

**Meeting:** COURT

**Date and Time:** Tuesday 24 September 2019 at 2.15pm

**Venue:** East Building Lecture Theatre

Present:	Mr R Whorrod Ms E Commander	Pro-Chancellor (Chair) Secretary to Court	
Prof R Aggarwal	Prof B Gilbertson	Mr P Markwick	Mrs A Ross
Miss E Alcock	Prof A Graves	Prof R Marsh	Prof G Ryan
Mr S Ali	Prof M Greaves	Mr F Masala	Mr T Sawko
Prof D Bonfield	Prof C Griffin	Prof R Mawditt	Mr T Sheppard
Mr D Brewer	Mr M Hameed	Prof M McManus	Prof D Tate
Prof A Buchanan	Prof G Hammond	Mrs M McNeir	Prof J Thompson
Prof I Butler	Dr M Harney	Mrs C Moar	Prof M Threadgill
Mrs P Chesters	Dr P Harrowing	Dr D Moon	Mr D Trethewey
Cllr R Clewer	Prof G Hawley	Prof B Morley	Dr J Troyer
Prof D Collard	Dr J Henderson	The Hon S Morrison	Ms K Turner
Prof B Crittenden	Mr M Holley	Mr H Nicholson	Mr M Whalley
Mr N Cutting	Lord Hylton	Miss R Osman	Dr S Wharton
Prof J Davenport	Cllr E Jackson	Dr D Packham	Dr J White
Mr C Davies	Prof J Knight	Ms E Pawlowski	Mr M Williams
Prof A Day	Prof P Lambert	Mr S Pearson	Mr R Williamson
Mr G Dennis	Prof H Logemann	Prof B Rayton	Prof I White
Prof J Eastham	Prof S Kolaczowski	Mr B Rhodes	Prof G Wood
Miss S Fazal	Prof S Lillicrap	Sir Francis Richards	Mr P Wyman
Dr P Ford	Miss A Lobo	Cllr M Rigby	Prof A Zalewska
Mrs R Foreman	Prof G Lunt	Ms K Robinson	Miss J Zhou

In Attendance: Ms C Henderson Governance Manager (Secretary)

Apologies: Apologies were received from 42 members of Court.

*The report below is a summary of the discussion at the meeting.  
It is not a verbatim record.*

**ACTION**

**1. WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS**

The Chair welcomed members of Court to the meeting, in particular new members. He passed on the apologies from the Chancellor.

The Chair introduced the Vice-Chancellor (Professor Ian White), Chair of Council (Mrs Pamela Chesters) and the Head of Strategic Governance (Emily Commander).

It was with sadness that members of Court noted the death on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2019 of the Venerable John Burgess, a life member of Court and former Archdeacon of Bath.

The Chair noted two errors in the membership handbook (paper CT19/20-01):

- Professor Brian McEnaney had died in 2018 and his name should have been removed from section B (iv); and
- the new Chair of Council, Mrs Pamela Chesters, should have been included in section A (xiv).

If members had noticed any other errors in the handbook, the Head of Strategic Governance should be advised.

The Chair reported on changes to Court membership since the handbook had been printed:

- Mr Sarda Ali had been appointed as a representative of the Muslim community;
- Mr John Bampfylde had been appointed from the Trades Council in the City of Bath;
- Lord Hylton's term of office as a representative of the Roman Catholic community and been extended to July 2020; and
- Ms Karen Turner had been appointed as a member of the Free Churches Group.

The Chair invited new members of Court to stand to make themselves known.

The Chair thanked the Deputy Mayor of Bath and NE Somerset, Councillor Manda Rigby, for attending. He noted that Councillor Rigby and a few others had given apologies in advance for leaving the meeting early.

The Chair explained that members of Court had been issued with an electronic voting card instead of a paper voting card. An explanatory note had been provided and further guidance would be available should there be reason to hold a vote. The Chair invited members of Court to express any concerns or objections and confirmed that the meeting would only proceed in this way by consent.

