

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Friday 8th July 2022

Burges Salmon

MINUTES

Present: Mr J Boyer, Professor H Brady (part-meeting), Ms G Bowen, Mrs K Bright, Professor A Carr, Ms J Cecil, Dr S Clarke, Professor I Craddock, Ms L Fletcher, Mr N Joicey, Dr J Khawaja, Mr A Poolman, Mr F Quek, Dr A Raffel, Professor C Relton, Mr S Robertson, Mr M Saddiq (Via Zoom), Professor J Squires, Ruth Day (part-meeting)

In attendance: Chris Bowden (for item 8), Tim Cole (for item 10), Rachael Goberman-Hill (for item 10), Shana Johnson (for item 16), Robert Kerse, Lucinda Parr, Hannah Quinn, Kate Robson-Brown (for item 10), Sophie Ross-Smith (for item 10), Dimitra Simeonidou (for item 10) and Phil Taylor (for item 10)

Apologies: Dr M Bhabuta, Ms O Adesanya

1 WELCOMES, APOLOGIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1.1 The Chair welcomed members and noted that this was the last meeting for the Vice-Chancellor, Hugh Brady.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

2.1 The Chair declared a new appointment to the Board of the Department for Education.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

3.1 The minutes of the previous meetings of the Board of Trustees on 26th and 27th May 2022 were APPROVED as a fair and accurate record, subject to minor changes.

4 ACTIONS & MATTERS ARISING

4.1 The notes of the Cyber meeting were circulated during the Board meeting.

5 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT AND QUESTIONS

5.1 The following points were NOTED:

5.1.1 The recent political developments and the likely impact on the sector. Cabinet vacancies included the Secretary of State of Education, Chancellor and other ministers which could have significant impacts on issues such as Horizon Europe, and the future of the Arts and Humanities. That the Freedom of Speech Bill was progressing. The Russell Group had started to brief with Labour and the Liberal Democrats on key issues

5.1.2 That whilst the Western Gateway was increasingly gaining profile in Whitehall, the Chief Exec Jo Dally was moving to the NCC and Katherine Bennet was stepping down in November.

5.1.3 That the return of summer graduations had been a joyful time on campus and the backlog of graduations had been cleared.

5.1.4 That there had been unprecedented interest in the recent successful UG Open Days, however China remained a key risk for overseas admissions.

5.1.5 The formal launch of Bristol Innovations at the Coal and Retort Sheds which had welcomed guests from across the City.

5.1.6 That the £1000 exceptional recognition payment had been well received by staff, despite some feedback from staff who did not quite meet the criteria.

5.1.7 The recent QS rankings which had seen the University's downward slide reversed and were a key input in terms of top 50. The NSS results were critical in terms of top 10 aspirations and while this year's results were disappointing, as they were for the whole Russell Group, delivery of changes to the Structure of the Academic Year and to assessment would significantly impact results. The Vice-Chancellor had very recently approved the new Structure of the Academic Year after significant consultation.

5.1.8 **[REDACTED: legally privileged]**

5.1.9 The Vice-Chancellor thanked the Board for their support and stewardship during his role and acknowledged the challenging role for the Board given the complexity of the institution. He estimated that Trustees would see up to 70,000 students graduate during a nine-year term. He noted the helpful challenge from the Board, and their wise counsel. He encouraged Trustees to support the transition of the incoming Vice-Chancellor.

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

5.2 The following points were DISCUSSED

5.2.1 **[REDACTED: legally privileged]**

5.2.2 **[REDACTED: legally privileged]**

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

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

5.2.5 The impact of the current political instability following a period of fiscal moderation and the risk that there may be a further period of austerity. Given the financial situation, the onus was on institutions to be as efficient as possible.

5.2.6 Staff trustees noted appreciation from staff for the exceptional recognition payment.

6 KEY UNIVERSITY RISK REVIEW (reference BT/21-22/070)

6.1 RECEIVED the paper. The Registrar & University Secretary (Lucinda Parr) introduced the item.

6.2 The following points were NOTED

6.2.1 The removal of both Research **2B Research Income** and **2C Research Reputation** and the addition of the consolidated **2E Research Pipeline**.

