
Meeting: ACADEMIC ASSEMBLY
Date and time: Tuesday 8 May 2018 at 12.30 pm
Venue: CB1.10

Present: Dr A Salo (Chair)
and 57 members
Attending by invitation: Mrs K Bradshaw and Ms L Humphreys
In attendance: Dr C Harris, Secretary to Academic Assembly

ACTION

654 MINUTES

The minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 10 January 2018 (Paper AA16/17-5) were discussed. One member felt that tone of the minutes was not an accurate reflection of the conversation, that there had been more criticism expressed, but did not propose specific amendments to them.

It was proposed by Dr S Wharton that a statement be made in these minutes that it was felt by some members that the balance of reporting in the minutes of the meeting held on 10 January did not express the balance of the discussion. This was agreed by a show of hands of those who were also present at the meeting held on 10 January (for 19: against 4).

Noting that it was felt by some members that the balance of reporting in the minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2018 did not express the balance of the discussion, the minutes were approved and signed by the Chair.

655 POINT OF ORDER

Dr S Gamsu raised a point of order explaining that he had submitted a motion to the Chair for discussion at the meeting, which the Chair had not accepted. He moved for a vote on whether to include the motion on the agenda of the current meeting.

The Chair displayed the motion for members to read and clarified that he had not accepted the motion for several reasons:

- The motion proposed submission to Court which was not in line with Statute 22.4 which states 'The Academic Assembly may discuss and declare an opinion on any matter whatsoever

relating to the University, including any matters referred to it by the Senate, and, if it so decides, submit resolutions to the Senate’;

- It involved terms and conditions of employment as most research associates were on externally funded research contracts and would be expected to work full time on them;
- Background statistical data to inform the debate had not been provided;
- He had suggested to Dr Gamsu that the concerns be passed to the Research Staff Working Group <http://www.bath.ac.uk/teams/research-staff-working-group/>; its main task being to improve the working environment and career management of researchers. He had contacted both the Chair and Secretary of the Group who were willing to look at the issues;
- He had suggested that a better formulated paper be brought to the October 2018 meeting of the Assembly for informed discussion.

Two members of the Secretariat were appointed to count the show of hands. 23 voted to reverse the Chair’s ruling and 18 voted not to do so. Thus a two thirds majority was not achieved to reverse the Chair’s ruling, hence the motion was not accepted for the agenda.

[Chair’s note: two thirds majority of those present (Standing Orders 12.a) would have required 39 voting to reverse the Chair’s ruling].

656 MATTERS ARISING

Minute 652, Matter for Discussion

The Chair reported that the resolution discussed and voted on at the extraordinary meeting held on 10 January 2018 was presented to Senate at its meeting of 7 February. It was noted by Senate.

He also mentioned that it had been presented to Court, which was against Academic Assembly governance (Statute 22.4). There followed a short discussion about whether this was against the governance or not.

Professor J Davenport moved that the Assembly do now move to the next business, which was seconded, and passed by a majority show of hands.

657 RELEVANT DECISIONS OF SENATE

The Chair reminded members of Academic Assembly that reports of the meetings of Senate could be found at:

<http://www.bath.ac.uk/statutory-bodies-committees/bodies-and-committees-senate/Senate/minutes/index.html>

He drew attention to the following:

- (1) Emeritus Professor - Senate approved the revised appointment criteria and process for professors emeriti as per the proposal from the Academic Assembly working party.

The Chair thanked the working party and pointed out that 549 members had responded to the survey.

- (2) Probationary Lecturers Support - Senate agreed:
- i. to introduce induction workshops
 - ii. to improve the support to probationary staff returning from long-term leave
- and that the following should be tested with a sample of staff on probation and Heads of Department to test their appropriateness:
- iii. briefing sessions for Heads of Department
 - iv. monitoring arrangements for staff on probation where performance issues had been identified

The Chair thanked a member, who raised this as a discussion item in the November 2017 meeting.

- (3) Education Strategy - Senate received an update on the transformation of the University's curricula and assessment, including lessons learned from the vanguard programmes. The timetable (spread over 2 years not 1 year) and framework for the first 2 study years were agreed in principle. Further discussion to take place in particular about the size and amounts of Study Units in the latter years of programmes.

The Chair thanked the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Learning and Teaching and the Academic Director of the Centre for Learning and Teaching for providing updates in every Senate since the previous autumn.

658 ELECTIONS

The Chair advised of the results of the elections during the year as follows:

Chair of Academic Assembly:

Dr Jane White, Department of Mathematical Sciences, from 1st August 2018 to 31st July 2021.

