
Meeting: COUNCIL

Date and Time: Monday 20 February 2020 at 9.30 pm

Venue: Council Chamber

Present:

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| Mrs Pamela Chesters | Chair |
| Ms Eve Alcock | President, Students' Union |
| Mrs Maria Bond | Appointed member |
| Mr Tim Ford | Appointed member |
| Mrs Ruth Foreman | Vice-Chair |
| Mrs Christine Gibbons | Appointed member |
| Professor Barry Gilbertson | Appointed member |
| Professor Dot Griffiths | Appointed member |
| Mr Malcolm Holley | Elected by staff not on Academic Assembly |
| Mr Tim Hollingsworth | Appointed Member |
| Mrs Catherine Mealing-Jones (for the business recorded in Minutes 7114 to 7126) | Appointed Member |
| Mrs Charlotte Moar | Appointed member |
| Ms Ruqia Osman | Education Officer, Students' Union |
| Ms Kate Robinson | Elected by Senate |
| Mr John Preston | Treasurer |
| Professor Danae Stanton Fraser | Elected by Senate |
| Professor Ian White | Vice-Chancellor and President |
| Dr Jane White | Chair of Academic Assembly |

In attendance:

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|---------------------------|--|
| Professor Jeremy Bradshaw | Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International and Doctoral) |
| Professor Jonathan Knight | Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) |
| Professor Peter Lambert | Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) |
| Mr Andrew McLoughlin | SU Chief Executive |
| Professor Bernie Morley | Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost |
| Mr Martin Williams | Director of Finance |
| Dr Cassie Wilson | Vice-President (Student Experience) |

Attendance for specific items of business only:

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| Mr Mike Nicholson | Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions |
| Mr Martyn Whalley | Director of Estates |

Secretariat:

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| Emily Commander | Secretary |
| Clare Henderson | Member of secretariat |

Apologies:

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| Mr Mesar Hameed | Elected by staff not on Academic Assembly |
| Dr David Moon | Elected by Academic Assembly |

7109 WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed Mr Tim Hollingsworth, a new member of Council, and all those attending the meeting.

7110 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- Professor Barry Gilbertson and Mr John Preston declared an association with PwC.
- Mr Tim Hollingsworth declared a long-standing friendship with one of the candidates for Pro-Chancellor (Minute 7120).

7111 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Council meeting of 28 November 2019 were **approved** as a correct record, subject to a minor amendment of the sixth bullet point in minute 7093, which should have read “postgraduate students”, and not “postdoctoral students”. They were then signed by the Chair (paper C19/20 – 31).

7112 MATTERS ARISING

Minute 7080: All members had been paired under the Council links scheme, and a full list of links was available to Council members in electronic format.

Minute 7092: An informal note of the autumn strategy day had been made available to Council members in electronic format.

Minute 7093:

(1) With regard to the annual report of the Independent Advisor for Postgraduate Research, the following actions were being taken:

- The Vice-President (Student Experience) had directed activity to four principal areas:
 - (i) Work with the University Independent Advisor, on the protocols for student interactions with the Independent Advisors, particularly looking at the management of confidentiality and independence issues.
 - (ii) Faculty/Departmental actions. All Faculty Boards were discussing the Independent Advisor’s report and reviewing changes to processes and procedures.
 - (iii) Communications. The Vice President (Student Experience) and others had attended events and the University was responding to requests for better signposting and sharing of best practice.
 - (iv) The Doctoral College was also giving consideration to the report. In particular, work was on-going with Human Resources to establish guidelines and professional boundaries. Training and reporting were being improved.
- The University Executive Board had proposed a new scheme be implemented under which postgraduate students would write six

monthly reports to which supervisor reports would be added.

It was noted that the concerns over PhD student completion rates were subject to ongoing work.

(2) The publication of the structure of new Buildings Board was available on the web at: <https://www.bath.ac.uk/teams/buildings-board/>

(3) The PowerApps Check-In App had been discussed at ARAC (Audit and Risk Assurance Committee) on 29 January 2020. A report of the meeting would come to Council on 25 March 2020. **ARAC**

(4) The Chair of Council had shared her response to UCU on the proposed motion for Council shortly after the meeting on 28 November 2019.