6.2.2 The removal of 7D Funding Review from the KURR.

6.2.3 The addition of a new risk 7F Inflation to the KURR.

6.2.4 The summary of risks taken from the 21/22 IPP round.

6.2.5 That the paper had been recommended by University Executive Board and Audit & Risk Committee.

6.3 The following were DISCUSSED

6.3.1 That in relation to the research pipeline risk, this had been reviewed in detail by ARC, and the PVC Research had attended the Committee. A reduction in research applications was not unusual in sector, however the risk impact was in relation to research scale and reputation rather than the net financial impact. **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests].**

6.3.2 Whether risks in relation to the delivery of the Civic agenda, and the recruitment of more diverse staff should feature on the KURR. The Executive confirmed that those risks were not scoring at a level to feature on the KURR but were being considered as part of the pipeline of risk at a lower level.

6.3.3 Trustees were pleased to see a reduction in the risk profile and encouraged the Executive to maintain attention on emerging risks, including the recruitment of staff.

6.3.4 That the past few years had impacted research funders as well as institutions and it was difficult to predict the future of research funding, however, for our top 50 aspirations it was important to understand what the configuration of a quality research income stream would look like. The Executive confirmed that

this would be part of the size and shape considerations and would be presented back to the Board once analysed.

- 6.3.5 The impact of the cost-of-living crisis on student and staff recruitment and wellbeing. **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**. Hardship funds for students were being reviewed to provide clarity of support for students.

- 6.4 AGREED to review the risk appetite statements annually in line with the recommendation from Audit & Risk Committee, and the Board Effectiveness Review.

7 SIZE & SHAPE REVIEW (reference BT/21-22/071)

- 7.1 RECEIVED the paper. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost (Judith Squires) introduced the item.

- 7.2 The following points were NOTED:

7.2.1 That the paper provided a process update of what was underway and would be brought together in September at the UMT Residential, before returning to Board in September and November.

7.2.2 That the heatmap provided high level management data which aimed to address our “triple bottom line” – i.e., education, research and financial sustainability. Top-down consideration of metrics for each School would be paired with bottom-up discursive processes with Faculties.

7.2.3 That data on student populations had been benchmarked against the Russell Group and showed that Bristol was not large, despite having grown significantly, and more quickly than most competitors.

7.2.4 That in relation to the proportion of international students Bristol was towards the bottom of the Russell Group, however competitors were tightly bunched together. **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**.

- 7.3 The following issues were DISCUSSED:

7.3.1 The opportunity to use REF data in relation to research, to consider in which areas Bristol needed to establish critical mass and could be world leading and focus investment there. The DVC & Provost confirmed that conversations about reshaping our research profile had started and how some areas might be redesigned to address emerging areas.

7.3.3 The volume of data under consideration and how academic experts could be engaged to support this. The importance of maintaining focus on key criteria. Discussions were planned with colleagues in multi-level modelling.

7.3.4 That this process represented a shift in approach, away from bottom-up, incremental change with high level management data used to set parameters, driven by the Strategy. **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**.

7.3.6 What consideration of market research and emerging trends had been undertaken. The DVC & Provost confirmed that as well as having commissioned some useful external analysis, the External Relations team had reviewed every programme and made recommendations from that data.

7.3.7 That the University Research Institutes would also be reviewed to focus resource and energy in multi-disciplinary, cross-Faculty themes.

7.3.8 The language of “triple bottom-line” which reflected the need to have high margin activity in some areas to provide a surplus to invest in education and research.

8 STUDENT EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME (reference BT/21-22/072)

- 8.1 RECEIVED the paper. The Registrar & University Secretary (Lucinda Parr) introduced the item. Chris Bowden joined the meeting for this item and apologies were received from Sarah Purdy, PVC Student Experience.

