



MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

FRIDAY 7th JULY 2023

BURGES SALMON, ONE GLASS WHARF, BRISTOL, BS2 0ZX MINUTES

Present: Mr J Boyer (Chair), Professor E Welch (Vice-Chancellor), Ms G Bowen, Mrs K Bright, Professor A Carr, Ms J Cecil, Ms L Fletcher, Mr N Joicey, Dr J Khawaja, Ms X Levantis, Mr F Quek, Mr S Robertson, Professor J Squires (Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost).

In attendance: Mick Axtell (Chief Financial Services Officer), Lucy Barling (Deputy Head of Governance), Ruth Day (former Student Trustee) – as an observer, Harrison Gorst (former Student Trustee) – as an observer, Veronica Hope-Hailey (Dean, Business School) for item 9, Jilly Huggins (Professional Services Trustee from 1 August 2023) – as an observer, Tansy Jessop (Pro Vice-Chancellor, Education and Students) for items 12 & 13, Lucie Lambert (Governance Apprentice from 1 September 2023) – as an observer, Lucinda Parr (Registrar and University Secretary), Jon Price (Chief Operating Officer, Business School) for item 9, Hannah Quinn (Chief of Staff), Kate Whittington (Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor, Education Quality and Standards) for items 13 & 14, Keith Woolley (Chief Information Officer) for item 12.

Apologies: Professor I Craddock, Ms O Adesanya, Professor C Relton, Miss H Thornton.

1 WELCOMES, APOLOGIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members and noted apologies.
- 1.2 The Board was reminded that this was the last meeting for the following outgoing members, and both were thanked for their valuable contributions over the past years:
 - Caroline Relton (Academic Trustee)
 - Kirsty Bright (Professional Services Trustee)
- 1.3 The Board also thanked last year's student trustees (Ruth Day and Harrison Gorst) for their support to onboard the incoming student trustees. Ruth and Harrison were in attendance today in an observer capacity.
- 1.4 The Chair welcomed the following incoming trustees to their first meeting (two in observer capacity):
 - Xenia Levantis (Student Trustee)
 - Lucie Lambert (Board Apprentice) - observer
 - Jilly Huggins (Professional Services Trustee) – observer
- 1.5 **NOTED** that recruitment for four further independent trustees was ongoing. The Chair informed the Board that one further appointment had been made since the paperwork was circulated for today's meeting - Dame Professor Melanie Welham, Chair and CEO of BBSRC. Dame Prof Welham would join the Board as an independent trustee from 1st September and email approval would be sought from the Board in due course.
- 1.6 **NOTED** the QS World Ranking 2024 results – the University of Bristol had risen 6 places to 55 in the world, remaining at 9 in the UK. This was excellent progress on the stated aim to join the Top 50 in the World. The Chair congratulated the DVC & Provost, the PVC Research and their wider teams for such an incredible accomplishment.

1.7 The Board congratulated Nick Joicey on his recent new appointment as the Second Permanent Secretary in DEFRA.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 There were none.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

3.1 RECEIVED and **APPROVED**: previous meeting minutes (*on file*).

3.2 The Board **APPROVED** the minutes of the 26th May meeting of the Board of Trustees (*on file*) **subject to** the provision of additional clarification in section 6.5 with regards to the reduction in SPIs. The Secretary would make the relevant amendments and the Chair would then approve the minutes for publication (redacted as appropriate).

4 ACTIONS & MATTERS ARISING

4.1 RECEIVED and **CONSIDERED**: the Board action register (*on file*).

4.2 The following was **DISCUSSED**:

4.2.1 Health and safety trustee training which was being considered for delivery in the Autumn.

4.2.2 The new REF framework and implications for UoB. A date had been agreed with the PVC Research to bring a REF preparation update to the November Board meeting. This was on the Board forward planner.

5 EXECUTIVE GROUP REPORT AND QUESTIONS (ref BT/22-23/061) (*on file*)).

5.1 RECEIVED and **CONSIDERED**: the report of the Executive.

5.2 The Vice-Chancellor introduced her report, and the following was **DISCUSSED** specifically in relation to industrial relations and the Marking & Assessment Boycott (MAB):

5.2.1 The impact of the MAB was very much concentrated in a small number of Schools, namely SSL and some in Arts.

5.2.2 The Temporary Regulations which had been put in place and approved by Senate and the Board allowed for additional ways to make awards if academic standards were met.