Minute 7100: With regard to the SU Top 10 – Reporting mechanisms into Council would be considered as part of the on-going review into committee Terms of Reference. An update on the 3G pitch would be brought to Council. The PCG (Project Control Group) would be meeting the following week to consider the feasibility study and tender process. This could take several months but it was hoped that an update would be available in early summer. **PCG**

Minute 7101: A forward programme for the Department of Development and Alumni Relations would be presented alongside their annual report in the 2020/21 academic year, as would benchmarking data. **DDAR**

Minute 7107: There would be a Council Strategy Day and meeting on 25 March 2020.

Minute 7108: The Head of Strategic Governance was continuing to work with staff producing papers to ensure that they met the needs of Council.

7113 REPORT OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

The Vice-Chancellor and President presented slides on the development of a new strategy for the University. He noted that work had been ongoing alongside other important and pressing concerns, including REF (Research Excellence Framework) preparations, Curriculum Transformation work, and the activities of two emergency planning teams currently in operation. Professor White drew attention to the following:

- Some 3,600 responses had been received from alumni to add to the responses from staff and students. A profile of the University's strengths and opportunities for improvement had been considered. A number of initial thoughts on the guiding (top level) aspects of the new strategy had been shared with the School of Management and Heads of Department. Some initial consideration had been given to second level goals for education and research.

- Feedback from participants had reflected the University's original values and ethos. There was pride in the educational experience that the University offered, which aimed to ensure well taught, well qualified, well experienced, well rounded students, equipped for future employment and success. Staff acted as role models alongside providing quality teaching. The placement provision was highlighted as being very good and the percentage of students undertaking a placement had increased. The campus nurtured an environment where students could socialise, learn and teach each other. The importance of future focus on subjects that would become increasingly important – such as technology in the wider sense of the intersection of science and society – was key.

The Discovery Report capturing the *Our University, Our Future* discussions would be published at the earliest opportunity, with proposals for exploring the headline themes.

The Vice-Chancellor shared some initial thoughts about the future strategic direction of the University.

Members of Council welcomed the engagement of the community in the *Our University, Our Future* initiative and the many positive outcomes. Council made the following comments:

- The £30 million contribution to sustain research should be subject to further discussion at the March meeting, and in particular there should be clarification as to whether this was increasing or decreasing, and what percentage of research income this represented. Concern was expressed at this level of financial commitment.
- The metrics to be used for comparisons with an international benchmark group of institutions should be shared with Council, when available.
- Rigorous financial control should mean that expenditure and resources were scrutinised. The Vice-Chancellor agreed that detailed financial analysis was critical to longer term plans, alongside getting Faculties and Departments to address any financially unsustainable activities and to develop those initiatives underpinned by proven or strongly anticipated success.
- The capacity to deliver change was crucial and might require external support. It was proposed that the University should envision how it would like to be in the next five/ten years and tailor its strategic objectives around this.
- There needed to be clarity over what was changing, what culture would support that change and the choices that need to be made. It was important that the University more widely supported and understood these three elements and had a sense of timeframes. The Vice-Chancellor noted that the University had a timeframe for objectives such as Curriculum Transformation, which would

PVC (R) / DoF

enhance teaching provision and bring benefits to NSS (National Student Survey) scores, and growth of applications, linked in part to a raft of new courses. These were both short-term objectives. This timeline of the strategy would run to 2022. Within the longer five to ten year+ timeframe, REF (Research Excellence Framework) results would be very significant. The comment was made that staff workloads needed to be addressed, support provided and confidence nurtured for achieving these ambitions.

- The alignment of the University's strategic direction with government priorities should be kept under review. Agility, enabling the University to seize opportunities as they arose, was considered vital to success. The Vice-Chancellor noted that the climate change agenda was embedded within teaching, an example being the low carbon diesel engines that had been developed by academics who were expert in their field and passionate about mitigating climate change. The capacity of the University to influence the local and national agenda was an area to strengthen.
- The distinctive offering of the University and its ability to be bold (a term used in *Our University, Our Future* conversations) were raised. The Vice-Chancellor considered that the University still led the field in its high-quality placement provision and an education that taught students in a very relevant way, equipping them to go out into the workforce and apply their skills.

Council **approved** the strategic direction of travel as set out by the Vice-Chancellor.

Council **noted** the formal report of the Vice-Chancellor (paper C19/20 – 32).

7114 WIDENING PARTICIPATION

Council **considered** the University's Widening Participation initiatives and the Access and Participation Plan (C19/20 – 33). The Director of Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach attended for this item.

