The Academic Assembly’s Accountability and Transparency Working Group (AA-ATWG)

2nd Report to AA (02/06/2020)

The Academic Assembly Accountability and Transparency WorkingGroup aims to advance accountability and transparency in the governance and management of the University. We were elected by members of Academic Assembly in January 2019 to serve for 18 months in the first instance.

The past year has seen considerable progress, as our group has become an accepted part of University deliberations regarding issues of governance, accountability and transparency. We note here only the key aspects of our work, for more detail see our minutes (<https://www.bath.ac.uk/publications/academic-assembly-accountability-and-transparency-working-group-minutes/>).

Since our last report in May 2019

* We have monitored closely the progress of the Council Effectiveness Steering Group in their following up of the Halpin Review, and engaged directly with the CESG on several occasions
* We have had eight meetings of the working group
* We have held two well-attended open meetings, on ‘Imagining a Democratic University’ (IDU), one in June and one in December 2019
* Based on the June 2019 IDU event we produced the **document “Imagining a Democratic University: Moving the Agenda Forward”** that was submitted and discussed at the AA’s Assembly in October 2019. The report on IDU2 was delayed by the impact of COVID-19 on the May Assembly meeting; it will be produced for the postponed May Assembly meeting.
* We have met and had constructive discussions with the VC, the Chair of Council, and the Head of Strategic Governance, helping to establish a good working relationship with each
* Our members participated in the “Our University Our Future” events and voiced their views on issues related to Accountability and Transparency
* One member of the A&T work was invited to join the Senate Effectiveness Review Group
* We received a preview of the Our University Our Future document and sent the VC our response to this, based on the discussions at our Imagining a Democratic University events

Our original proposal (31.10.18) stated that the group should serve until the end of academic year 2019/20, and that a review should take place 6 months before then, to determine whether or not it should continue. With COVID-19, this review has not taken place.

However, we believe that accountability and transparency is and will always be a key concern for Academic Assembly. Implementation of the Halpin Review is ongoing, and the COVID-19 crisis engenders a number of new concerns.

Based on our experience thus far, we also believe that complementary initiatives, between those led from the Centre and those self-organised by staff, provide a positive model for engagement going forward.

We therefore propose to the Assembly that the working group should continue beyond the initial 18 months to continue the important work of ensuring that accountability and transparency remain at the heart of current and future reforms in our University’s governance. To refresh the membership of the working group, this would mean a call for nominations open to all members of Academic Assembly, and a new election in July 2020.

Robert Kelsh (Biology and Biochemistry) (Chair)

Sarah White (Social and Policy Sciences) (Secretary)

Sabina Gheduzzi (Mechanical Engineering)

Hartmut Logemann (Mathematical Sciences)

Elke Pawlowski (Skills Centre, Languages)

Theo Papadopoulos (Social and Policy Sciences)

Motion to Academic Assembly (to be taken as one item)

1. Academic Assembly affirms the value of having a Working Group on Accountability and Transparency, and agrees to extend the term of the Group for a further two years, until the end of academic year 2021/22.
2. The working group should have 5 members, to include both a Chair and Secretary.
3. The working group may choose to co-opt up to 2 further members if this were considered to ensure a better balance in terms of faculty representation and other equality & diversity issues.
4. The members should be elected through electronic ballot of all members of Academic Assembly to be held by the end of July 2020
5. A call for expressions of interest should be made, with those willing to stand providing a short statement of intent, to be circulated with the ballot papers

Proposed: Robert Kelsh 

Seconded: Tony Miles