University of
BRISTOL

COURT 2021
Friday 3 December 2021

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM COURT MEMBERS RECEIVED BY DEADLINE OF 23 NOVEMBER

Question 1.
What actions are the University taking to meet a zero carbon 2030 target?

University's response
The University has a comprehensive Carbon Management Plan.

This plan sets out 8 key steps to get the University to net zero carbon.
1. Optimising our use of space
2. Conserving energy and water
3. Using energy and water more efficiently
4. Building new buildings to the highest cost-effective energy standards
These will halve our emissions by 2030 and cap water consumption with no other intervention. To achieve the other 50% reduction the University will do the following up to 2030.
5. Using self-generated heat and electricity from lower-carbon sources to save 5%
6. Using local externally generated heat and electricity from lower-carbon sources to save 20%
7. Using mains gas and electricity from lower-carbon sources to save 20%
8. Certificating the offset of residual to save 5%

Actions taken so far include, investing £11million in efficiency measures, running behaviour change campaigns like 'Be the Change' to reduce waste, applying the sustainable construction standard BREEAM to over 20 University building projects, installing Solar PV and Air Source Heat pumps. Our most recent annual report gives much more detail on other actions.   A new report on progress during the academic year 2020/21 will be issued at the start of January 2022.

Question 2.
Comprehending the ethos of the recently concluded climate change conference, what are the changes that the University is planning to bring to the campus?

University's response
Delivery of the Carbon Management Plan (see answer to 1 above) is key to helping the University to deliver net zero carbon. This will require significant investment. It will also require wide stakeholder engagement and changes to university policy and procedures. The University is still taking in what changes the COP26 conference has made to the direction of travel for climate change action, but we feel that our plan to get to net zero is robust.

Question 3.
How is the University defining net zero and does this include offsetting schemes to achieve that target?

University's response

The University has a net zero carbon target of 2030 for scopes 1 & 2.   It also aims to be net zero for scope 3 emissions, but there is considerable work needed to measure our scope 3 emissions. Because of this we aim to set a target date in the near future for when this will be achieved. That said we also aim over the next year to develop and start the implementation of a plan to reduce scope 3 emissions. We have stated that we may need to offset 5% of our emissions. But this will be one of the last things we do following the other 7 actions within our Carbon Management Plan. Offsetting may play more of a role in addressing scope 3 emissions.

Definitions are described below:

Scope 1 emissions - These are carbon emissions that are generated directly from our activity at the University, e.g. use of gas in boilers to heat buildings emits carbon.

Scope 2 emissions - These are carbon emissions that come primarily from electricity use. The electricity we use within our buildings comes from a power station that emits carbon, so less direct but because we use that electricity generated it is carbon attributed to the University.

Scope 3 emissions - These are a wider group of emissions that are less directly emitted by the University, so things like business air travel or carbon in the supply chain. Thus we take a flight, the airline emits the carbon but only does that as we are using the plans. Like wise carbon in the supply chain is the carbon emitted in making say a chair, getting the raw materials, manufacturing and then transporting to us. All this carbon is emitted by others on our behalf.

Question 4.

How is the University taking forward the policies agreed at COP26 as part of its ongoing sustainability agenda?

University's response

The answers to the above questions apply here. Delivery of our Carbon Management Plan is key to get to net zero carbon by 2030 for scopes 1 & 2, as well as the development of a plan to address scope 3 emissions.

Question 5.

The University of Bristol fully divested from the fossil fuel industry last year. What further climate action is the University planning to undertake in order to secure its position as a sector leader in environmental and sustainability practices?

University's response

The answers to the above questions apply here. The University has an 8-point carbon plan with specific actions this year, investing almost £1million in energy efficiency measures and developing a year by year investment plan for the next 9 years, all schools and divisions are writing bespoke Carbon Management Plans, working to find energy savings via our Building Management System with the appointment of a carbon reduction officer - we are already seeing cost and carbon savings being made from the additional £1million spent upgrading this system. We will continue to run engagement programs like Be the Change and are helping staff & students understand their impacts via a Partnership with the sustainability institute IEMA (institute of environmental management & assessment) via a program of training.