- 8.2 The following points were NOTED:

- 8.2.1 That the programme aimed to create a step change in the student experience, which was defined as students' experience outside of the classroom and had embedded the student voice in all decisions. The programme worked alongside the Education Administration Enhancement project, which had a staff lens on student processes.
 - 8.2.2 The programme took an agile approach and was driven from the student perspective in three phases – listen, understand and act. For example, recent work with Disability Services where a booking system had been developed for student appointments, saving time and increasing available bookings. A dashboard had also been developed for staff to see students' disability info, reducing the need for students to provide this information multiple times.
 - 8.2.3 Results from the Your Priorities Survey and an improvement in satisfaction in areas where the Programme had intervened. The results would also frame future activity including case management, self-service developments and a global appointment booking system.
 - 8.2.4 That research had shown inconsistencies between Schools, and the Programme would need to focus on how to roll out best practice across all of them, accelerating consolidation, but avoiding broad prescriptive approaches which wouldn't deliver for students.
- 8.3 The following issues were DISCUSSED:
- 8.3.1 The reduced response rate to the Your Priorities survey since last year and the need to get better engagement with a larger group of students. The Registrar and University Secretary confirmed that a post had been created in the Students' Union to support engagement with students, as well as looking at forward trends. Work was also underway to review how students contact us and how that could be improved or scaled, make it easier to engage with students.
 - 8.3.2 The need for continuous improvements, meeting external impact, competing with other institutions and keeping up with student expectations. Listening to students had been built into the programme.
 - 8.3.3 Student feedback on timetabling. It was noted that there had been some improvement, with timetables now online on the student app, with way-finding information. The ambition was to transform timetabling data collation, as the current approach was admin focussed, rather than student focussed.
 - 8.3.4 The recent NSS results, which had seen the Russell Group perform poorly overall, and a disappointing set of results for Bristol. It was confirmed that the NSS itself was being reviewed and further information was scheduled for the Board at its September meeting.
 - 8.3.5 The need to disaggregate data to consider the specific experiences of student groups, for example, international students.

9 STUDENT MATTERS (reference BT/21-22/073)

- 9.1 RECEIVED the paper. The DVC & Provost (Judith Squires) introduced the item.
- 9.2 APPROVED minor revisions to the
 - 9.2.1 University of Bristol Degree Outcomes Statement (Appendix A).
 - 9.2.2 Student Agreement for 2022/23 (Appendix B).
 - 9.2.3 Student Protection Plan for 2022/23 (Appendix C).
 - 9.2.4 Student Intellectual Property Policy for 2022/23 (Appendix D).
- 9.3 The following points were DISCUSSED:
 - 9.3.1 A recent recommendation from the Anti-Racism Steering Group to stop using the category of BAME internally, but instead to always disaggregate where possible. However, the category would still need to be used when we report externally, for example to the OFS.
 - 9.3.2 The impact of the pandemic on the attainment gap. The DVC & Provost confirmed that some of the moves to online assessment had been beneficial

to some groups who had historically performed less well, however other groups, for example mature students had been negatively impacted.

10 UNIVERSITY RESEARCH INSTITUTES (Presentation)

- 10.1 The DVC & Provost introduced the item, welcoming colleagues from the University's Research Institutes.
- 10.2 The following points were NOTED:
 - 10.2.1 The value of URIs and their link to delivering the Strategy, working across boundaries to accelerate progress. URIs were both challenge-led, for example climate or health, and method focussed, for example data science and digital co-production. Equitable partnership building was a key feature of URIs, whether internal or external as was embedding research impact.
 - 10.2.2 The role of URIs in the global civic agenda, working with key regional economies and connecting academics and creators for mutual benefit. The global impact of research, for example work in Columbia on post-conflict truth and reconciliation and working on designing the constitution.
 - 10.2.3 That URIs were well positioned to tackle boundary spanning, wicked problems, for example working together across URIs to tackle climate change and health challenges, bringing together climate, data and health scientists in partnership to secure funding.
 - 10.2.4 Engagement with COP26 by a delegation of academics spanning disciplines who presented their work, influenced policy makers and led engagement and communication campaigns with local and global influence.
 - 10.2.5 The contributions of the Elizabeth Blackwell Institute, supporting health research in all Faculties from discovery science through to translation. EBI supported research and connected researchers, through interdisciplinary strands and challenge led areas as well as holding a stewardship role for funding from the Wellcome Trust, QR and other gifts and trusts. The Institute had generated £42 for each £1 invested by the University, supported 450 projects, over 100 events and workshops, generating £160m of income.
 - 10.2.6 The Bristol Digital Futures Institute, which was the newest of the URIs and had attracted £600m of funding into digital societies, pioneering transformative approaches to digital futures. It brought together social and technical domains of expertise, using different forms of knowledge to disrupt and create intentional futures. It would deliver a step change in challenge driven research and provide capital investment to develop facilities matched by co-investment commitments. BDFI had a key role in growing the digital ecosystem and had already attracted an additional £55m research income.
 - 10.2.7 The Jean Golding Institute's role in translation of research, breaking down silos and enabling cross fertilisation between domains. Work across different areas including data visualisation, communication, methodologies, events and training. The recent data week and data competitions with external partners e.g., Ordnance Survey. The Data Science and AI showcase held every three years and the most recent event at the MShed which had seen over 1500 visitors.
- 10.3 The following issues were DISCUSSED:
 - 10.3.1 Opportunities to build international research partnerships and embed those for best effect and wider benefit. Recent consultation around partnerships which recommended a smaller number of partnerships as more effective than lots of very small arrangements. New engagement with a network of United Nations charitable organisations which was providing exciting opportunities.
 - 10.3.2 The need for Institutes to be financially self-sustaining and the challenges of funding core activities outside of salaries, which often required fundraising. Whilst it was appropriate that URIs sat outside Faculty structures, this also put them outside of mechanisms for strategic dialogue and planning, particularly the IPP.

