UNIVERSITY OF BATH

Academic Assembly
Wednesday 25 October 2023 at 13.15

Virtual meeting via TEAMS

Present:
Professor Alan Hayes, Chair and 47 attendees

In attendance:
Pamela Chesters, Chair of Council

Richard Brooks, Director of HR

Ghazwa Alwani-Starr, Chief Operating Officer

Kate Robinson, Librarian

Rachael Kotarski, Head of Library Research Services

Hannah South, Head of Library Academic Services

Katrin Roberts, Faculty Librarian Humanities and Social Sciences

Helen Rhodes, School of Management Librarian

Secretariat
Katie Anderton, Secretary

Introductory items

778 - Welcome and Quorum
The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, they extended a particular welcome to Pam Chesters, Richard Brooks and Ghazwa Alwani-Starr and thanked them for their participation in the meeting.

779 - Declarations of Interest
There were no declarations of interest.

780 – Membership and Terms of Reference
The membership and Terms of Reference of the Assembly were noted.

Members were reminded that the Terms of Reference for Academic Assembly were available on the web: http://www.bath.ac.uk/statutory-bodies-committees/academic/index.html

781 - Minutes of the Previous Meeting - AA23/24-01

The minutes of the previous meeting of Academic Assembly held on 2 May 2023 were approved.

782 - Actions and Matters Arising - AA23/24-02

The Action Log was noted.

Part I

783 – Relevant Decisions of Senate

It was noted that the minutes of meetings of Senate may be viewed at:
https://www.bath.ac.au/publications/?f.Type%7CY=Minutes&f.Department+or+group%7CX=Senate

There had been two meetings of Senate since the last meeting of the Assembly and the Chair noted that the majority of discussion at these meetings had related to do with the Marking and Assessment Boycott (MAB). The University had had to maintain a balance of doing what was best for students and maintaining their academic standards. Retrospectively this had been done well and the Chair extended their thanks to colleagues for their roles in this.

The following Senate approvals were brought to the attention of members:

JUNE 2023

- Recommendations in relation to:
    o The approach and principles for assuring the quality and standards of marking summative assessment, applicable for the 2022/23 academic year where there is MAB impact.
    o The approach to the administration of marks and interim academic outcomes where there is no or incomplete information, applicable for the 2022/23 academic year where there is MAB impact.
    o The extraordinary options for interim award and classification, applicable for the 2022/23 academic year where there is MAB impact.
    o The conduct of Summer 2023 ceremonies.
- Proposals in relation to Postgraduate Taught students on 100% online courses using NFAAR-PGOLC assessment regulations where there is MAB impact.
- A new MSc Financial Mathematics with Data Science, POLIS DAP and PG CERT/DP in Business Analytics for final Stage 2 approval (QA3 Approval for New Programmes of Study).
- Changes to Regulations to be implemented for the 2023/24 academic year.

SEPTEMBER 2023

- Recommendations in relation to:
    o Quality assurance and marking approaches previously agreed by Senate in June 2023 to continue to apply to postgraduate students undertaking academic year 2022/23 units where there is MAB impact.

- o That interim minimum awards and classifications may be made as an award decision for 2022/23 cohort students, where there is MAB impact/
- o That all MAB-impacted courses with taught content be extraordinarily permitted to opt to award PGTAR exit awards of unnamed, generic PG Certificate and PG Diploma to 2022/23 cohort students.
- o That the extraordinary approaches agreed by Senate in June 2023 for Summer 2023 ceremonies continue to apply to postgraduate students celebrating in January 2024 as appropriate.
- o That the normal maximum period of registration for 2022/23 cohort postgraduate students be exceptionally waived if at risk of being exceeded where suspension related to MAB impact.
- Proposed approaches for handling MAB-delayed supplementary assessments remaining from 2022/23/
- Proposed dates for assessment periods for 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- Proposals for the decision-making approach for complex continuing undergraduate student cases under 2022/23 MAB policy.
- Proposals for the exam board decision-making approach in Autumn 2023.
- The formation of a Research Advisory Board.
- The appointment of the Vice-President (Community & Inclusion) as Chair of the Academic Staff Committee.
- Changes to the Prize Committee's Terms of Reference.

784– Elections – AA23/24 – 03

Academic Assembly <u>noted</u> details of Academic Assembly representatives on University committees.

785 – Chair of Council Update

The Chair of Council extended their thanks to the Chair for the invitation to attend the meeting of the assembly to give an update on the work of Council and the recruitment of the new Vice Chancellor.

They outlined to the Assembly the process by which the recruitment of the next Vice-Chancellor had followed. The Committee which was formed to oversee the recruitment included members of both Senate and Council and the decision had been made that the Committee needed representation from both students and Professional Services Staff and so the Students' Union President and the Director of Education & Student Services had been co-opted. An external, non-voting member was also co-opted to the Committee to give an external view to the decision making.

Recruitment had been led by a recruitment consultancy firm, Perritt Laver, who carried out head hunting exercises as well as extensive advertising to ensure the best candidates came forward.

A consultation process was carried out during the Summer, including focus groups, in order to highlight values which the University Community expected from their Vice-Chancellor.

This allowed the Committee to identify eight specific characteristics they would be looking for during the long and shortlisting process. The longlisting process had already taken place, and the shortlisting process was to take place the following week.

The next stage of the process would give the shortlisted candidates a chance to visit the University, meet members of the current Executive Team and engage in a two-day recruitment event. This would take place in November 2023 and include a final interview as well as a presentation as to their direction for the University. This process would involve the members of the Committee as well as a small group from across the University. The Chair of Council noted that the Committee hoped to have approval of a candidate by the end of 2023 and an announcement would be made shortly after, with a view to them starting in post at the end of July.