The following two questions have similar themes so have combined responses.

Question 6.
Has there been a downturn in international students and staff taking up places at the university in the post Brexit and post COVID era? If so, how does the university plan to ensure talent from overseas is attracted?

Question 7.
What has the impact of Covid been on student recruitment (home and international)?

University's response
Students
There has not been a noticeable downturn in home or international student attraction overall, and the University has this year exceeded its recruitment targets. However, a drop in EU students (who are now classified as international for fee purposes) has been witnessed at Bristol and generally across the sector. This is not a direct consequence of Covid but can be attributed to Brexit and a raise in tuition fees for EU students. To address the decrease in EU student numbers the University has increased funding to its international scholarship programme, Think Big and are also investigating the possibility of increasing its presence in Europe. In order to assure that we remain a destination of choice for international students, the University is expanding its overseas recruitment operations.

Staff
When discussing attraction, application number is the most appropriate metric to consider. At institutional level, we observed significant drop in applications from individuals residing outside of the UK between academic years 2019/20 and 2020/21. It is difficult to clearly separate whether the downturn was Brexit related or a result of the Covid-19 pandemic (2020/21 involved a freeze on non-essential recruitment) but it is most likely a combination of the two. What is reassuring is that international application numbers for Q1 (August – October) 2021/22 are improved on the same period in 2019/20. This highlights the strength and resilience of the University's brand in the face of an extremely challenging and recovering recruitment market.

Question 8.
How many disabled students and staff are at the university and what support is the university able to provide for them?

University's response

Students:
In 2021/22 academic year there are 4044 students who have declared a disability. 3188 disabled students are undergraduates, 542 and postgraduate taught, and 315 are postgraduate research students. As well as access to all of the University's main student support services, Disability Services are the key specialist service who ensure students have reasonable adjustments and appropriate support in place. Support can include specialist study support mentors and study skills tutors; support to access Disabled Students Allowance or other funding; advice on and access to assistive technologies; specialist study skills workshops; information and advice for students who think they might have an undiagnosed specific learning difficulty or other disability and support in getting a diagnosis. Students who are disabled as a result of a mental health diagnosis can also access specialist support through the Mental Health Advisory Service which is part of Student Counselling.

Staff

575 members of staff have disclosed a disability to the University. Unlike students, we do not have a separate disability service for staff: we expect line managers to support disabled colleagues through making workplace adjustments as appropriate to help them reach their full potential. To support managers, advice from HR Business Partner Teams is provided where requested and this may include referrals to the University Occupational Health Service. There is a range of support available to staff across the University including accessibility guides for buildings and access to online IT software.

Question 9.
What monitoring and actions have taken place to address systemic inequality and underrepresentation from minority groups in academic and leadership positions in the university?

University's response
Through a recruitment lens, the University's diversity monitoring approach has been re-designed, allowing for much improved frequency and accuracy of management information relating to the institutional recruitment funnel. This has improved granularity and awareness of where issues may exist, and the University can now better identify and understand any collective measures that need to be taken.

This year's cohort of 42 new professors has increased the proportion of our female professors to 30.4%. We have exceeded our mid-term University Strategy target of 28% female professors last year by 1%, modelling of our population data suggests we are on track to meet our target of 33% by 2023. As a result of numerous local and central initiatives our female professor population has increased by 10.5% over five years. This reflects a much longer journey, undertaken by committed colleagues across the institution, to tackle inequalities in the academic career pipeline and to change our cultures and structures to better support women at all stages of their career. Our Women's Mentoring Network is currently supporting 78 new mid-career mentees from both Academic and Professional Services communities; and the Female Leaders Initiative (FLi) supported 30 more women from across all career levels in both Academic and Professional Services teams.

Within the professoriate, and based on a 93.8% ethnicity disclosure rate, 8% disclose as being from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic background, and 92% identify as White. By gender these figures are 2.4% female and BAME, 5.6% male and BAME, 28.0% female and White, and 64.0% male and White. This confirms that we still have a lot of work to do to improve the BAME representation of staff at a senior level. In the coming year we will explore an appropriate target for BAME population in the professoriate, to complement our female population target in a review of our Strategic Performance Indicators. We look forward to making greater progress in this area.

