



## MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Friday 31 January 2020

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 (part-meeting), Dr M Hamlin, Mr N Joicey, Robert Kerse, Dr J Khawaja, Ms N McCabe, Mr J Palmer, Ms L Parr, Mr A Poolman (Treasurer), Dr A Raffel, Professor G Macdonald (part-meeting), Mr J McAlinden, Professor J Squires (Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC) and Provost), Mr M Saddiq, Professor K Syrett.

In attendance: Professor J Bamber (part meeting), Mr G Bemrose (part meeting), Prof P Ireland (part-meeting), Professor T Peters (part meeting) Mr P Kent (part meeting), Mr B Mac Ruairi (part meeting), Professor J Norman (part meeting), Ms H Quinn (Clerk and Head of Governance), Professor D Southerton (part meeting), Mr K Woolley (part meeting).

Apologies: Dr M Bhabuta

#### **1 WELCOMES, APOLOGIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.
- 1.2 Apologies were received from Dr M Bhabuta.

#### **2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

- 2.1 There were no new declarations of interest.

#### **3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

- 3.1 The minutes were APPROVED as a fair and accurate record of the meeting of 22 November 2019 subject to minor amendments.

#### **4 ACTIONS & MATTERS ARISING**

- 4.1 It was noted that any completed items would be removed from the register.

#### **5 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT AND QUESTIONS (reference BT/19-20/030)**

- 5.1 RECIEVED the report of the Vice-Chancellor.

#### **5.2 The following points were NOTED**

5.2.1 That the University was continuing to support staff and students impacted by Brexit, whilst working with the Russell Group to engage with government in a range of areas, including the UK's association with Erasmus+ and Horizon.

5.2.2 The development of the global talent visa which will be managed by UKRI, with an opportunity to fast track the existing process, an exemption for overseas fieldwork & research and a fast track to permanent residency.

5.2.3 The announcement of £60m funding per year for Maths research, over 5 years which would address a previously identified gap in funding for Maths.

5.2.4 That the Augur report has been delayed and will be considered by government as part of the Comprehensive Savings Review (CSR).

5.2.5 That guidance has been received in relation to the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF). The Board will receive further detail at a later meeting

**ACTION:** Head of Governance

5.2.6 The signing of a collective agreement on the gender pay gap by the University and UCU, the first of its kind in the sector. The University has been working with the Russell Group to influence the national conversation in relation on casualisation and workload principles. Pensions continue to be a significant issue and the University continues to work with Unions and with the Russell Group as the 2020 valuation approaches. Further strike action is planned for 14 days during March.

5.2.7 The Vice-Chancellor had hosted a positive visit from David Sweeney, Chief Executive of Research England. This was an opportunity to highlight links to the place and economic development priorities of the government and to make the case for Bristol, including retaining existing industry links, competing in new sectors and contributing to the regeneration of struggling regional economies.

5.2.8 Professor Dimitra Simeonidou had recently been selected as a fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering and of the IEEE.

5.3 The following points were DISCUSSED

5.3.1 Trustees asked how the University planned to engage with staff around Industrial Action. The role of the Pensions Task & Finish Group was noted, including that the papers would be shared with all staff for consultation, and that additional open meetings and engagement events had been scheduled. The University would continue to work collaboratively with local unions, preparing a joint Bristol response to JEP2.

5.3.2 The University's response to Coronavirus. It was confirmed that one student had been undergoing tests, which had resulted in increased press interest, and communication with staff and students, including development of an FAQ. Two students had been repatriated from Shanghai and four from Hong Kong. Contingency planning was underway in relation to Bristol and China graduation events and ongoing recruitment activity.

5.3.3 Trustees requested further detail on the meeting with David Sweeney, **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**

## **6 EDUCATION AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE STRATEGY AND THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME (reference BT/19-20/031).**

6.1 RECEIVED the presentation, introduced by the Registrar, and presented by the Registrar, Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience and Student Living Officer.

6.2 The following points were NOTED

6.2.1 The presentation was an early introduction to the strategy, as well as an update on the progress of the Student Experience programme. The strategy would return to the Board for consideration in the Autumn term.

6.2.2 The wide consultation and engagement already undertaken, particularly the student journey mapping workshops. The initial themes arising from the workshop around community building, communication, the international student experience and accommodation. Any identified quick wins will be implemented for the start of next academic year.

6.2.3 The importance of amplifying the student voice in this process, and working with the Students Union to engage with a wider range of students.

6.2.4 The interrelated nature of the Student Experience programme with other work underway, particularly around wellbeing and systems and the co-ordination between programmes.

6.3 The following points were DISCUSSED

6.3.1 Trustees welcomed the approach taken in engaging with students and staff, sought reassurance that all groups were represented within the programme and discussed the opportunity for training students to maximise their contributions. The new role of Student Voice Co-ordinator will support student training and representation, with an increased capacity for pro-active approaches and interventions with underrepresented groups.