Mr Nicholson reported that the OfS (Office for Students) had introduced a five-year Access and Participation Plan (APP) covering the period 2020-2025. This had required the University to align its activity to analyse progress and gaps under four key headings relating to undergraduate admission of UK students, attrition rates for UK students, degree outcomes for UK students and employment/further study outcomes for UK students.

Council made the following comments:

- The data underlying headline figures should be disaggregated and reviewed. The Director of Undergraduate Admissions responded that, in reporting terms, the OfS would not accept statistics based on very small data sets so that the University had to look at both numbers and contextual information to identify issues for action.
- The admissions targets agreed with the OfS would result in a more diverse student body for which the University must be pro-active and clear about the support to be put in place. This should be an

integral part of all discussions around progress to attaining targets. The view was expressed that some under-represented groups were encountering issues that needed to be addressed before further recruitment took place.

- The recruitment of a diverse student population would be facilitated by diversity in the profile of teaching and research staff.
- The support of the alumni community could be harnessed to lend greater impact to projects that addressed some of the challenging issues associated with the targets under the four OfS headings.
- Whilst the gold scholarship scheme did demonstrate benefits in terms of ethnicity and diversity of social class, the University's bursary scheme needed further evaluation.
- Clearing might afford a mechanism for recruiting students that the University did not normally reach. The Director of Undergraduate Admissions noted some success with Clearing but considered that this was a particularly pressurized point for admissions and an uncertain time for applicants.
- A good pre-arrival event to capture the interest of new students could be tailored to the needs of a diverse intake including those without family experience of University.
- On-going enhancement of the student experience should continue to be a tool for attracting and meeting the needs of students from diverse backgrounds. A positive story of good experience would have potential for driving up numbers, but the 'easy to ignore' issues needed to be identified and addressed.
- The achievement of targets and the underlying infrastructure to support integration were raised as potential concerns. The Director of Undergraduate Admissions considered that targets were achievable but could only be realised through significant change. In response to a question on tuition fee waivers, he considered that resources were better directed at supporting students to integrate.

Council **requested** that the next report on progress should include an action plan with an analysis down to Department level and include reference to any areas of identified weakness in order to keep on track to achieve targets.

DofUA

7115 APPLICATIONS 2020 AND ADMISSIONS 2019

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor presented paper C19/20 – 34 (Undergraduate taught admissions and applications update) and 34B (Postgraduate taught admissions and applications update). The Director of Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach attended for this item.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor reported that UK, EU and international undergraduate applications in 2019 were up, which was against the national trend.

Council commended these results but made the following comments:

- The University's declining undergraduate applications from China for 2020, where applications had fallen 11% on 2019 against a

national increase of 34%, was a matter of concern. The Director of Undergraduate Admissions & Outreach reported that his office would be working with postgraduate colleagues on co-ordinated solutions in the recruitment approach for China and would continue to pursue a strategy of recruitment from a range of overseas markets, with India having been a successful area. He noted that the University continued to be highly selective in the offers that it made to ensure academic suitability.

- The risks associated with any decline in entry grades would need to be monitored and managed.

Council **noted** the update on admissions to the University for 2019.

7116 COUNCIL APPEALS COMMITTEE

The Chair of Council introduced a report from the Council Appeals Committee, following meetings on 25 November and 19 December 2019 (paper C19/20 – 35).

Council made the following comments on the points raised for consideration:

- The University should consider making provision for the reporting party to request that the Committee should consider their appeal. This matter was delegated to the executive to consider.
- The proposal that members of the Council Appeals Committee should receive training before being allowed to serve on the Committee was welcomed. This was felt to be key to ensuring those serving had the right competencies and to providing consistency of approach and outcomes. A further way to ensure good practice would be collaboration with other institutions to share learning over procedures and experience.
- Any extension to timelines made the process more difficult.

PVC (L&T)
and VP
(Student
Experience)

Council **noted** the paper.

A further paper would be brought to Council in March by the Vice-President (Student Experience), which would provide statistics and an update on how the new student disciplinary process was embedding.

VP (Student
Experience)

7117 CAPITAL PROJECTS: SUSTAINABILITY

The Director of Estates introduced paper C19/20 – 36, setting out the approach of the University to the sustainability of new buildings and major refurbishments and a proposal for the provision of sustainability information in capital project updates. He explained that the BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) standard had been in existence for nearly 20 years. The University did not pursue a formal BREEAM assessment for value for money reasons, but it did use a “spirit of BREEAM” assessment instead.