Court representatives, for the period to 31 July 2020:

Dr Michael Carley, Department of Mechanical Engineering
Professor Hartmut Logemann, Department of Mathematical Sciences
Ms Elke Pawlowski, Skills Centre

Senate representatives:

Dr Michael Carley, Department of Mechanical Engineering, and Dr Aki Salo, Department for Health, to serve for a period of three years from 1st August 2018 to 31st July 2021

Dr Lizzi Milligan, Department of Education,
to serve with immediate effect for the period to 31st July 2020

Dr Sabina Gheduzzi, Department of Mechanical Engineering,

to serve for a period of two years from 1st August 2018 to 31st July 2020.

659 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S STATUTORY ADDRESS

The Chair welcomed the Vice-Chancellor to the meeting and invited her to give her statutory address to members in accordance with Statute 22.3. The Vice-Chancellor's address is attached to the minutes as an appendix.

As this was the Vice-Chancellor's last address, the Chair summarised some changes during the past 17 years. The student numbers had increased by 75%, the research income increased by 194% and the building area doubled; there had been 7 different governments providing numerous regulatory changes including the introduction of the NSS, REF and TEF. The Chair thanked the Vice-Chancellor for guiding the University through all these changes.

Questions from the floor

Questions were put to the Vice-Chancellor from members of Academic Assembly.

When asked about restricting further development due to the limited nature of the campus the Vice-Chancellor outlined the need to balance growing academic departments resulting in an increased need for student accommodation with satisfying the small historic city's limit on student accommodation. She stated that the University needed to be creative.

A question was asked on the benefits for Higher Education now that education had been moved from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) to the Department of Education (DoE). The Vice-Chancellor responded that when under BIS the funding regulations were controlled in one place (HEFCE and research innovation) whereas now although education was under DoE research innovation was not. She did not anticipate that the aforementioned move would cause any great changes.

660 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Professor James Davenport thanked the Chair on behalf of the Academic Assembly for chairing through an interesting time.

The Chair thanked the elected senators and expressed gratitude to the secretary and other members of the Secretariat for their support.

661 DATES OF MEETINGS 2018/19

Wednesday 31 October 2018 at 1.15 pm
Tuesday 7 May 2019 at 12.30 pm

The meeting concluded at 1.30pm

Academic Assembly

Vice-Chancellor's Statutory Address, May 8th 2018

Introduction

In last year's address to Academic Assembly, I focused on one aspect of the University's Strategy – postgraduate research – and spoke about the challenges and developments in this area.

Today will be my last address as I step down from the role of Vice-Chancellor in August. I would like to take this opportunity to talk more holistically about the University's progress against the 2016-2021 Strategy, to think about what still needs to be done and to share with you some thoughts on national policy and the implications this may have for the University.

University Strategy 2016-2021

But first, let us recap on the five key strategic priorities which are:

- Growing the volume of research and increasing our research power by recruiting more researchers and creating a vibrant environment to encourage discovery and impact;
- Attracting more graduate students by providing them with innovative programmes and first-rate training;
- Stabilising our undergraduate student numbers in order to focus on enhancing the quality of the student experience;
- Continuing to improve the infrastructure both on and off campus, allowing us to provide the facilities our communities require;
- Strengthening our international profile and establishing innovative joint teaching and research programmes with universities outside the UK.

Progress against the University Strategy

This is an ambitious, all-encompassing strategy and I have been impressed by the way our talented community has risen to the challenge and already delivered outstanding results.

So what has been achieved?

We have celebrated considerable success in terms of research with the value of the University's portfolio overtaking the £150 million mark prior to Christmas. In 2016/17, academic colleagues representing all faculties and the School of Management won 40 grants in excess of £250K.

We recognise, however, that monetary value is not the only measure of success; social and environmental impact is critical when addressing issues of global importance.

The University's response to the refugee crisis in the Middle East is a good example of this. Through provision of a new PGCE programme to train Jordanian teachers who are working with refugees, and by sending multi-disciplinary teams of researchers to design housing for

the displaced, the University has the potential to effect positive change on the lives of many. Other examples include the creation of a non-invasive, adhesive patch which promises the measurement of glucose levels through the skin without a finger-prick blood test, and the development of biodegradable cellulose microbeads. The first has the potential to assist millions of people worldwide with their day-to-day living. The latter will help to reduce ocean pollution and the negative impact that plastics are having on the environment.