## **2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

The Chair reported that supporting recommendation 9 of the Halpin Review of Governance at the University of Bath stated that: "Declarations of interest should be placed formally on the agenda as the first item for each meeting alongside welcomes and apologies. The Chair should specifically invite declarations at the commencement of each meeting relevant to that meeting, and this principle should apply mutatis mutandis to other committees". He invited anyone having an interest relevant to any of the agenda items to declare it.

***No declarations of interest were made.***

The Chair added that any questions about a declaration of interest could be put to the Office of Strategic Governance at any time.

### 3. MINUTES

Court **AGREED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2019 (paper CT19/20-02) as a correct record of the proceedings and the Chair signed them.

### 4. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising other than that Court reiterated its appreciation of the contribution to the University made by those late life members of Court listed in (Minute 4 (2) of the meeting of 22 January 2019).

### 5. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S PRESENTATION TO COURT

**The Vice-Chancellor** reported that the next meeting of Court in 2020 would include the annual review but that he would take the opportunity to share some initial thoughts. He expressed his delight at returning to the University, which was now a significantly larger institution than when he was last there. Thirty years previously there had been just over 3,700 undergraduate students. Professor White thanked the University community for their welcome and support, in particular Mrs Ruth Foreman and Mrs Pamela Chesters for their kindnesses and advice, Professor Bernie Morley for his work during the interim period before his appointment and the SU Officers. He welcomed Mrs Emily Commander, newly appointed Head of Strategic Governance, to the University.

The Vice-Chancellor set out recent successes achieved by students at international level:

- Team Bath Drones, a multi-disciplinary student team which had won the SESAR special prize at the European Robotics League in February 2019;
- Justin Bean, who had been awarded this year's Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) President's Medal for undergraduate students;
- Ritika Israni, a Bath MBA graduate, who had won this year's MBA Student of the Year at the AMBA Excellence Awards. This was the third time that a Bath MBA graduate had won the award; and
- Bath Zero's electric superbike, Apollo, had achieved an impressive 4<sup>th</sup> place at the Isle of Man Tourist Trophy and MotoE race series in June.

Professor White paid tribute to staff receiving external recognition for their work:

- Professor Jonathan Knight had been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society;
- Professor Rajani Naidoo had been appointed to the UNESCO Chair of HE Management;
- Dr Roy Maconachie and Mr Simon Wharf had received an HE Oscar for their Learning on Screen Best Educational Film Award;
- Professor Cathryn Mitchell had won the 2019 Edward Appleton Medal and Prize (Institute of Physics);
- Professor Joe Devine had been elected a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences; and
- Dr Apala Majumdar had won the Academic category of the 2019 FDM Everywoman in Technology Awards.

In terms of research successes, Professor White drew attention to:

- Reducing injuries in Rugby, leading to reduction in injuries sustained by up to 70% and resulting in the adoption of the findings by World Rugby.

This research had been listed as one of UUK's most significant university breakthroughs and offered a way to promote safer play for over 9 million rugby players worldwide;

- Improving Battery Technology for Electric Vehicles had resulted in the award of £11.2 million by the Faraday Institution to a multi-disciplinary consortium led by the University; and
- The Queen's Award for Enterprise and Innovation had been won by Bath ASU, a spin-out company developing technologies to extend the shelf-life of key biologic chemotherapy drugs which had been achieved through a Knowledge Transfer Partnership.

Other successes of note for the University had included:

- The results of the National Student Survey 2019 with an overall satisfaction rate of 87.2% - nine courses achieving 100% for overall satisfaction and a further seven courses achieving 95% or above. Such excellent scores were attributable to the hard work of staff and students but the task was on-going to improve further the ratings; and
- The results of The Times and The Sunday Times Good University putting the University in 11<sup>th</sup> place overall (up two places) and the top University in the South West. The University had achieved the UK's third highest degree completion rate of 96.6%. The Complete University Guide 2020 had placed the University at 9<sup>th</sup> place (up two places). The QS World University rankings had placed the University in 36<sup>th</sup> place for Social and Policy Sciences.