5.2.3 **REDACTED: Section 22: information intended for future publication**

5.2.4 There had been murmurings of a potential re-ballot (post 24th September when the current action was due to conclude) with a view to continue striking during the Autumn. Should it occur, this would have a significantly higher impact on PGT students in the affected areas, many of whom had already planned their departure dates, thereby putting visas at risk.

5.2.5 The University had done well to position itself with its students, including working together with the SU to communicate individually with those students who were impacted, explaining what the situation was, and how the University would expect to resolve it.

5.2.6 The University was proactively considering a goodwill payment for impacted students. This goodwill payment would not stop nor reduce the number of complaints to the OIA but the University felt strongly that this was an important ethical point.

5.2.6 The additional support provided within the affected Schools, which included: more staff deployed to speak with students, the student information service acting as a triage service, and support for front line staff. Support was targeted and comprehensive and the student information services were trained to know about specific students who perhaps were at more of a special disadvantage.

5.2.7 The heroism of staff from all parts of the University who had gone above and beyond to complete student marking during such a challenging time.

5.2.8 The impact of the MAB on Professional Services staff, which had been significant.

- 5.2.9 How important it was to maintain an audit trail of where the student goodwill payments were being deployed.
- 5.2.10 The Board emphasised its support for the direction of travel in terms of how the University was working to mitigate the impact of the MAB on its students.

5.3 Other key aspects of the report were also **DISCUSSED** as follows:

5.3.1 The PS Operating Model was now well underway. The key areas of focus for the PS Operating Model were around Finance processes, HR processes, Student facing systems, and the University’s change capacity. With the appointment of the new Dir. of Strategic Communications (Annabel Chalker) from August 2023, the Operating Model would soon turn to what the University’s Professional Services should look like going forward and how to best align with the new academic structures that were being put in place (see section 11 below). The Board agreed that it would be helpful to invite the new Dir. of Strategic Communications to a future Board meeting to provide trustees with a sense of the direction of travel.

Action: Head of Governance

5.3.2 NSS results had now been shifted back nationally to 18th August 2023. Bristol was the only University who had retained the final question in the Survey (which was no longer a required question) ‘Overall, how satisfied are you with your experience at the University?’ NSS Results and analysis would be shared with the Board in September.

5.3.3 REDACTED: Section 22: Information intended for future publication

5.3.4 With regards to student housing, it was important to be mindful of how this was handled given the potential to create silos (the have’s and the have not’s) and to learn lessons from other Universities. The Executive commented on the results of the recent student residential survey, which highlighted that the most important matter for students was being co-located with other students. The accommodation in Newport in Cardiff, specifically, was part of a student village where there would be pro-active community building activities and other students to socialise with. In addition, there would be door-to-door travel, day and night, between the Newport student village and the University. The Board noted that the University provided a range of different accommodation offerings and would continue to communicate with students about those offerings so that they understood what types of accommodation they could choose from. The Board also noted that the rooms in Newport could be ‘scaled up’ if required in future years.

5.3.5 REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests

5.3.6 REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests

5.3.7 The Board was pleased to see that the University had changed its staff recruitment policy to advertise open-ended vacancies externally as well as internally. This was very positive in terms of diversity and encouraging a local workforce into the University.

5.3.8 The University was working hard to address the increase in demand on counselling services, specifically triaging wellbeing support more effectively and upping telephone subscriptions. The University was also putting in place a student liaison service together with UWE, which was on track to go live in September. The Executive and wider teams would continue to work collaboratively with other organisations and external partners to try and offer services where it was particularly challenged, in partnership with the NHS.

6 KEY UNIVERSITY RISK REVIEW (ref BT/22-23/062) (on file)).

6.1 RECEIVED and **CONSIDERED**: the Key University Risk Review.

6.2 The Registrar introduced the report, and the Board **CONSIDERED** the following:

6.2.1 The overall controls in place to manage the Key University Risks;

6.2.2 REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests

6.2.3 REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests

6.3 The Board **NOTED** that the University Risk Appetite Statements had been scrutinised by UEB on 19th June, and by the Audit & Risk Committee on 22nd June and that further discussions and iterations were required prior to the item being considered by the Board in the autumn term.

6.4 The following was **DISCUSSED**:

6.4.1 REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests

6.4.2 REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests

6.4.3 REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests

6.4.4 REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests

Action: Registrar

6.5 The Board **APPROVED** the University’s overall risk profile, and felt assured that the University’s arrangements for risk management remained adequate and effective.

