
Dr J Agarwal, Dr D Aldamen, Dr M Allinson, Dr M Barbour, Prof A Blom, Mr C Brasnett, Ms P Coonerty, Dr N Dahnoun, Dr D Damen, Dr A Flack, Mr D Freda, Miss H Gyebi-Ababio, Dr S Hannuna, Dr I Hers, Mr P Kent, Mr R Kerse, Miss Y Li, Dr E Love, Mr B Mac Ruairi, Mr TJB Metcalfe, Dr N Milner, Ms A Noble, Dr K Opie, Mrs L Parr, Dr D Poole, Dr S Proud, Dr M Spear

Apologies: Dr K Austin, Miss SE Bain, Prof I Bond, Mr A Brett, Dr S Bullock, Prof Carrington, Dr S Fitzjohn, Prof R Flecker, Mrs M Gillway, Dr J Howarth, Miss R Hudson, Prof P Ireland, Prof FM Jordan, Dr P Langton, Prof J Marklof, Dr S McGuinness, Prof I Nabney, Prof T Payne, Prof T Peters, Prof K Pollman, Prof AJ Ridley, Prof J Robbins, Dr J Wright.

In attendance: Ms L Barling (Clerk),

   1.1 APPROVED the minutes of the meeting of 9 December 2019.

2. CHAIR’S REPORT
   2.1 RECEIVED and NOTED: paper ref: (SN/19-20/019).

   Industrial action

   2.2 The University fully supported benefits for staff that made Bristol a positive place to work, and these included fair pay and a secure pension benefits that were affordable and sustainable over the long term.

   2.3 The University continued to participate in a national collective bargaining arrangement for pay. As one of 147 employers in the scheme, the University was represented by UCEA, whose role it was to negotiate with all the unions on the University’s behalf. This year the University argued for a higher award in line with the Government’s core inflation measure of Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers’ housing costs (CPIH), but it was clear that most institutions considered a higher award unaffordable.

   2.4 This year’s pay award ranged between 1.8% - 3.65% depending on pay grade. In addition, a significant percentage of staff also received an incremental award. The University had urged the sector to move to a position where staff pay increases align with inflation. The University had proposed to the Board of UCEA that employers should offer staff a three-year pay deal linked with CPIH to protect the value of pay for the next negotiating round for 2020/2021 to help settle this industrial action. This excluded pay scale increments that are awarded above this in many cases.

   2.5 There had been a considerable amount of work undertaken in response to these claims both locally and nationally. UCEA had put forward a proposal that provided a framework to ensure all institutions effected positive change.
2.6 The University had been working closely with its UCU representatives and were the first University to publish a collective agreement on reducing the Gender Pay Gap.

2.7 The University would publish its first Ethnicity pay report this year, in advance of this becoming a legal obligation in our sector. The University would demonstrate the same commitment to closing any identified gap as it had in addressing gender pay issues.

2.8 The University had a casualised contracts working group and had been looking at all contracts to see where it could offer more certainty to its staff; it had already moved 100 staff onto permanent contracts in the last 12 months, this work was in conjunction with UCU colleagues. The University had also published Workload Allocation Principles earlier this year. These efforts were recognised by UCU locally but had not been sufficient to stop the strike.

Pensions
2.9 The University was a strong proponent for the establishment of the Joint Expert Panel (JEP) as a mechanism to chart a sustainable way forward for the USS pension scheme which had been, and would be, so important a benefit supporting the recruitment and retention of world-class staff within the UK higher education sector.

2.10 This remained the University’s view, and it was pleased that good progress was being made through the tripartite talks involving USS, UCU and UUK to respond to the recommendations in the JEP’s second report. The University was urging that the sector created sufficient space for these key deliberations.

2.11 The JEP report affirmed the stresses facing the USS scheme in terms of the rising costs to staff and employers due to a significant deficit in the face of regulatory pressures. The University proposed that both sides should be pragmatic and compromise on the employee/employer contributions as an interim goodwill gesture while the tripartite talks worked through these very complex and challenging issues.

2.12 The University was proud of the way that it had been working with the local branch of UCU and the other trade unions to make things better for colleagues. The University was very open to continuing the conversation and responding as positively as it was able to what staff want.

