REPORT** (reference **BT/19-20/008**).
- 13.1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost introduced the report.
- 13.2 NOTED the report of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost.
- 13.3 NOTED the appointment of the Pro Vice Chancellor for Research as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leicester. This role will be advertised internally and externally, with the same remit and an interim PVC will also be sought for the short term. The other areas of his role have been reviewed and redistributed among the Senior Team.
- 13.4 DISCUSSED the recent University Management Team residential which has initiated the planning cycle and identified priorities for the team. Board will receive further updates on these priorities.
- 14 REGISTRAR'S REPORT** (reference **BT/19-20/009**).
- 14.1 The Registrar introduced the report.
- 14.2 NOTED the report of the Registrar
- 14.3 APPROVED the Terms of Reference for Nominations Committee
- 14.4 NOTED expected student numbers for the new academic year and lower than expected attrition rates which had impacted availability of accommodation. This has since been resolved and all undergraduate students have been offered accommodation in Bristol. **[REDACTED: information intended for future publication]**.
- 14.5 NOTED plans for the Student Experience programme to support and bring together the work of the Pro Vice-Chancellors for Education and for Student Experience. Work is underway with the Students Union to understand the differential student experience and undertake a gap analysis.

- 15 SPECIAL RESOLUTION: STATUTE 29** (reference **BT/19-20/012**).
- 15.1 The Registrar & University Secretary introduced the report.
- 15.2 APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY BY SPECIAL RESOLUTION the proposed changes to the Statutes.
- 15.3 AUTHORISED the University Secretary to submit the request for approval to change Statutes to Privy Council in due course.
- 16 REPORT FROM THE FINANCE & MAJOR PROJECTS COMMITTEE** (reference **BT/19-20/010**).
- 16.1 The Chair of the Committee introduced the report.
- 16.2 NOTED the report.
- 17 REPORT FROM THE AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE** (reference **BT/19-20/011**).
- 17.1 The Chair of the Committee introduced the report.
- 17.2 APPROVED the University Value for Money Strategy, as updated in response to the requirements of the OfS Regulatory code. (item 2.2).
- 17.3 NOTED that Audit and Risk Committee considered the performance of the new co-sourced Internal Audit Service following its first year of operation and recommended to the Board of Trustees the reappointment of RSM for a second year as the University's Internal Auditor. Approval from the Board of Trustees was granted via Chair's Action, because the reappointment needed to be confirmed by 1 August 2019. (item 2.8).
- 17.4 APPROVED the reappointment of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP ("PwC") as the external auditors to the University for the year ending 31 July 2020. (item 2.10).
- 17.5 DISCUSSED that, in relation to Key University Risks, the Committee were not yet satisfied in relation to full implementation of the new risk management framework. The Committee noted that it would receive a further response and update on this topic at its meeting on 14 October 2019.
- 17.6 DISCUSSED the critical issues raised in the report and asked how Board could further support the Committee. DISCUSSED a range of ways for Board members to engage further in risk work, including the opportunity for the External Auditors to brief the Board.
- 17.7 NOTED that the annual report from Audit Committee will be presented at the next Board meeting and invited other Board members to attend Audit & Risk committee.
- 18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
- 18.1 There was no other business and the meeting was closed.