All of these projects are helping to increase our research volume and we are taking further steps to increase our research power. Our third round of prize fellow recruitment commenced this year, we have launched the Doctoral College to support our research students and we continue to invest in our faculty.

Recognition of research expertise has not been limited to funding and impact success. Eight colleagues from the University were appointed to REF panels last month and I would like to congratulate Matt Davidson, Patrick Keogh, Ian Tonks, Jane Millar, Alison Walker, Mark Haskins, Joe Devine and Dylan Thompson.

Colleagues have also attracted recognition in other arenas. Within the last month, Manuel del Pino has been awarded a Royal Society Research Professorship, Alma Harris and Nick Pearce have been named as Fellows of the Academy of Social Sciences and Carole Mundell has been listed in the 100 most influential women in the West.

The University's multidisciplinary and industry-facing approach to research has also been recognised. The Institute for Mathematical Innovation (IMI) has been praised for its work improving links between academics and industry in a national review of Knowledge Exchange in the Mathematical Sciences commissioned by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council. The University two year Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) with Spirent Communications, the world leader in Galileo, GPS and other global navigation satellite systems (GNSS) testing solutions, has been awarded 'outstanding' by Innovate UK.

The University's strong research profile has facilitated two major projects which have been realised over the last year. Firstly, we have successfully secured an initial £40m from government with further funding from industry for the IAAPS project. IAAPS is an important development for the University heralding, as it does, a major step change in the scale of our activity. It is estimated that it will stimulate £67m in research and development between 2020 and 2025, and will position the UK as a global competitor. We congratulate Gary Hawley and Chris Brace, as well as others within the automotive research area, on this achievement.

Announced by the Prime Minister at the 2018 World Economic Forum in Davos, the £20m Institute of Coding will be led by the University. A consortium of universities, business and industry experts, the Institute will play a central role in developing a world-class pipeline of digital skills.

We have achieved our aim of stabilising UG student numbers this year.

Whilst we saw an increase last year in UG recruitment in 2016/17 due to the pipeline effect, numbers have decreased this year and have been offset by growth in PGT and PGR new students. Particular recognition should be given to the School of Management as well as departments such as Psychology who have moved quickly to introduce new PGT programmes and recruit effectively to them.

Considerable efforts have been made to enhance the student experience, with a revised induction programme, the establishment of the new Centre for Learning and Teaching, and a

revised online unit evaluation being just some of the developments. We achieved a Gold award in the TEF and levels of student satisfaction have remained high with the University being ranked 4th overall in the 2018 THE Student Experience Survey.

The Doctoral College is a significant step forward in increasing the scale and effectiveness of our graduate provision. We are delighted that Cathryn Mitchell has taken on the challenge as Academic Director of the College and that Jeremy Bradshaw has joined us to head up doctoral and international developments as PVC. A Student Union Sabbatical officer post dedicated to PG matters has proven invaluable and the third incumbent is about to take up the post.

As well as an increase in core student numbers, we have seen a significant increase in visiting research student numbers – from 204 in 2015/16, to 253 in 2016/17 and 344 so far this year. This demonstrates an interesting development for research provision resulting from collaborations with other universities in DTCs but also from international research networks.

We have continued to improve infrastructure both on and off campus. Last year saw the formal opening of the Virgil Building, 4 East South and the Pall Mall offices. The Milner Centre and Polden are well underway and plans for the new SoM building have been developed. The new £3.5m gym extension is also on track. The Masterplan has been updated to consider how the campus might be developed further, recognising physical constraints and pressures on accommodation within the City. Consultations took place in March and will inform a final version which will be submitted to B&NES for approval and inclusion in the Council's new Local Plan.

Rankings have remained stable; 4th in the Guardian & we have retained 11th place in the Complete University Guide this year and are still the top placed university in the South West. More importantly, two thirds of our subjects were recognised in the top 10 and 6 in the top 3: Accounting and Finance; Architecture; Marketing; Psychology; Sociology; and Sports Science. Special mention must go to Architecture and Marketing who were ranked first in the country. This is a real achievement and I congratulate everyone who has played their part.

Financially, the University is reasonably sound. The accounts to the end of July 2017 showed that the University remained well placed financially but very real pressures continue to grow. Many routes are being taken to enhance our financial robustness and flexibility. By the start of this year, we had reached a total of over £63m towards our £66m philanthropic fundraising target. The Look Further Campaign will finish soon and I will be able to announce the final figure. Such philanthropic support is extremely important – especially for the many scholars and early career researchers who benefit from it.

