

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL

Minute of the 110th Annual Meeting of Court
Friday 6 December 2019

Sir Paul Nurse FRS (Chancellor)

Members

Category 1 – Elected Members

R Barry, U Brandenburg, T Brewer, C Burns, A Carr, A Cole, H Devlin, R Dufton, A Franks, A Ganapathy, S Gilbert, A Glykis, J Golding, M Lee, M Liversidge, L Malt, J Metcalfe, T Mitchell, M Partington, H Phillips, J Phillips, C Scowen, G Stirrat, J Thompson, A Waterman Pearson, L Wilson, L Yalagala, M Young

Category 2 – Nominated Members

X Bell, J Cleeton, P Coles, S Crew, H David, M Donelan, G Ferguson, P Golding OBE, R Griffith, S Jirde, M Joint, A Kelly, R Maule, G Richardson, S Rolt, D Shiu, T Smallwood OBE DL, E Smith, P Smith, P Smith, D Speed, L Testani, A Wall, S Wilson

Category 3 – Ex Officio

M Berry, S Clarke, B Hale, R Hodder-Williams, B Pickering, M Prior CVO MBE

Category 4 – Additional Members

M Burgess, D Finch, P Hassan, M Hogg, O Otele, M Tanner, K Woolf

In Attendance

Senior Team

H Brady, P Kent, R Kerse, E Lithander, B Mac Ruairi, G Orpen, L Parr, T Peters, S Purdy, J Squires

Board of Trustees

K Ashley, M Bahabuta (incoming), J Boyer, S Ellwood, M Hamlin, J Khawaja, J McAlinden, A Poolman, J Manley, N McCabe, A Raffel

Deans

I Bond, K Pollmann, S Tormey

Sabbatical Officers

G Bemrose, C Brasnett, A Brook, J Mkok, J Ogayo

Elected individuals from UoB staff

H Abulrub, C Baldwin, M Baptist, L Clark, M Costain, R Ellis-Haque, K France, T Henderson, J Hunt, G Liveley, R Logan, J McAllister, P Mutesva, T Mwarewangepo, E Palk, R Salisu, N Smith, P Walters, A Williams

Clerk: Hannah Quinn

1. WELCOME BY THE CHANCELLOR

1.1 **RECEIVED:** opening remarks from the Chancellor.

1.2 The Chancellor welcomed all present to the annual meeting of Court. It was noted that it was the inaugural meeting of the reimagined Court, and the Chancellor offered thanks to the Court Reform Steering Group who had implemented the reforms agreed by Court.

1.3 It was noted that the Court reforms had been designed to provide a forum for more intimate extended debate with a wide range of key stakeholders and that this was an

important meeting to engage the University with the local community and broaden the connection with the City and local area.

- 1.4 The Chancellor thanked Professor Richard Hodder-Williams for his commitment and hard work on the completion of his term as a University Pro Chancellor.

2. STRATEGIC POSITIONING OF THE THEME

- 2.1 The Vice-Chancellor introduced the theme of the Global Civic University, setting the context for the workshop.
- 2.2 The Vice-Chancellor reflected on the history of the University and its civic mission; and compared and contrasted this with the current position, acknowledging the challenges and changes facing the city and the University.

3. WORKSHOP: THE GLOBAL CIVIC UNIVERSITY

- 3.1 A workshop was facilitated by way of table discussions, centered around the Global Civic University agenda. All presentations were available on the Court webpages (www.bristol.ac.uk/court).

4. REPORT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES (CRT/19-20/001)

- 4.1 The Chair of the Board of Trustees presented an annual report of the activities of the Board of Trustees over the preceding year (on file).
- 4.2 Court **NOTED** a report of relevant changes to the Charter, Statutes and Ordinances in the preceding academic year, specifically those changes relating to the reform of Court.

5. ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2018/19 (CRT/19-20/002)

- 5.1 The Chief Operating Officer presented the University Annual Report & Financial Statements (on file).
- 5.2 Court **NOTED** the University Annual Report and Financial Statements 2018/19.
- 5.3 Court **NOTED**: that the University Borrowing Limit as reported by the Board of Trustees was £535m

6. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS ANNUAL MEETING OF COURT (2018) (CRT/19-20/003)

- 6.1 **APPROVED** the minutes of the previous meeting 7th December 2018 (on file).

7. APPOINTMENT OF PRO CHANCELLORS & AWARD OF HONORARY FELLOWSHIP (CRT/19-20/004)

- 7.1 The Chancellor introduced the paper (on file) and reminded members of voting procedure.
- 7.2 Court **APPROVED** Mr Alexander Wilmot-Sitwell's appointment as Pro Chancellor from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2022.
- 7.3 Court **APPROVED** Dr Andrew Sheng's appointment as Pro Chancellor from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2022.

7.4 Court **APPROVED** Dr Jackie Cornish's appointment as Pro Chancellor from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2023.

7.5 Court **APPROVED** the award of an Honorary Fellowship to Mr Denis Burn.

8. OPEN FORUM QUESTION TIME

8.1 Members of Court were invited to ask questions of the University Senior Management team, including the Chair of the Board of Trustees. It was noted that any questions which had been received in advance of the meeting had been responded to, and the responses had been made available on the Court webpages.

8.2 In response to questions from the room, the following issues were highlighted:

- The University constitution (Charter, Statutes, Ordinances & Regulations) would be reviewed and modernised over the next 12 months.
- The pension deficit was a significant issue and the University was committed to working towards a long-term sustainable solution, which ensured there were sufficient assets to continue to pay staff pensions into the future.
- Court welcomed the fact that there had been a marked improvement in the diversity of Court members, attendees and speakers.
- The University was a living wage employer and was proud to lead by example in this area.
- University student accommodation was a particular issue of concern for the University and the City, but should not be considered as a choice between housing for students and other residents. There were opportunities for the City of Bristol to become a pioneer in this area, by focusing on social, affordable & intergenerational accommodation projects. However, it was noted that students wanted a range of options, and overseas students particularly valued high-quality, high-rise accommodation.
- Staff costs had increased at a greater rate than staffing levels, which was primarily due to the University's pay structure, including annual increments to pay. Increases in non-academic staff had been faster than academic due to essential investment needed to firstly, minimise the administrative burden on academic staff, and secondly, to introduce an important new Wellbeing and Residential Life Service to students.
- The University had £250m cash on hand, most of which had been borrowed. The timing of the borrowing had been due to uncertainty in the market and had been at a good rate.
- Staff were entitled to different pension provision and arrangements on different schemes. The USS scheme had a higher employer contribution than the UBGPP. It was noted that the employer contribution for USS also covered other benefits, however the University would be reviewing pension provision for all staff, based on the principle of providing more opportunity for lower paid staff to contribute fairly.
- The University had taken a whole institution approach to Suicide Prevention and specifically had introduced an opt-in policy, where students could agree to a designated individual (e.g. a parent) being contacted, should there be concerns about them. 94% of the student body had opted in, and they could opt out at any time. This policy was being carefully monitored and the University was sharing its experience with the sector. Internationally, all countries had experienced a quadruple increase of students with mental health issues.
- The University had developed a staff mental health strategy, in consultation with staff and trade unions. This had a significant investment underpinning it, however it was clear that mental health was an ongoing journey.

- Growth (in student numbers) was an issue which was frequently debated. Over the last decade the University has grown at 4 – 5% per year. Local projections were that the city region would grow by a quarter over the next 20 years and the University was in active conversation with city partners to ensure that the growth was balance. Growth was modelled carefully and the University of Bristol was one of the few Universities which had grown without a drop in entry tariff.

9. Closing remarks and date of next meeting

9.1 The Chancellor thanked all present for their contributions and engagement and asked that they complete the post event feedback form which would be circulated to them electronically after the meeting.

9.2 **NOTED** that the next meeting of Court would be held on Friday 4 December 2020.