Elsewhere at the University, we have been tackling BAME under-representation by revising our approach to apprenticeships. This includes developing a pipeline of talent from groups traditionally under-represented in professions such as finance, IT and human resources. Currently 75% of trainees across Professional Services are from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic background.

The under-representation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic women at senior levels is an issue across the HE sector. To help address this we have launched the Elevate programme in 2021 – the first pilot of its kind – with 30 participants (eight academics and 22 Professional Services staff) across the GW4 universities.

Question 10.
What monitoring of completion and success of student degrees and higher degrees is undertaken by demographic? what, if any, are the concerns about statistically significant

differences in progression and outcome by different demographics, and what action is being taken?

University's response

Degree outcomes are analysed each year, with work undertaken between the Education Data and Insight Team and the Academic Quality and Policy Office. This includes the monitoring of attainment gaps for various student characteristics. Analysis covers both undergraduate and postgraduate taught awards. The analysis is reported annually to University Academic Quality and Standards Committee and onwards to University Education Committee. The undergraduate portion of the analysis is then distilled into the [Degree Outcomes Statement](#), which we publish annually (a requirement of the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment). In addition, every five years we undertake an analysis of undergraduate access, continuation rates, degree attainment and progression into further study and employment to inform the writing of our [Access and Participation](#) plan which includes targets agreed with the Office for Students, and a high level overview of plans to address these targets. Progress against these targets is monitored on an annual basis and reported both internally and to the Office for Students.

The following three questions have similar themes so have combined responses.

Question 11.

In the light of the findings of the Parliamentary Education Committee entitled: "The forgotten: how White working-class pupils have been let down, and how to change it (June 2021)" and also the university's undoubted success in increasing black student numbers through programmes such as Black Futures Scholarships, how does the university propose to help , at a national level, to improve opportunities in higher education for disadvantaged children referred to in the Parliamentary report?

Question 12.

What measures are being taken to improve socio-economic balance in the student intake to the university - and what progress has been made on increasing the proportion of students from deprived areas and social groups?

Question 13.

What more the University is planning to do to support social mobility and people from low-income backgrounds to attend?

University's response

In recent years the University has made significant progress in the diversification of our student body. Our 2021 intake is set to continue that trend with the exception of mature students.

The [University's Access and Participation Plan 2020-21 to 2024-25](#) contains a series of targets covering all stages of the student lifecycle. These externally regulated targets are supplemented with a range of internal targets.

Progress is being made against a number of targets and plans are in place to accelerate this. Our 2021 intake performance will be finalised in December and will reflect that that our intake from low participation neighbourhoods and Venturers Trust (the multi academy trust of schools which the University co-sponsors) intake numbers will have taken a step forward from 2020. Our intake of mature students will have regressed from 2020. There will be good progress on other access measures including state school intake.

Target area	2020-21	2021-22	2021-22	2024-25

	intake	intake	target	target
Ratio in entry rates for POLAR4 quintile 5: quintile 1 students	6.8:1	6.4:1	9:1	6:1
Number of students recruited from the Venturers Trust	9	13	13	22
Percentage of mature students in UoB Home intake	5.8%	4.5%	6.5%	8%
Internal SPIs				
State school intake	72.7%	77.4%	75%	TBC
Aspiring State School intake	33.6%	34.5%	34%	TBC

The Office for Students (OfS) identified narrowing the gap in intake rates between POLAR quintile one and quintile five as their key measure for the sector. Due to focusing of activity, including our contextual admissions system on this target we have made significant progress in recent years. In 2020 our intake ratio was 6.8:1, comfortably below our 2020-21 target of 10:1 and approaching our long term 6:1 target. Our ratio in 2021 is likely to be 6.4:1.

The recruitment of mature students to the University is a longstanding challenge. For the three years between 2018 and 2020 representation of this group within our student community was improving. Our 2021 intake is likely to be 4.8%, below the 2020 intake and our APP target. There are a number of reasons for this, including mature students taking Access courses not benefitting from Teacher Awarded Grades in the way that A level students did, and mature students being more attracted to vocational programmes such as Nursing which are not in our programme portfolio.

