

Senate Special Meeting

Monday, 8th January 2024 2:30 pm
Hybrid/Council Chamber | Senate

Attendees

Attended

Fran Amery
Steve Brammer - Online Attendance
Zoe Burke - Online attendance
Julian Chaudhuri
Duncan Craig
James Davenport
Fiona Gillison
Sophia Hatzisavvidou - Online attendance
Alan Hayes
Andrew Heath
Titus Hiller - Online Attendance
Jo Hyde
Nigel Johnston
Peter Lambert
David Moon
Fei Qin - Online attendance
Ben Ralph
Kate Robinson - Online attendance
Paul Shepherd
Amber Snary
Danae Stanton Fraser
Cassie Stokes
Edmund Thompson
Jane White
Deborah Wilson
Jun Zang

Apologies for Absence

Jimena Alamo
Teslim Bukoye
Adrian Evans
Sarah Hainsworth
Tim Ibell
Guy McCusker
Jura Neverauskaite
Lorraine Whitmarsh

Partial Attendance

Ian White
Pamela Chesters
Richard Brooks

Welcome and Quorum

Minute by Andrew Browning

The meeting was quorate.

In his capacity as Chair of Senate the Vice-Chancellor opened the meeting. He confirmed that this was a meeting that had been specially convened in order to discuss the appointment of a new Vice-Chancellor at the University. He stated that he personally wished his successor every success in the role.

No other business had been received. The Vice-Chancellor said that he wished to call for an election of a Chair for the remainder of the meeting to discuss his successor. The Interim Head of Governance said that as there was no Deputy Vice-Chancellor in post to assume the role of Senate Chair it was necessary for him to organise an election for Senators to elect a Chair for the remainder of the meeting. The Interim Head of Governance nominated Alan Hayes and with there being no other nominations Senate unanimously elected Alan Hayes to be Chair the remainder of the meeting.

The Vice-Chancellor left the meeting.

Declarations of Interest

Minute by Andrew Browning

There were no declarations of interest.

Recommendation of New Vice-Chancellor

Purpose - For Discussion

Minute by Andrew Browning

Pam Chesters, the Chair of Council, and Richard Brooks, Director of Human Resources joined the meeting.

The Chair of Council said that she was representing the Committee for the Office of the Vice Chancellor ("COVC") due to the Chair of the Committee, the Chancellor, being unable to attend. She said that a comprehensive recruitment process had been undertaken and that there had been unanimity of the Committee throughout. The COVC membership had included members from Senate and the Students' Union as well as Council and a representative of professional services and all had been involved in the final two day process which the shortlisted candidates had participated in.

It was the unanimous view of the COVC that Professor Philip Taylor be recommended to Council as the next Vice-Chancellor of the University. Professor Taylor is currently the Pro Vice-Chancellor Research & Enterprise at the University of Bristol.

Senate members asked whether there would be any recommendations in relation to the recruitment process now that a successful candidate had been found. The Chair of Council confirmed that there would be a "lessons learned" exercise. As an

example, she said that part of the process had included assigning a senior member of staff to each shortlisted candidate as a "buddy" to assist them doing their own due diligence about Bath and this had been positively received. She said that any other suggestions as to how the process could be improved or what had gone well would be welcomed.

Senate asked about the strategic priorities of Professor Taylor. The Chair of Council said that Professor Taylor had made clear that he would first want to listen and understand the University more fully before reaching any firm conclusions and that he had acknowledged that there was already a strong positive trajectory of success on which to build. She noted that at the highest level, the current positioning of Bath as a dual intensive with a focus on quality and inclusivity had been arrived at after careful consideration, involving both Senate and Council and felt that this was unlikely to change.

Senate asked about Professor Taylor's current research work and external appointments and their compatibility with the responsibilities of being Vice-Chancellor. In relation to his research, Professor Taylor had advised he would be looking to transfer some of his grant allocations to other project collaborators. He had already considered the need to cut back on his external appointments, which contractually needed to be agreed with the Chair of Council. She confirmed that after discussion with Prof Taylor, they had agreed he would retain only two such appointments: the government's Net Zero Innovation Board which he did on a pro-bono basis and his Non-Executive role on Northern Powergrid, 6 days of which would be in University time, the balance being undertaken within his annual leave.

The Chair of Council was asked whether there would be a wait until Professor Taylor started working at the University before any senior vacancies were filled including the role of Vice-President (Community & Inclusion). The Director of Human Resources told Senate that an appointment has been made for Vice-President (Community & Inclusion) role. The Chair of Council said that the issue of appointing a Deputy Vice-Chancellor might benefit from waiting until the new Vice-Chancellor could come into post. Currently the tasks of this role were divided between the current Vice-Chancellor, Pro Vice-Chancellors and other senior staff and would continue to be so.

Senate asked that in light of recent events at US HE institutions, whether any due diligence had been carried into whether there could be any concerns regarding plagiarism or similar academic misconduct. The Chair of Council said that a due diligence process had been carried out in relation to the appointment. This had not included plagiarism but had included comprehensive social media checks and no concerns had arisen regarding Professor Taylor's research.

Senate asked about the transition arrangements which would apply between now and Professor Taylor's start date of 1st August. The Chair of Council said that the current Vice-Chancellor remained the accountable officer until 31 July and consequently he retained responsibility for executive decision making at the University until that date. Bristol University had made clear that they did not expect the transition to begin before May. The Chair of Council noted that Professor White had agreed that it would be important for Prof Taylor to understand his thinking,

especially on those strategic issues the impact of which would inevitably extend beyond 1st August.

Senate formally recorded its support for the appointment of Professor Phil Taylor as the next Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bath. Members of the COVC and colleagues in Human Resources were also thanked for their hard work in reaching the point whereby a new Vice-Chancellor could be appointed.

Any Other Business

Minute by Andrew Browning
There was no other business.

The next meeting of Senate would be on 31 January 2023.