- 10.3.3 Co-ordination with national research institutes, for example the Turing Institute and the opportunity to drive national agenda from a Bristol lens and working together to leverage benefits at a national level.
 - 10.3.4 Opportunities for URIs to deliver on challenge areas and impact across the strategy whilst continuing to be disruptive.
- 10.4 The Chair of the Board thanked colleagues for addressing the meeting and encouraged Trustees to continue discussion over lunch.
- 11 **TEMPLE QUARTER UPDATE REPORT** (reference **BT/21-22/074**)
- 11.1 RECEIVED the paper. The Chief Operating Officer (Robert Kerse) introduced the item.
- 11.2 The following points were NOTED:
- 11.2.1 The revised cost forecast received in May from the consultants and planning approval received in June from Bristol City Council.
 - 11.2.2 Whilst there has been movement in the market in relation to cost and supply chain pressures, early signs were that things were improving, but it remained a volatile environment.
 - 11.2.4 **[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]**
 - 11.3.3 **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**
12. **REPORT FROM COO** (reference **BT/21-22/075**)
- 12.1 RECEIVED the paper. The Chief Operating Officer (Robert Kerse) introduced the item.
- 12.2 The following points were NOTED:
- 12.2.1 The financial performance for the ten months ended 31 May 2022 and the forecast financial outcome for 2021/22 which was still looking strong. That conditions would be tougher moving forward, with smaller margins and less contingency.
 - 12.2.2 The financial risk profile for 2022/23
 - 12.2.3 Scenario planning in relation to the risk of Chinese student recruitment and Home Office concerns with online provision and visas which would impact plans for hybrid teaching.
 - 12.2.4 Thank you breakfasts and lunches for Professional Services colleagues which had attracted over 2,500 staff
 - 12.2.5 That a period of dispute resolution in relation to the UCEA pay award had commenced and that UCU had announced the intention to ballot for further strike action in relation to pay. The potential for UNISON to also ballot and the need to continue to engage staff and communicate clearly.
- 12.3 The following points were DISCUSSED:
- 12.3.1 Plans to diversify the international student intake, which would have medium term impacts.
 - 12.3.2 That plans to revise the Structure of Academic Year were not financially based but were about a better pedagogical experience for students and a reduction in the volume of assessment, both of which linked to student satisfaction.
 - 12.3.3 **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**
- 12.4 The COO presented the 2022/23 budget for University of Bristol Student Union for approval, noting Trustees responsibility for the financial sustainability of the Students Union. The Students Union had launched a new strategy and conversations were

underway in relation to funding going forward. APPROVED the 2022/23 budget for University of Bristol Student Union.