COVID19 update
2.13 Members noted that the University was currently operating in ‘silver mode’, and protocols were in place for when students returned from affected areas.

2.14 The University was reviewing options should circumstances arise where it might possibly contravene its educational assessment, and what the contingency plans should be in that scenario.

2.15 The University was dealing with some instances of negative reactions from students towards Chinese students, and members of Senate were encouraged to continue to be supportive of Chinese students and staff.

2.16 This was a moving situation and timely updates would be provided to students and staff.

3. VICE-CHANCELLOR’S QUESTION TIME
3.1 In response to a query raised by a Bristol SU Sabbatical Officer (PG) regarding industrial action communications planning, members of Senate were encouraged to provide feedback to the Senior Management team about the way in which its communications regarding industrial action were being received ‘on the ground’ by staff and students, and to provide suggestions for improvement. Members noted, however, that messaging,
particularly externally, had to be carried out within the constraints of what UUK and UCEA would allow based on the collective stance of employers.

3.2 In response to a query regarding national guidance for COVID19, members noted that the University was working in consultation with Public Health England and that it was stepping up planning for scenarios where the issue may become more large-scale. Members noted that in terms of communications planning, the University would provide regular updates to staff and students but there was a careful balance to strike, and the University had to be mindful about data protection in individual cases.

4. WRITTEN QUESTIONS
4.1 There were none.

5. FACULTY BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS
5.1 None have been received.

6. DRAFT SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY
6.1 RECEIVED: paper ref: (SN/19-20/020).
6.2 Senate CONSIDERED AND ENDORSED the content of the proposed new Sustainability Strategy, including the aims, objectives and targets within the thematic areas, and made the following comments:
   • The strategy should reference ways in which the University could use its estate differently in order to support staff (and student) wellbeing and sustainability.
   • It would be helpful to bring forward explorations of the digital educational piece, in order to ensure good pedagogic practice.
   • The strategy should more clearly acknowledge the inherent contradictions and challenges that existed around air travel at the University, and provide some mitigating actions/options. Options could potentially include the online delivery of full degree programmes, for example.
   • Whilst the ambitions to increase extra-curricular experiences and provide more course options to students were positive ones, it would be important to consider those alongside the additional resource that would be required to make this happen.
   • The strategy provided a helpful framework for the University, and specific issues (such as research and conference travel, as an example) would be further captured in formalised University policies.

6.3 Senate DISCUSSED the ‘vision’ and ‘mission’ statements within the strategy and raised a concern that these were too centred on carbon at the expense of other issues. Members requested more consideration recognising in particular the holistic view of resources – water, energy, food, mineral resources, social justice and equity, the ecological emergency, and sustainability of the wellbeing of staff and of the sector business model.

6.4 Senate ENDORSED the governance and timescales relating to the new Strategy.

6.5 Senate DISCUSSED any communication requirements in relation to agreed actions, noting that the University was encouraging Schools and Divisions to each develop a carbon action plan by the 31 July 2020.

7. EMERGING ESTATES STRATEGY
7.1 RECEIVED: paper ref: (SN/19-20/021).
7.2 Senate **DISCUSSED** the emerging themes and supporting evidence that would form the basis for an Estates Strategy 2020-2023, including the emerging Estates Strategy framework.

7.3 The following was highlighted:
- It would be important to ensure alignment between the Estates and Sustainability strategies, together with the Staff and Student Wellbeing strategies.
- The University was comfortable with the polycentricity of the University ‘campus’, operating across multiple sites, but it would be important to divest itself of buildings that incurred significant running costs or which lacked suitability.
- Delivery of TQEC was essential because it had a significant return on investment, which would allow the University to properly invest in other parts of the university estate.

7.4 Members were encouraged to send any further feedback to the Chief Property Officer outside of the meeting.

8. **EDUCATION STRATEGY: ANNUAL POSITION PAPER**

8.1 **RECEIVED** and **NOTED**: paper ref: (SN/19-20/022) (powerpoint presentation on file)).

8.2 Senate **REVIEWED** the positioning paper and **DISCUSSED** the following three questions:

1. How could Bristol be more ambitious about research-rich education?
2. Did the outlined approach to student attendance monitoring and the wider student engagement agenda have the right balance between having impact and being realistic to implement?
3. What were the benefits of the educational change agenda, the ways in which it was supporting staff to enhance practice, and any ways that the University could improve the change process?