Discussion covered the following points:

- Whether there was a contingency plan if there were no appointable candidates or the chosen candidate withdrew from the process. It was noted that this was too important of a role to settle for an appointment and so the Committee would need to reconsider. Perritt Laver had gone through a similar scenario previously and so would be well placed to assist. The Chair of Council was optimistic that an appointment would be made.

The Chair of Council also gave an update on the work of Council over the 2022/23 Academic Year and moving forward to 2023/24. It was noted that the work on the Council Effectiveness Review and Governance Framework Review had faced delays, in part due to changes in staffing in the Governance Team, but there were plans to tie these reviews in with the Senate Review of Business and Operations.

Informal meetings had been put in place before Council meetings with Senate members to allow for discussion on topical issues. It was important for Senate and Council members to interact and improve relationships.

The view of Council was that the University had had a successful year, which was reflected in our rankings, the impressive research capture and the results from the TEF. The Chair of Council extended their thanks to all those involved.

Moving forward finances may be difficult across the sector. The University needs to put a focus on managing its space and resourcing in relation to campus infrastructure and encouraging the recruitment of international students.

The Chair thanked the Chair of Council for their presentation and for their insight into the recruitment of the Vice-Chancellor.

786 - SLT Temporary Structure
The Director of Human Resources attended to give an update on the structure of the executive team.

It was noted that there had been a number of changes in the Executive Team in recent years with the introduction of the Chief Operating Officer and the previous Deputy Vice-Chancellor leaving the University in August 2023.

The current role of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor was looked at, and how this compared with the role at other institutions. It was noted that the role of Deputy Vice-Chancellor was one of the key appointments a Vice-Chancellor has to make and so there was hesitancy to recruit for the role before the next Vice-Chancellor was appointed which would allow for the remit of the role to be looked at and the right candidate recruited for it.

In the interim the responsibilities of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor have been delegated to different members of the Executive Team with a view to strengthening the Senior Team in their collaboration and not becoming reliant on the Vice-Chancellor.

Looking forward it is likely the new Vice-Chancellor would have worked with a Deputy and so an appointment into the role would be looked at. Another area they may consider is the appointment of a University Secretary, a role which was common in other Universities.

Discussion covered the following points:

- The role of the registrar had at one point been instrumental to the running of Universities, did they have any thoughts on why this was no longer the case. It was noted that there were certain roles which did not exist outside of academia. The Director of Education & Student Services role has been created to bring together direct academic support functions. Where there were Registrars in post this role often overlapped with the role of the Chief Operating Officer, and so it was unclear how these roles fit together. It was important not to have too many Senior roles within the Organisation and that any new positions created should highlight a unique aspect.
- It was questioned if there was a difference between internationalisation and global or if it was a rebranding of the same concept. It was clarified that there was a perspective difference between the two, with internationalisation looking out and global looking down. Early international models were taken from a UK view whereas global was more holistic. The University had previously had Pro-Vice-Chancellors (International) but this had been a niche role. It was unclear if this more narrow perspective would have sufficient global read and influence University culture.

The Chair thanked the Director of Human Resources for their update.

787 – Introduction to the COO

The Chair extended a welcome to the Chief Operating Officer (COO) to the Assembly and to the University.

The COO thanked the Chair for the invitation to address the Assembly and extended their thanks to colleagues for the warm welcome to the University. They introduced themselves and their background to the Assembly and outlined their priorities moving forward in the role. These included:

- Marketing and international recruitment,
- Education and Student Services support for international students,
- Space improvements and utilisation.
- Digital Transformation,
- The University's relationship with BANEs.

They noted that the space at the University was not currently best utilised and that there was work needed on the relationship between space utilisation and digital transformation. There was a desire that work into this area would be academically led, taking into account the University's growth and vision for the future.

Discussion covered the following points:

- It was queried as to whether there had been any quick actions that the COO had been able to take forward since starting, as many of their ongoing priorities have longer timelines. It was noted that there was a piece of work surrounding space and space utilisation which had been actioned.
- It was queried whether any bubble concrete had been identified on campus. It was confirmed that it had only been found in one building and that the area had quickly been vacated and action was being taken.

The Chair thanked the COO for attending and for

788 – CT and Campus Infrastructure

The Chair noted that the first year of implemented Curriculum Transformation appeared to be going well and invited colleagues to reach out to them with any further thoughts.

Part 2

789 – New Chair of Academic Assembly

It was noted that the 2023/24 academic year was the final year of Professor Alan Hayes' term as Chair and the election process for the next Chair would soon begin. The Chair encouraged colleagues to apply and invited anyone interested to contact him.

790 – Senate Review of Business and Operations

It was noted that a benchmarking exercise was carried out as part of the Senate Review of Business and Operations in Summer 2023. The report from this exercise would be brought to a future meeting of Senate and subsequently made available to interested members of the Assembly. The Chair would look into the timelines for this.

791 – Programme of Meetings for 2023/24- AA23/24-05

Academic Assembly noted the programme of meetings and the 2023/24 Annual Plan:

- Tuesday 30 April 2024 at 12.30pm, on Teams, to include the Vice-Chancellor's statutory address. It was noted that this would be the Vice-Chancellor's final address.

792 – Any Other Business

There was no business raised.

MINUTES OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 14.15

Please contact the Governance Team If you require any further assistance regarding this meeting.