13. CHAIR'S REPORT (reference BT/21-22/076)

13.1 RECEIVED the paper. The Chair of the Board (Jack Boyer) introduced the item.

13.2 NOTED the report.

13.3 NOTED the decisions taken between meetings.

14. REPORT FROM DVC & PROVOST (reference BT/21-22/077)

14.1 RECEIVED the paper. The DVC & Provost (Judith Squires) introduced the item.

14.2 The following points were NOTED:

14.2.1 The appointment of all four Heads of Schools to the new Schools in Engineering.

14.2.2 Plans for an event with David Olusoga on 27 July, to which Trustees would be invited.

14.2.3 [REDACTED: legally privileged]

14.2.4 Recent university rankings and analysis

15. REPORT FROM REGISTRAR & UNIVERSITY SECRETARY (reference BT/21-22/078)

15.1 RECEIVED the paper. The Registrar & University Secretary (Lucinda Parr) introduced the item.

15.2 The following points were NOTED:

15.2.1 [REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]

15.2.2 [REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]

15.3 [REDACTED: information for future publication]

15.4 [REDACTED: information for future publication]

16. BOARD EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW REPORT (reference BT/21-22/081)

16.1 RECEIVED the paper. The Registrar & University Secretary (Lucinda Parr) and the Head of Governance (Hannah Quinn) introduced the item. Shana Johnson (Deputy Head of Governance) joined the meeting to minute this item.

16.2 DISCUSSED the Effectiveness Review Report.

16.2.1 That the introduction of Board Member categories would not help increase diversity and was not recommended for use in recruitment; in fact, categorization could unintentionally lead to a hierarchy amongst Board members, which was not desirable.

16.2.2 When the Effectiveness Review report was published the Board response should be published alongside.

16.4 AGREED to provide feedback to the Head of Governance on areas for further discussion/potential improvement areas. These would then be brought back to the meeting in September, making it clear if any of the areas highlighted were already the subject of improvement actions. Report to also be circulated to Additional Members.

17. REPORT FROM AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

17.1 The Chair of the Audit Committee (Andy Poolman) provided a verbal update.

17.2 The following points were NOTED:

17.2.1 That a Student Wellbeing strategic risk focus was scheduled for the next meeting.

- 17.2.2 That in relation to the Cyber and Disaster Recovery risks, the University was continuing to deliver its plans and the Committee were happy that the pace and goals were correct.
- 17.2.3 That the Committee had received assurances in relation to the Research Pipeline risk.
- 17.3 The following points were APPROVED:
 - 17.3.1 The reappointment of RSM as the internal auditors for the year ending 31 July 2023.
 - 17.3.2 The reappointment of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC) as the external auditors for the year ending 31 July 2023.

18. REPORT FROM NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE (reference BT/21-22/079)

- 18.1 RECEIVED the paper. The Chair of Nominations Committee (Jack Boyer) introduced the paper.
- 18.2 APPROVED that Freddie Quek join as an Independent Member of the Board of Trustees and Independent Member of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee for an initial three-year term from 1 September 2022 until 31 August 2025.
- 18.3 APPROVED changes to the membership of Pensions Task and Finish Group and required changes to Ordinance 4, Appendix G effective from 1 January 2023.
 - 18.3.1 Removal of the Treasurer from the membership of the Group
 - 18.3.2 Removal of the Chair of the Remuneration Committee from the membership of the Group
 - 18.3.3 Addition of an "Additional Member" to the Group
 - 18.3.4 Clarification of chairing arrangements for the Group
- 18.4 APPROVED the removal of the Treasurer in attendance from the membership of Finance and Infrastructure Committee, and required changes to Ordinance 4, Appendix B effective from 1 January 2023.
- 18.5 APPROVED the removal of the Treasurer from the membership of Remuneration Committee, and required changes to Ordinance 4, Appendix C effective from 1 January 2023.
- 18.6 APPROVED the appointment of Linda Fletcher as the Chair of the Remuneration Committee effective from 1 January 2023 (see paragraph 2.5.5).
- 18.7 NOTED the Report of the Nominations Committee.

19. REPORT FROM FINANCE & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE (reference BT/21-22/080)

- 19.1 RECEIVED the paper. The Chair of the Finance & Infrastructure Committee (Andreas Raffel) introduced the item.
- 19.2 NOTED the report of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee meeting held on the 9 June 2022.

20. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 20.1 None

- 21. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING:** 23 September 2022.