7 INSTITUTIONAL RISK EXPOSURE: CHINA (ref BT/22-23/063) (on file)).

7.1 RECEIVED and **CONSIDERED**: an update report on the University’s International Risk Exposure to China.

7.2 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor introduced her report which highlighted the University’s assessment of the risks relating to its institutional exposure to China in the context of international student recruitment; what was currently happening in the sector; and the mitigating actions which had been in place to reduce the risk rating related to this newly added KUR.

7.3 The following was **NOTED**:

7.3.1 REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests

7.3.2 REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests

7.3.3 REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests

- 7.3.4 REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests
- 7.3.5 REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests
- 7.3.6 REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests

7.4 The following was **DISCUSSED**:

- 7.4.1 It would be helpful to provide the Board with: a) a more granular level of data regarding the progression that the University was anticipating in Chinese students compared with 'rest of world'; and b) a list of the top key emerging markets for the University.
Action: Provost
- 7.4.2 Being an international university, it was important to always be mindful of different cultural learning and teaching styles as well as different expectations and the impact of this on the way in which classrooms might operate. The Student Experience Programme was working hard to ensure the best onboarding experience for international students as this was key.
- 7.4.3 The discussions and subsequent developments in Westminster relating to the restriction of accompanying family members coming to the UK from countries such as India and Nigeria were ones to keep abreast of REDACTED: Section 43
- 7.4.4 The University's aspiration to become Top 50 in the world was very much aligned with its need and intention to recruit more international students. The University should anticipate the fact that international students were becoming increasingly more discerning in such a competitive environment about attending universities with higher world rankings as well as strong research reputations/rankings.
- 7.4.5 It was suggested that the [speech](#) delivered by Jake Sullivan, the US National Security Advisor, in April 2023, in relation to American economic leadership and its relationship with China, because underpinning that was a strong objective of building security and resilience from China. The Board agreed that the University should be mindful of this.
- 7.4.6 As the University continued to grow and diversify, it should be mindful of diversity, ethnicity and being clear in our messaging that the growth of international students would encourage a more diverse university community that was nationally and internationally reflective of its Global Strategy.
- 7.4.7 REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests
- 7.4.8 The University should continue to keep an eye on what was happening in Europe (Horizon programme etc) in the context of the recruitment of international students from Asia and Africa.

7.5 The Board **ENDORSED** the overall approach being taken in this area. Members emphasised that they had understood the different options presented and that they had sufficient confidence in the direction of travel

REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests

8 UPDATE ON SIZE AND SHAPE (ref BT/22-23/064) & (PowerPoint slides) (*on file*)).

8.1 RECEIVED and **CONSIDERED**: an update from the DVC & Provost on Size and Shape and Deep Dives – specifically, the progress to date on identifying future financial improvement opportunities, future plans on how they would be taken forward, and a specific proposal (T1) REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests

8.2 The Board **CONSIDERED** whether the approach highlighted in the report was appropriate REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests

8.3 The following was **DISCUSSED**:

8.3.1 This was a good first step and the University should clearly articulate to staff and students why these different choices were being made, in order to bring people along on the journey.

8.3.2 The 13 proposals contained in the paperwork were not only financially beneficial but would also assist the University in delivering its 2030 Strategy. The recent UMT Plenary gave its overwhelming support for delivering on the proposals.

8.3.3 It was anticipated that the new faculty structure and the PVC & Executive Dean roles would help to drive change operationally, structurally and in terms of leadership in order to empower Schools to own key processes and objectives and to deliver against those. It was essential that Heads of School had a clear sense of their mission and what they needed to do to achieve it.

8.3.4 The Board agreed that T1 as a proposal was the easiest to deliver quickly but was also high risk so members emphasised the need for the University to take a measured approach.

8.3.5 REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests

Veronica Hope-Hailey & Jon Price joined the meeting

9 UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL VISION (ref BT/22-23/065) & PowerPoint slides (*on file*)).

9.1 RECEIVED and **CONSIDERED**: a paper and presentation on different options (options appraisal) for the future strategy for the University Business School.