Our focus in this area is the creation of diverse entry routes into the University including the accreditation of short courses and the creation of part time degrees.

It is vital that the University makes all reasonable efforts to meet targets and make progress against all SPIs. This means continuing to focus activity on strategically important areas including the development of a STEM foundation year for mature students.

Although significant progress has been made in widening access, it is clear that there is still a huge amount to do. Widening participation is a key part of the University's strategy and a priority for the institution. Increasing the number of students enrolling at Bristol who have been eligible for free school meals is an important goal and in recent years we have increased representation for this group from 3.4% of our intake in 2015 to 6.2% of our intake in 2019.

Question 14.

*In a press release of 11 June 2020, the University announced that it would consider
"...whether we should rename the Wills Memorial Building, and other buildings named after
families with links to the slave trade. We commit to reviewing the names of these buildings.
We will also review our University logo, which carries the Colston, Wills and Fry crests . . .
We will initiate this debate with our staff, students, alumni, and wider city communities".
Could you please report on the progress of this debate? I am not aware of any consultation
with the alumni on this matter, other than a short discussion with a small number at the last
meeting of Court.*

University's response
The Naming Workstream of the Anti-Racism Steering Group (ARSG) last discussed Naming
on 21 October 2021, noting the latest updates from the Naming workstream, and discussed
the following:
- The conclusion of research by Professors Olivette Otele and Richard Stone which
  would be combined into a report to underpin the consultation. This draft report would
  be available at the next meeting in December.
- That communications plans were being tested with student and staff networks.
- That the University logo was under consideration as part of work underway in relation
  to brand.
- That consultation would include staff, students, alumni and other stakeholders, as
  well as the families concerned.
- That a framework was being designed to consider the outcomes of the consultation
  including any weighting of responses e.g. to young people and students. Agreed the
  importance of engaging young people.

The Group further noted a draft timeline update below:
- Developing and testing communications plan: Late October / early November
- Naming event with BME network: November 2021 (*subsequently postponed*)
- Draft Report to ARSG: December 2021
- Consultation: aiming for launch late Jan / early Feb 2022

Question 15.
*Bristol Multi-Faith Forum is an equality organisation established by the Bristol City Council in
2004 for inter-cultural and inter-faith social harmony and to promote the health and well-
being of the communities. We wish to have an active partnership with Bristol University. Who
are the officers, whom we should contact to develop such a cooperative arrangement, and
which are areas in which the University could collaborate with the mission of social harmony
and community well-being?*

University's response
The University works hard to foster an inclusive environment and collaborates with specific
groups to ensure everyone is included in our community. The University's Registrar and
Secretary, Lucinda Parr, leads on the University's faith-based interaction with the City.
Lucinda can be contacted via email: lucinda.parr@bristol.ac.uk. Chaplains from the
University's Multi-Faith Chaplaincy also work together as a team and strive for inter-religious
understanding and co-operation, without blurring the differences and disagreements that
exist between and also within faith group. The University and its Multi-Faith chaplaincy
would welcome an opportunity to discuss future potential areas of collaboration with Bristol
Multi-Faith Forum.

Question 16.
*Assimilating the past issues of depression, loneliness, and suicide tendency amongst a few
students, what are the steps taken by our University to tackle those issues? How helpful and*

accessible are instructors in that? Are you trying to involve parents or guardians in those pastoral remedies? How far have those steps been effective?

University's response
In 2018, the University published comprehensive student and staff mental health and wellbeing strategies, and a suicide prevention strategy. It also initiated a total overhaul of its mental health and wellbeing support, and introduced 24/7 Residential Life and Student Wellbeing services, complementing existing on-site student counselling and Primary Care services. These services are now supporting student wellbeing proactively through transitions, inclusive community building and personal skills development, as well as providing individual support for students with additional needs. Importantly, the University has focussed on ensuring these services are equally accessible and effective in supporting all groups of students, and there is always someone a student can speak to for additional information, advice, and support.