Highlights and other updates included:

- Three new online MSc courses in Computer Science, Applied Economics, and Entrepreneurship Management & Innovation for which registrations had exceeded prediction;
- The Institute of Coding, taking digital skills to those who otherwise would not have access, had surpassed 22,000 learners and over 40 courses;
- IAAPS (Institute of Advanced Automotive Propulsion Systems) had had its foundation plaque unveiled;
- The School of Management building was progressing well;
- The Milner Centre was launched and academic performance was proving exceptional; the gym extension was being fully utilised;
- The Climate Action Framework had been publicised to reduce carbon emissions on campus and more widely;
- The new post of Vice-President (Student Experience) had been created to provide leadership to enhance the student experience. Dr Cassie Wilson had been appointed; and
- The Deputy Vice-Chancellor had launched the Health and Wellbeing Initiative for the staff and student community.

External engagement would be enhanced:

- The new post of Vice-President (Corporate Engagement) had been established to lead a series of projects looking at how the University could engage more effectively with external partners, with an initial focus on corporate relationships. Professor Veronica Hope Hailey had been appointed and would be working with industry and other organisations to extend corporate relations benefitting student experience, student engagement and research. There was already a lot of charity work being undertaken by students in the city but there was scope for widening the interaction of the University with the city and region.

- The Chief Marketing Officer, Tim Kaner, would be leading on the University's commitment to enhancing the economic, social, environmental and cultural life of our local community.

One of the most significant initiatives had been the launch of the *Our University, Our Future* consultation. In the context of on-going uncertainty around the impact of Brexit, the Augur report, student demographics and technological change, the University was canvassing opinions on the opportunities arising and how to prepare for the future. In this way, a shared common purpose would be built around the direction of travel. Over the coming months, staff and students would be able to make online submissions and engage in person with the conversations being held. It was hoped to finish the initial consultation by Christmas and produce some outputs from the discussions and submissions during Semester 2.

*The Vice-Chancellor then took questions from the floor.*

**Mr Colin Davies** (Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers) asked whether the University had a representative at the UN Climate Action Summit taking place in New York.

**The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)** noted that climate change was an important area of research at the University but it was not possible to confirm the conference attendance of individuals.

**Mr Davies** then asked whether the University kept statistics on student suicides.

**The Vice-Chancellor** noted that there was a gap in data in this area that was being addressed. The University took student and staff wellbeing very seriously.

**Mr Neil Cutting** (Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales), an alumnus of the University, asked whether the vision and strategy set out on the University's website were being achieved.

**The Vice-Chancellor** reported that the quality of teaching was superior at Bath and that applications and admissions remained strong. There had been many excellent examples of growth and advancement in areas of research. The international profile could be strengthened though there were some outstanding areas of success such as some of the research in the School of Management that was ranked in the top 15 globally.

In response to a question from **Dr David Packham** (life member of Court) on whether climate change was reflected in the curriculum, the **Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching)** reported that within the curriculum transformation initiative new courses were being offered. There were two principles governing the climate change framework: social justice and taking action because it is the right thing to do and reduction of carbon emissions. A lot of hard work had been done to reduce carbon emissions per square meter of space on campus, and research and teaching addressed issues of emissions globally with, for example, more efficient diesel engines and policy intervention. There was significant expertise within the University but operationally learning was taking place from partners.

**Councillor Dr Eleanor Jackson** (Chair, B&NES Council) noted that the MaSN (maximum student number) had been lifted and asked for a projection of student numbers and whether the preference was for on campus accommodation or

better integration in the city.

**The Vice-Chancellor** responded that the size of the community had grown significantly since he had last worked at the University but that stability of student numbers was an important concern because of the duty of care. It was essential to establish the best way of accommodating students and the expectations and wishes of the student body in this regard would influence the decisions made.