What needs to be done?

Higher Education is facing many challenges. Our strategy is serving us well and our direction is strong but we need to continue to make progress against our objectives. There is still much to do.

As already noted, growth potential on campus is limited. The acquisition of the Bath & Bath Science Park will be extremely important to the University as it will enable us not only to realise the ambitions for IAAPS, but also to house other developments. Increasingly, the University will need to think of itself as a multi-site operation rather than a single campus entity.

We are greatly indebted to the City of Bath and to B&NES Council for the support given to the University but we are aware that the local community has been affected by the growth in our student numbers. We hope that our strategy to focus on PG growth rather than UG will help to alleviate some of the concerns, but recognise that there is work to do to regain the support of residents. The incoming Mayor, Cllr Patrick Anketell-Jones, has indicated his intention to use his term of office to foster a mutually beneficial relationship between the City and its universities.

Partnerships with multinationals, such as those involved with IAAPS and the IoC, are vital to our future success. Veronica Hope Hailey's new role as VP for Corporate Engagement will help to increase our sponsorship for both research and learning & teaching activities with such companies as EDF and Unilever.

But we also need to work with SMEs, recognising their significance in this region. The £5m HEFCE grant for SETsquared to identify fast-growing SMEs in South of England and connect them with universities to encourage research and innovation collaborations will help us achieve this aim. The £800k grant (£1.6m project) from the West of England ERDF for the Social and Innovation programme led by Dimo Dimov and £700k (£1.4m project) for the Sustainable Business Acceleration Hub led by Matt Davidson will also have a big impact on our region.

Our research volume, power and impact is growing but there is much to be done to ensure that we are ready for the 2021 REF.

We also need to be prepared for the introduction of the subject level TEF. With the recent successes at subject level in the Complete University Guide, and the Gold award in the university-level TEF, I have no doubt that the University can perform well.

Although the University has made great strides in improving the student experience, feedback shows that more is required. Increasing the amount and quality of our student study space must be a priority going forward.

International recruitment has become increasingly competitive and changes to immigration policy have created a further challenge. We hope that the restructuring of the international recruitment team, our new PVC D&I post and the appointment of Catherine Montgomery as Academic Director of International Partnerships will offer a good base of support for all our international activities.

National policy and its impact on the University?

So what impact will national policy have on the University? I will give four examples.

The first relates to Widening Participation. In recent years, universities have been encouraged to promote access and participation in higher education amongst students from disadvantaged and under-represented groups. Whilst this will remain important, there will be a shift in emphasis towards retention, attainment and progression by disadvantaged and under-represented groups. Supporting such students to achieve their potential is something that we are able to do well at Bath.

The second is concerned with the national Industrial Strategy which is shifting towards targeting funding at high impact research (solving problems and enhancing competitiveness). As I hope I have demonstrated, the University's research is achieving

economic, social and technological impact and I feel we are in a good position to optimise opportunities afforded by the Industrial Strategy and to access the funding that will be made available in a way that is appropriate for the research challenges we see as important.

My third example is the skills agenda. The government aims to make sure that further and higher education provides the skilled workforce employers need and helps individuals reach their full potential. In doing so, it will champion the sort of work we are doing with multinationals, with SMEs and with other universities in our region via GW4. With our strong track record of graduate employment and engagement with business and industry, we are in a good position to be at the forefront of developments.

Finally, we now know that current Government reforms of higher education financing mean that income for teaching increasingly comes through students' tuition fees and to a much lesser extent through the HEFCE/OfS grant. This supports the Government's aims of increasing student choice and supporting a more diverse sector. However, we also now know that funding for high cost subjects will be protected and that the postgraduate supplement will be aimed at supporting high cost subject provision as a complement to the recent postgraduate loan support system. This may be advantageous for us, ensuring that the University will not have to cross-subsidise certain areas. It may also support our strategy for PG growth. Nevertheless, the political climate for tuition fees is uncertain. It is hard to have confidence when planning university directions. Not only the national and EU situation is changing unpredictably but also there are international movements in higher education that will make uncertainty the norm for some time.

Closing remarks

There are clearly interesting and demanding times ahead and the University is fortunate to be able to attract highly qualified and talented people. As I come to the end of my period as Vice-Chancellor, I am confident that the University can continue to thrive. It now has the scale and resilience to have real impact and to become a globally recognised centre of excellence.

I would like to thank you all for everything you have done to ensure the University's excellence. And I wish you well for the future.