9.2 The Dean of the Business School and the Chief Operating Officer of the Business School presented to the Board.

9.3 The following was **DISCUSSED**:

9.3.1 REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests

9.3.2 REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests

9.3.3 REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests

9.3.4 REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests

9.4 The Board **ENDORSED** the two suggested options for further review, with decisions to be taken at the September Board meeting, **subject to** the inclusion of the following information as part of the decision-making process:

9.4.1 REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests

9.4.2 REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests

9.4.3 REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests

9.4.4 REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests

9.5 The next iteration of this paper would be presented to the Board for decision in September.

Veronica Hope-Hailey & Jon Price left the meeting

10 FINANCE REPORT (ref **BT/22-23/066**) (*on file*).

10.1 **RECEIVED** and **CONSIDERED**: the Finance Report.

10.2 The Chief Financial Services Officer introduced the report.

10.3 The Board **CONSIDERED** the financial performance for the first ten months of the financial year that would end on 31 July 2023 and the forecast financial outcome for 2022/23, including whether management was taking appropriate action to address areas of underperformance.

10.4 The following was **DISCUSSED**:

10.4.1 For future iterations of this paper, the Board requested that the stress-testing on the financial plan include the China scenario as discussed earlier in today's meeting,
REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests

10.4.2 REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests
The CFSO agreed to bring this back to FIC in September, and anything material that emerged out of the discussion at FIC would be brought to the attention of the Board by exception.

10.4.3 REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests

10.5 **APPROVED**: the updated financial plans from 2024/25 to 2026/27.

10.6 **APPROVED**: the revised Capital Programme.

10.7 **APPROVED**: the proposed mechanisms to provide more flexibility for in-year spending.

10.8 **APPROVED**: the Student Union Budget for 2023/24.

11 NEW ACADEMIC STRUCTURES (ref **BT/22-23/067**) & PowerPoint slides (*on file*).

11.1 **RECEIVED** and **APPROVED**: a report and presentation on New Academic Structures delivered by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost.

11.2 The following was **DISCUSSED**:

11.2.1 How the new structure was felt to be well-aligned with other UK University faculty structures and how it represented excellent preparation for the next REF.

11.2.2 The way in which the new structure mapped onto the University's plans for TQ, specifically in terms of making best advantage of the new space.

11.2.3 The challenges around a) systems and professional services operations, and the opportunity to review, streamline and make those more consistent; b) the reorganisation of Faculty support and; c) cultural challenges.

REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests

11.2.4 The impact of the change in faculty structures for students.

REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests

11.2.5 Given the above, the importance of involving the University Change team to assist in addressing the cultural challenges.

11.3 **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**: the move to a three Faculty Structure.

11.4 **UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**: the naming of the three Faculties as follows:

- Arts, Law & Social Sciences
- Health & life Sciences
- Sciences & Engineering

Tansy Jessop & Keith Woolley joined the meeting

12 SENSITISATION: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (PRESENTATION) (on file).

12.1 **RECEIVED** and **CONSIDERED**: a presentation by Tansy Jessop, PVC Education and Keith Woolley, CIO, on Generative Artificial Intelligence in Learning, Teaching and Assessment.

12.2 The following was **DISCUSSED**:

12.2.1 How the University would build AI into its operational processes, delivery models and the staff and student experience.

12.2.2 The importance of learning from others and seeing generative AI from different dimensions. Specifically focusing on Russell Group [conversations](#) and Whitehall discussions.

12.2.3 An industry-led perspective and collaborations would be essential going forward.

REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests

12.2.4 Challenges in relation to AI, particularly in relation to examinations and assessment and what the University should consider putting into place to mitigate against this.

Section 43

12.2.5 Other challenges discussed were around cyber security, and looking internally at the potential for AI to leave people behind and to create divisions and how the University could best mitigate these.

12.2.6 How to ensure that our graduates were not affected when going into the job market.

REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests

12.2.6 It was important to always have in mind the bigger public policy questions: How do we prepare the environment in which the UK can innovate in this space? What are the applications for AI? And then how do we adjust to the implications in terms of the world of work? Also, what should the University be doing to prepare students for the impact of AI? It would be important to sensitise and prepare people.

- 12.7 Specific support which the PVC Education requested of the Board was around improving the level of connection and engagement with the private sector.

REDACTED: Section 43: Commercial Interests

- 12.8 The Board **AGREED** to do a deep dive on Artificial Intelligence at its Away Day on 21st March 2024 to involve experts from different parts of the University to present their findings and learning. The discussion should provide the Board with:

- a) a better sense of what was the type of process re-engineering required in terms of the way the University should be run and the way it delivered its educational and research provision and;
- b) clarity around how best to deliver on addressing the inequalities created by AI.