8.3 The following comments were made:
- There should be dedicated time and space for staff to engage with research so that they could fully deliver research-led teaching. This was particularly important for staff in Pathway 3 roles in terms of the provision of time for reflection on pedagogy, and discussions with their peers.
- Given the increase in the number of students per units, it would be helpful to provide staff with techniques and tactics to allow them to successfully deliver research informed teaching in large class sizes.
- A revised version of the Student attendance policy (which was endorsed by Senate in 2018/19) would be brought back to Senate after further consultation and wider engagement with staff and students. University Education Committee was fully involved in the process and would be providing essential scrutiny prior to the policy returning to Senate.

9. **ACADEMIC CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

9.1 **RECEIVED**: paper ref: (SN/19-20/023).

9.2 Senate **DISCUSSED** the programme objectives, the programme scope, and the programme projects and workstreams.

9.3 The University would share information with staff that would help them in preparing their research ‘environment statement’.

10. **GOVERNANCE PROGRESS UPDATE: MODERNISATION OF THE UNIVERSITY CONSTITUTION**
10.1 RECEIVED and NOTED: paper ref: (SN/19-20/024).

11. WHAT APPLICANTS WANT: AN ANALYSIS OF THE FACTORS INFLUENCING HOME UNDERGRADUATE OFFER-HOLDER

11.1 RECEIVED: paper ref: (SN/19-20/025) (powerpoint presentation on file)).

11.2 Senate DISCUSSED the approach described in the paper (and presentation) and ways in which members of Senate might help embed inclusion across the University and also CONSIDERED steps that members might take in their schools/departments in order to achieve this.

11.3 The following comments were made:
- It would be useful to survey those people who decided not to attend University open days.
- Analysis on international applicants would also be useful, and it was agreed that SRAA would circulate analysis outside of the meeting.
- It would be important to ensure that SRAA worked in partnership with Schools to agree the number of visit days, and being as flexible as possible, bearing in mind the differences between Schools across the institution.
- It was important to recognise the challenges around the desire to build regular and physical communities for students to work in, and the desire to respond to student needs by potentially building more multi-subject degree programmes, which may create a split into sub groups of communities.
- It would be helpful to provide Schools and Faculties with information about those students who did not visit the University, and their reasons why.
- In future, it would be helpful to provide Schools and Faculties with information that was broken down by WP characteristics.

12. UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

12.1 RECEIVED and ENDORSED: paper ref: (SN/19-20/026).

12.2 Senate ENDORSED and RECOMMENDED TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES the following:

A Minor revision to Ordinance 19 to the list of degrees awarded by each faculty: addition of ‘Master of Science denoted by MSci’ to the list of academic awards in the Faculty of Engineering.

13. UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMITTEE REPORT

13.1 RECEIVED and APPROVED: paper ref: (SN/19-20/027).

13.2 Senate APPROVED the updated URC Terms of Reference and; the Ethics of Research Committee Policy & Procedure and updated Terms of Reference.

13.3 Senate APPROVED the PGR Committee Terms of Reference subject to the following:
- The terms of reference document did not make it clear about the University’s aspiration to grow PGR numbers.
- Given the above, it would be helpful to ensure that the skills/experience of the members appointed to the committee, were such that it benefited the committee and the University by helping the University to achieve its aspirations in this area.

14. EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY, INCLUDING CONSIDERATION OF EQUALITY RELATED RISKS
14.1 Senate considered EDI related risks as part of discussions around academic career and development programme.

15. **COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION**
15.1 Members of Senate were encouraged to provide further feedback to the Chief Property Officer on the Estates and Sustainability strategies, and to share what was discussed today with their colleagues in the University.

15.2 The Senior Management team would review the timings currently allotted for Senior Team ‘drop-in sessions’ in order to address some concerns about how inclusive the timings were.

16. **CONSIDERATION OF SUSTAINABILITY MATTERS**
16.1 These were considered during discussions on the University’s draft sustainability strategy.

17. **CONSIDERATION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE MATTERS**
17.1 No quality assurance matters were raised.

18. **Date of Next meeting:** The date of the next meeting of Senate would be Monday 6 April 2020, in the Reception Room, Wills Memorial Building.