**Professor Geof Wood** (life member of Court) noted that a post of Vice-President (Engagement) might demonstrate a strong commitment by the University to a strategy of working with the corporate and public sectors, with a remit extending to the 'public good'.

**The Vice-Chancellor** acknowledged the value of engaging with national and international government organisations as an mechanism for influencing leadership. The University's Institute for Policy Research had a key role to play in this area. The provision of executive education by the University could also be explored further. The role of Vice-President (Corporate Engagement) was evolving but corporate and local government and charitable sectors required different approaches. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor had in this respect an important role in developing the relationship with the City Council and would, with the Chief Marketing Officer, continue to foster community links.

**Mr Mesar Hameed** (Council member) asked why the University had not declared a climate emergency in line with the declaration of some colleges and universities across the globe.

**The Vice-Chancellor** reiterated that this was a matter of great importance but that the University was reaching out to seek the views of its members before defining the Climate Action Framework so that this represented a coherent, evidence based and structured approach.

**Professor Ania Zalewska** (Senate member) noted that the University had the previous day hosted a workshop involving individuals from a number of organisations and open to academics and students which had focussed on how companies and industries were responding to climate change and sustainability challenges. In particular, how policy makers, business and investors can address the problems of governability and accountability.

In the context of the recent news on the collapse of Thomas Cook, **Ms Elke Pawlowski** (Academic Assembly) raised the issue of support for staff made redundant.

**The Deputy Vice-Chancellor** confirmed that the package of help offered comprised: the Employee Assistance Programme designed to help with a wide range of work, family and personal issues, redeployment into a new area of work, redundancy pay, access to health and wellbeing services and to the Careers Service.

**Ms Pawlowski** asked how staff to be made redundant were informed.

**The Vice-Chancellor** undertook to confirm the process and report back to her.

**VC**

**Mr Graham Dennis** (Convocation) invited the Vice-Chancellor to outline the University's approach to unconditional offers to prospective students.

**The Vice-Chancellor** confirmed that the University did not give unconditional offers to pre A<sup>1</sup> level candidates. He noted that entry requirements were high and that the University needed to consider how to widen access. However, unconditional offers were detrimental to students fulfilling their potential and achieving their best performance and to ensuring that they were well suited and prepared to study at the University. In general, unconditional offers fulfilled a role only in a minority of subjects such as, for example, fine art.

*The slides of the Vice-Chancellor's report are kept with the record of the meeting.*

## 6. THE HALPIN REPORT

Court received a report from **Mrs Ruth Foreman**, Chair of the Council Effectiveness Review Steering Group. She reminded members of Court that the remit of the Steering Group was to consider and implement, as directed by Council, the recommendations arising from the Halpin Review. She reported that all the recommendations relating to the Remuneration Committee had been implemented and that there had been an independent review of the implementation of the HEFCE recommendations.

The Halpin Review's primary recommendations relating to Council had also been implemented with one exception. Thus an external search agent had led the recruitment of lay members of Council extending the diversity of skills, terms of office had been reviewed, and meetings management had been improved with more granularity in papers, more time for debate, and more challenge to the executive.

The new post of Head of Strategic Governance had been created to take forward an improved governance framework. There had been 55 supporting recommendations relating to the operation of Council, all of which had been resolved apart from two to which attention was being given and one primary recommendation which concerned stakeholder engagement. The Halpin Review had recommended that a review of Court should be undertaken by Council but with Court representation to seek ways and means of modernising engagement. Further to this recommendation a Stakeholder Engagement Steering Group had been set up with membership comprising members of Court and Council and under the chairmanship of the Treasurer, Mr John Preston.

More generally stakeholder engagement was vital to the interests of the University and the Vice-Chancellor had separately launched a review of external engagement with the local community and more widely. The Stakeholder Engagement Steering Group was looking specifically at the role of Council with respect to stakeholders.