The University also operates a 'consent to contact' policy. When a student registers for their studies, and then at the start of each academic year, they can opt in or opt out of allowing the University to contact a designated parent, guardian, or friend, if it has serious concerns about their wellbeing. Most students have opted-in to this service.

The University's significant investment in services has strengthened support for students in accommodation, in academic schools, and through central support services. This has been evidenced in recurrent student wellbeing survey results. The most recent (2021) survey, delivered in partnership with Bristol SU, shows more than 80 per cent of students who sought support with wellbeing from their tutors found it helpful. The University is also seeing increasing numbers of students coming forward for support, and reduced waiting times for counselling services. Notable differences in symptoms of depression and anxiety have also reduced for some minority groups highlighted in previous surveys, including Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students (45%), international (44%) and first-generation university (47%) students compared to their peers (White British 47%, home 47%, non-first generation 47%) but work continues to ensure all groups of students receive the support they need. The University is now in the process of refreshing its strategies and action plans. This work will be informed by the findings of the student mental health and wellbeing survey.

Question 17.
What is the University currently doing to combat issues around anti-social behaviour during and after mainstream events in Bristol such as "Love Saves the Day", where a number of my constituents in the Sneyd Park area have reported issues regarding students who reside in the Stoke Bishop Halls of residence destroying flower beds, smashing bottles on the streets and littering on and round the Downs?

University's response
All students who move into all University Halls of Residence are required to attend an initial Welcome Talk with members of University staff from the Residential Life team. This talk covers several subjects including conduct in and around the local community and respect for our neighbours. This is then followed up throughout the year with further meetings on a flat-by-flat basis where our senior residents will talk to students again about any specific issues that are required at the time. This can include conduct outside the University accommodation if it is felt this is required.

In addition to these awareness raising measures, we also have access to University disciplinary processes to which we can and do refer specific students if we become aware of specific incidents.

It is important to note that in the academic year 2020/21, all communications at the beginning of the year and indeed throughout the year took place virtually due to the restrictions set in place nationally and within the University to combat the spread of Covid-19. The lack of face-to-face interaction should be noted in terms of the potential impact on student behaviour.

With regards to the reference to "*Love Saves the Day"* specifically, and students living in Stoke Bishop it should be noted that no students were in University residences within Stoke Bishop in early September when this event took place so could not have been responsible for damage referred to on this occasion. The majority of students live in the private sector.

It is important for any resident who is concerned about the behaviour of students with regards to specific incidents or issues to report these, by email to community-living@bristol.ac.uk. Any issues raised will be investigated and actions taken as appropriate. If it is clear that a conduct issue relates specifically to students living in our Stoke Bishop (North village) residences, concerns can also be sent to: resilife-north@bristol.ac.uk.

Question 17.
I am honoured to be a member of Court as a representative of Emeritus Professors, who all wish to give back to the University, as appropriate. A small group of us are willing to help facilitate this and we have our own ideas, but it seems to us that we should first understand how the University thinks emeritus professors' collective expertise and experience should be best deployed. My question is would the University welcome such an endeavour?

University's response
We would welcome input from the Emeritus Professors via Court. As previously discussed, we believe that emeritus professors' collective expertise and experience can usefully be deployed to support the activities of DARO (Development and Alumni Relations Office). Many of our Emeritus Professors hold longstanding relationships with a wide range of alumni, often with former students showing great enthusiasm for reconnecting. Encouraging and involving the Emeritus Professors to play an active role in alumni networks and fostering connections back to Bristol would be incredibly valuable, especially considering some key audiences including those who have pledged legacies to the University and alumni who have progressed into academia.

Question 18
Would the University consider instituting a system whereby Court members could share emails, via the University, so that members could discuss university issues among themselves?

University's response
The University recognises that improvements could be made in the wider communications between itself and the members of Court. For example, news of University of Bristol achievements and initiatives could be shared with the members in between meetings to help the members be engaged and understand University perspective throughout the year. For data protection reasons, we would not consider sharing Court members contact details with other members. We would also not consider facilitating discussion between members without the University's input because the role of Court is to serve as a bridge between the wider community and the University. Court's purpose is to provide a source of ideas, influence and support from the wider community to assist the University in pursuit of its mission.