6.3.2 Trustees emphasized the importance of considering the digital experience of students, in relation to teaching and learning, and its integration in their student experience.

6.3.3 The opportunity to benchmark with organisations and experiences outside of the Higher Education sector. Trustees were invited to recommend examples of excellent customer experiences, or particular sectors which could be used for benchmarking.

6.3.4 The importance of establishing expectations early in the student journey, and making best use of all pre-arrival communications and events. The benefits of maintaining links with students post-graduation to support their transition and enable them to remain engaged with the University.

6.3.5 Trustees challenged the programme to look long term, and take an agile approach, appreciating that one size does not fit all and that there is an opportunity to embed the student voice in ongoing decision-making.

**7 DENTAL SCHOOL OPTIONS** (reference **BT/19-20/032**).

7.1 RECEIVED the Dental School Options paper. The Dean of Health Sciences introduced the item.

7.2 **REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**

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7.3 The Vice-Chancellor commended the team from Health Sciences for the comprehensive work undertaken and noted the opportunity to hire a new Head of the Dental School.

7.4 The Board ENDORSED the proposal to discount Options 1 & 2, to de-prioritise Options 3 & 4 and to develop detailed business cases for Options 5A and 5B for further consideration.

**8 TOWARDS A DIGITAL STRATEGY** (reference **BT/19-20/033**).

8.1 RECEIVED the draft Digital Strategy. The Chief Information Officer introduced the item.

8.2 The Board DISCUSSED the direction being undertaken in defining the overarching Digital Strategy and COMMENTED on the emerging Digital Strategy presented in the Appendix to the report.

8.3 The following items were DISCUSSED:

8.3.1 Trustees welcomed the emphasis on cybersecurity and personalisation.

8.3.2 The opportunity to collect meaningful data to identify and support students, and to have an interactive digital conversation with students. Trustees requested that the next iteration of the strategy include information about how digital can support and enable vulnerable individuals.

8.3.3 The importance of a forward looking and dynamic approach to strategy development. The intention to create an iterative strategy on a two-year lifecycle was confirmed. A communications plan would have been developed alongside the strategy

8.3.4 Trustees questioned how the strategy will be operationalised and discussed the need for supported cultural change as well as investment to deliver on aspirations.

8.3.5 The challenge of the underlying network infrastructure, and the opportunity to develop new approaches as part of the Temple Quarter Enterprise Campus (TQEC) design team.

## **9 REF PREPARATIONS (reference BT/19-20/034)**

9.1 RECEIVED the paper on REF Preparations, introduced by the DVC & Provost, and presented by the Interim Pro Vice-Chancellors for Research.

9.2 The following points were NOTED:

9.2.1 The Research Excellence Framework (REF) runs every 6 - 7 years, with an important direct and indirect impact on funding and reputation, as well as recruitment of staff and international students.

9.2.2 Submissions are assessed by peer review panels and a main panel in each Unit of Assessment (UoA). Research is measured in terms of outputs, impact and environment. **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**.

9.2.3 The PVCs have developed process and timelines to develop and sign off all submissions in the coming months. Where UoAs are not meeting expectations, remedial plans have been developed, using the support & influence of senior staff to bring that area back on track.

9.2.3 The change in REF rules and the impact across the sector. During REF 2014, each institution had to submit 4 outputs per staff member, which was of benefit to Bristol, who submitted 90% of staff while other institutions had excluded large numbers. For this REF, institutions can enter between 1 and 5 outputs per staff member, with an average of 2.5 submissions per staff member across all staff. This has meant that other institutions will now be able to enter more staff which may impact results.

9.3 The following points were DISCUSSED

9.3.1 The change in submission rules, and Bristol's previous performance. **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**.

9.3.2 Trustees were reassured that there were no concerns in relation to outputs, and that adequate time and senior support was available to manage any UoAs considered to be in special measures in relation to impact or environment statements. There was a sector-wide challenge in obtaining evidence from external partners.

## **10 HEALTH & SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT & POLICY REVIEW (reference BT/19-20/035)**

10.1 RECEIVED the Health & Safety Annual Report & Policy Review, introduced by the COO.

10.2 It was NOTED that the Board is responsible for Health & Safety in the organisation and that the annual report portrayed a positive picture in relation to workplace safety and also identified specific risks e.g. biohazards. The Executive Health & Safety Committee meets monthly to manage remaining risks.