Mrs Foreman reported that that with regard to supplementary recommendation 50 on key performance indicators (KPIs) linked to strategy, the Vice-Chancellor had launched *Our University, Our Future* which was a University-wide engagement exercise to achieve a deeper understanding of current areas of strategic focus, and start conversations about the next strategic plan, which would come into effect in 2021. Subsequent to this, the executive would go through the process of developing KPIs for Council to consider.

Mrs Foreman invited questions on the reporting grid advertised to Court members and available at: <https://www.bath.ac.uk/publications/council-effectiveness->

[review-steering-group-progress-on-recommendations-from-the-halpin-review/](#)

**Dr David Packham** asked about implementation of the Halpin recommendation PR6 that Council should publish on the University's website its confirmed minutes unless there was a compelling reason for redacting or withholding information from publication.

**The Chair of Council** reported that Council minutes had been uploaded to the website and that it was proposed to agree at Council any categories of information that would be redacted, for example because of the requirement to preserve the confidentiality of staff and students, commercial sensitivities or where material would be removed in response to an FoI request. Mrs Chesters noted that the Minutes would carry a note of any redactions and the reasons.

**Dr Packham** asked whether the same approach would apply to Senate minutes but, as a result of structural governance changes implemented in light of the Halpin review, Senate minutes fell under the remit of academic governance, and therefore lay outside the scope of the meeting.

**Mr Neil Cutting** noted the usefulness of KPIs to ensure that the University's strategy delivered the anticipated benefits and suggested that expertise within the School of Management might be considered when determining KPIs and monitoring performance.

**Mrs Foreman** expressed her thanks to all those involved in the work of the Steering Group.

## 7. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

**Mrs Pamela Chesters** introduced herself to members of Court and gave a brief summary of her career experience and work with large public and not-for-profit organisations. She expressed her commitment to good governance and to bringing perspectives from other organisations including HEI to strengthen the governance framework at Bath. She noted that the OfS was a more demanding regulator of the HE sector but that the University should also establish what represented good practice within its own context.

The University had already a number of KPIs against which to monitor its performance eg for Finance and the IAAPS project. Mrs Chesters illustrated the nurturing of trust and confidence in the University's processes as casting a stone into a pond that cascaded outwards the ripples, noting that those further from the centre may require longer before they have seen sufficient evidence of change. Similarly, Council needed to engage the wider community in new directions to rebuild good governance. Court constituted an important safety net for ensuring that the right direction of travel was achieved.

Mrs Chesters passed on to Court the apologies of John Preston, Chair of the Stakeholder Engagement Steering Group. She informed Court of the election of Professor Geoff Hammond, Professor Geof Wood and Professor Jeff Thompson to the Steering Group to represent Court. The Halpin Review had recommended a review to identify ways and means of modernising Court as part of a deeper and broader engagement strategy, while preserving and enhancing the ability of stakeholders to challenge and speak truth to power. Mrs Chesters suggested that the key questions to ask concerned identifying the University's stakeholders and how it should engage with them, and then how Court fitted into this

framework. It was important to approach the question of engagement in the right way and relate it to the role of Council and what it needed to fulfil its responsibilities with regard to governance and oversight. The proposed timetable was to formulate concrete proposals by February 2020 and then submit these to Council before working out more detailed provisions. Court would receive updates as the work progressed.

## **8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### 1) Voting

The Chair invited Court to consider the use of voting clickers in future meetings. Members had been given a clicker to try this method of voting which would enable a more accurate report on the numbers voting for or against a motion or abstaining. Court members tested the clickers, voting to support their use in future meetings.

### 2) Pro-Chancellor

It was reported that consideration was being given to the appointment of new Pro-Chancellors. However, as Pro-Chancellors were no longer members of Council, work is first being done to refresh the job and person specification. It was anticipated that a report would be presented to Court at the next meeting.

## **9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was reported that date of the next meeting would be Thursday 30 January 2020.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending, and Court recorded its thanks to him for his chairing of the meeting.

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The meeting concluded at 4.15pm.

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