Action: Head of Governance

*Keith Woolley left the meeting
Kate Whittington joined the meeting*

- 13 ANNUAL REPORT: QUALITY & STANDARDS 2021/22** (ref **BT/22-23/069**) (on file)).

- 13.1 RECEIVED and **APPROVED**: the Annual Report of Quality Assurance 2021/22.

- 13.2 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor introduced the report, and the following was **DISCUSSED**:

- 13.2.1 The evolving and increasingly complex regulatory environment within which the HE sector was now operating.

- 13.2.2 Awarding gaps for certain groups were getting wider post-Covid and more analysis needed to be done around why this was the case. The Board noted that it was difficult to know how much of this was due to the mitigations that the University had to put in place during the pandemic and the way in which it changed how it assessed student during that time.

Tansy Jessop left the meeting

- 14 STUDENT MATTERS** (ref **BT/22-23/070**) (on file)).

- 14.1 RECEIVED and **CONSIDERED**: various reports on Student related matters.

- 14.2 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor introduced the report, with support from the PVC Education and the APVC Education Quality and Standards.

- 14.3 **APPROVED**: the University of Bristol Degree Outcomes Statement.

- 14.4 **APPROVED**: the Student Agreement for 2023/24.

- 14.5 **APPROVED**: the Student Protection Plan for 2023/24.

- 14.6 **APPROVED**: the Student Intellectual Property Policy for 2023/24.

- 14.6 **NOTED**: the Appeals and Complaints Annual Report covering 2021/22.

- 14.7 The Board requested that for the 2022/23 Degree Outcomes Statement, the table relating to attainment by demographic characteristics should either be disaggregated, or a link should be provided in the report for a more detailed breakdown of the awarding gaps.

Kate Whittington left the meeting

- 15 CHAIR'S REPORT** (ref **BT/22-23/071**) (on file)).

- 15.1 RECEIVED and **NOTED**: the Chair's Report

- 16 UNIVERSITY SECRETARY'S REPORT** (reference **BT/22-23/072**)

- 16.1 RECEIVED and **APPROVED**: the University Secretary's Report.

- 16.1.1 The Board **APPROVED** the updated list of authorised officers for the purposes of the operation of the resolution of 3 April 2020, in relation to the delegation of authority to use the University Seal.
- 16.1.2 The Board **NOTED** the Chair's use of his delegated authority and Chairs Powers to take decisions between meetings.
- 17 REPORT FROM FINANCE & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE** (ref **BT/22-23/073**) (*on file*).
- 17.1 **RECEIVED** and **APPROVED**: the Report from Finance & Infrastructure Committee.
- 18 REPORT FROM NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE** (ref **BT/22-23/074**) (*on file*).
- 18.1 **RECEIVED** and **APPROVED**: the Report from Nominations Committee.
- 18.2 The Chair introduced the report.
- 18.2.1 **APPROVED** the appointment of Ian Craddock as Academic Staff Trustee on the Board of Trustees for a 3-year second term from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2026.
- 18.2.2 **APPROVED** the appointment of Jilly Huggins as Professional Services Staff Trustee on the Board of Trustees for an initial 3-year term from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2026.
- 18.2.3 **APPROVED** the appointment of Charlie Cowley as Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Oversight Committee Staff Representative for an initial 3-year term from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2026.
- 18.2.4 **APPROVED** the appointment of Lucie Lambert as Governance Apprentice on the Board of Trustees for a one-year term from 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024.
- 18.2.5 **NOTED** that the appointment of Xenia Levantis and Helena Thornton as Student Trustees on the Board of Trustees for a one-year term from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 had been approved by the Board via email in advance of the meeting.
- 19 REPORT FROM AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE** (ref **BT/22-23/068**) (*on file*).
- 19.1 **RECEIVED** and **APPROVED**: the Report from Audit & Risk Committee.
- 19.2 Mr S Robertson, member of the Audit & Risk Committee, introduced the report in the absence of the Chair.
- 19.3 **APPROVED**: the reappointment of RSM as the internal auditors for the year ending 31 July 2024.
- 19.4 **APPROVED**: the reappointment PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC) as external auditors for the year ending 31 July 2023.
- 20 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
- 20.1 Board members agreed to look at their diaries to check their availability for moving the November 2023 Board meeting from 17th November to the 16th November. The Governance team would be in contact via email to canvass availability, in due course.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 22 September 2023

Signed by the Chair of the Board:

Section 40:

Personal info

Jack Boyer

Date: 22 September 2023