Council made the following comments:

- Although there might be valid reasons for not using the accredited BREEAM standard, the University should nevertheless use an auditable benchmark to evidence the robustness of its approach. Where it chose not to follow recommended practice in any area, it should be transparent and clear about the reasons for this decision.
- The publication of data in the annual report or elsewhere relating to sustainability and energy efficiency should have regard for the concerns of readers and, in particular, the student audience. It should be recognised that environmental concerns had become more prevalent and expectations would be high over action being taken.
- The independence of oversight for the spirit of BREEAM assessment should be referenced to appropriate bodies such as the Carbon Trust (with which the University is registered) and linked to the University's strategic initiatives, such as the Climate Action Framework.
- The use of buildings should be monitored to ensure that new builds were used in the way anticipated to reap the benefits. The Director of Estates noted that it was easier to monitor, for example, electricity or water consumption in newer buildings and to plan in response. There was on-going concern to ensure that newer buildings had the equipment in place to monitor targets and that space was well used. In response to a question, the Director of Estates confirmed that the University did not have sight of the performance evaluation of new build designs at other universities.

Council considered the proposal set out in the paper. The provision of sustainability information in capital projects updates was a good starting point. It requested that future papers should provide clarity over how existing buildings were assessed, transparency about choices made, and the performance measures used and linked to the Climate Action Framework.

7118 SENIOR ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Council considered papers C19/20 – 37 and 37A. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor withdrew from the meeting for this item of discussion.

Council **approved:**

- the re-appointment of Professor Bernie Morley as Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost for a period of five years from 1 May 2020 to 30 April 2025
- the extension of the appointment of Dr Nicky Kemp as Acting University Secretary to 30 September 2020 in order to enable phase one of the review of the functions of the University Secretary to be completed.

7119 DRAFT COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS

Council considered new Standing Orders as set out in paper C19/20 - 38.

The Chair of Council and the Head of Strategic Governance were thanked

for their work in drafting new Standing Orders.

Council **approved** the Standing Orders to come into effect at the conclusion of the current meeting.

7120 NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Council considered paper C19/20 – 39. Mrs Ruth Foreman withdrew from the meeting for this item of discussion.

In response to a question on the approach to evaluating of the effectiveness of committees, the Chair of Council noted that Council would be discussing the outcomes of its self-effectiveness review at the March strategy day and meeting. Feedback on how the links scheme was working would be welcome.

HoSG

Council:

- **approved** the revised Terms of Reference for Nominations Committee, as agreed by Nominations Committee on 29 January 2020
- **noted** the proposed job role and appointment process for new Pro-Chancellors
- **recommended** to Court the two proposed candidates, subject to the satisfactory outcome of:
 - (a) due diligence checks and
 - (b) meetings with the Chair of Council and the Vice-Chancellor
- **approved** changes to the Council membership of the Council Appeals Committee and the Senate Appeals Committee as recommended by Nominations Committee.

7121 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2020/21 AND 2021/22

Council **approved** the Calendars of Meetings for the academic years 2021/21 and 2021/22 as set out in paper C19/20 - 40.

Council **noted** the arrangements for scrutiny of the Annual Report and Accounts in 2020/21 as set out in paper C19/20 40 A.

7122 CLIMATE ACTION FRAMEWORK

Council **noted** the paper on the University's Climate Action Framework C19/20 – 41 and commented on the very interesting presentation received and discussed at the working dinner on the previous evening.

7123 ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE: MINUTES

Council **noted** the minutes of:

- Senate on 20 November 2019 (paper C19/20 – 42)
- Senior Academic Appointments Committee on 23 October 2019 (paper C19/20 – 42A)

- Senior Academic Appointments Committee on 21 January 2020 (paper C19/20 – 42B).

124 MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT

Council **noted** the Modern Slavery Statement, which had been approved by Council by correspondence on 22 January 2020 (paper C19/20 – 43).

7125 APPOINTMENT OF A DEAN OF THE SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

Council **noted** the decision taken by Council by correspondence on 11 February 2020 to appoint Professor Stephen Brammer as the Dean of the School of Management (paper C19/20 – 44).

7126 PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2019/20

Council **noted** the programme of meetings for 2019/20, as follows:

- Wednesday 25 March 2020 – Spring Strategy Day
- Thursday 14 May 2020
- Thursday 23 July 2020

The meeting concluded at 12 noon

NOTE *A section of one of the agenda items has been redacted either because it pertains to information relating to individual staff or students, or because it is still commercially confidential.*