10.3 The following points were DISCUSSED:

- 10.3.1 Trustees questioned whether the issue of student tampering with fire safety equipment in Residences was linked to changes in the residential student support available, but were assured that there are more staff and Senior Residents available than under the previous model. Work was underway to further develop induction activity for students, and to consider the appropriate level of fine which would serve as an adequate deterrent.
- 10.3.2 The importance of focussing on culture and how cultural impact can be measured, noting the increase in near miss reporting as a potential measure.
- 10.4 APPROVED the Health and Safety Annual Report 2018/19, subject to minor typographical updates.
- 10.5 APPROVED the University of Bristol Group Health and Safety Policy.
- 11 NEW UNIVERSITY LIBRARY AND PUBLIC REALM (reference BT/19-20/036)**
- 11.1 RECEIVED the presentation, introduced by the Deputy Vice Chancellor and Provost.
- 11.2 The following points were NOTED
- 11.2.1 The importance of transforming the heart of the campus, and the impact this would have across all areas of the strategy, the student experience and our civic commitment.
- 11.2.2 The progress made on the design process, with consideration for innovation and imagination, and a commitment to defining what is a 21<sup>st</sup> century library for a research-intensive institution. **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**.
- 11.2.3 The opportunity to bring together the public realm and new library to make the most of the investment by maximising land.
- 11.2.4 Timescales for development, as presented in the paper, which have been revised in line with the delay to TQEC development. This approach was in line with the previous Board request to minimise the risk of exposure associated with two significant capital programmes, i.e. to sequence the major build phase of the two developments.
- 11.3 The following points were DISCUSSED: **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**.
- 11.4 **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**.
- 12 TEMPLE QUARTER PROGRAMME & RISK UPDATE (reference BT/19-20/037).**
- 12.1 RECEIVED the Temple Quarter Programme & Risk Update, presented by the Chief Operating Officer.
- 12.2 The following points were NOTED: **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**.
- 12.3 The following points were DISCUSSED: **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**.
- 13 CHAIRS REPORT (reference BT/19-20/038).**
- 13.1 RECEIVED the Report of the Chair
- 13.2 NOTED the content of the report.

- 14 COO UPDATE REPORT** (reference **BT/19-20/039**).
- 14.1 RECEIVED the COO Update Report
- 14.2 The following points were NOTED:
- 14.2.1 The disposal of the University's interest in the joint venture company Bristol is Open Limited (see section 3.0).
- 14.2.2 The property health and safety issues and risks and the action taken.
- 14.2.3 The financial performance for the first five months of financial year 2019/20 (to 31 December 2019) and areas of underperformance.
- 14.3 The following points were DISCUSSED:
- 14.3.1 The people issues relating to the current staff industrial action, and the work with some key members of the Russell Group to align position on these issues.
- 15 DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PROVOST'S REPORT** (reference **BT/19-20/040**).
- 15.1 RECEIVED the report of the Deputy Vice Chancellor & Provost,
- 15.2 The following points were NOTED:
- 15.2.1 A comprehensive Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) update had been scheduled for the April Board meeting.
- 15.2.2 Ongoing work to address concerns of Hourly Paid Teachers, had resulted in changes to policy to be implemented in late April.
- 15.2.3 Progress on addressing the gender pay gap and preparatory work for the race equality charter.
- 15.2.4 Progress made against widening participation targets and the related impact on the budget for bursaries.
- 16 REPORT FROM THE REGISTRAR** (reference **BT/19-20/041**).
- 16.1 RECEIVED the report of the Registrar & University Secretary.
- 16.3 APPROVED the changes to the Students Union byelaws and articles, as presented in the Reading Pack, subject to minor comments.
- 16.4 DISCUSSED the admissions figures and updates subsequent to the UCAS deadline. **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**. Trustees were assured that controls were in place to manage recruitment and conversion to meet targets.
- 16.4 NOTED the plans to modernise the University constitution and relevant timelines.
- 17 PHYSICAL SCIENCES: THE CABOT INSTITUTE** (reference **BT/19-20/042**).
- 17.1 RECEIVED the presentation, from Professor Dale Southerton and Professor Jonathan Bamber.
- 17.2 Professor Southerton introduced the remit of the Cabot Institute, which has worked with a research community of more than 600 academics, to develop interdisciplinary environmental research and engagement. The Institute is structured around six themes which operate autonomously and are co-led by researchers from different disciplines. The Institute has attracted £33M in research income, and 40,000 visitors to public events, with an Annual Lecture attended by more than 800 guests.
- 17.3 Professor Bamber introduced his research into sea level rises, with reference to a co-authored paper with a significant impact, having been viewed more than 91,000

times, cited in over 100 papers published in 2019, and referenced in 220 news outlets.

17.9 DISCUSSED the different engagement models which enable interdisciplinary research and the importance of working with students and young people. NOTED the interdisciplinary MRes and PhD in Sustainable Futures offered in association with the Cabot Institute.

**18. REPORT FROM FINANCE & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE (reference BT/19-20/042).**

18.1 RECEIVED the report of the Finance & Infrastructure Committee. The Chair introduced the report.

**19. REPORT FROM AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE (reference BT/19-20/043).**

19.1 RECEIVED the report of the Audit & Risk Committee. The Chair introduced the report.

19.2 The Committee reported improved confidence in the area of IT, and assurance in relation to the governance of the TQEC project

**20. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

20.1 There was no other business and the meeting was closed.

**Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> and Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020**