



## MEETING OF SENATE MINUTES

**Monday 19 June 2023**

15.00, virtual Microsoft Teams meeting

### **Present:**

Professors: Allen, Banissy, Barbour, Bickers, Birdi, Cater, C Chapman, Clark, Clatworthy, Dermott, Dillingham N Edwards, George, Hodos, Juncos, Marklof, McGirr, Mundell, Nabney, Nairn, Oliphant, O Madhloom, O'Toole, T Parkin, Powell, Raven, Ridley, Robbins, Roberts, Rust, Sandvoss, Savery, Schwarzacher, Smart, Spear, Squires, Tavaré, Taylor, Tether, N Timpson, Tormey, Warburton, Welch, West, Wilding.

Ms T Adeniyi, Ms Y Ankaine, Dr M Allinson, Mr J Barrie, Mr S Buffonge, Dr N Carhart, Mr X Chen, Dr A Clayton, Dr S East, Dr T Ellson, Dr V Erlandsson, Mr E Fay, Ms J Inglis on behalf of Mr D Freda, Dr C Fricker, Dr H Gadelha, Ms A Garr, Dr F Ginn, Dr G Hemani, Dr J Howarth, Ms L Macey (Postgraduate Education Officer, Bristol SU), Dr B Main, Dr J McManus, Mr M Munafo, Dr M Gillway, Dr D Pamunuwa, Dr B Pohl, Dr S Proud, Dr J Ross, Mr S Williams (UG Student rep). Dr K Trimmis, Dr M Werner, Whittington.

**In attendance:** L Barling (Deputy Head of Governance), J Bridgwater, T Brunnock, C Buchanan, P Coonerty, T Ellson, M Flay, M Gillway, H Quinn, C Relton, P Vermeulen, C Warburton, D Wilson.

**Apologies:** M Allen, Dr P Allen, Prof I Craddock (Academic Trustee), Dr S Das, Prof C Faul, Prof R Glynn, Prof D Manley, Prof M Hickman, Prof A Linthorst, Prof P Manzini, Prof R Martin, Prof M Munafo, Prof S Neild, Prof M Powell, Prof T Tahko, Prof R E Wilson.

### **1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING ON 24 APRIL 2023**

1.1 **APPROVED** the minutes of the meeting of 24 April 2023 as a true and accurate record.

### **2. CHAIR'S REPORT**

2.1 **RECEIVED** and **CONSIDERED**: paper ref: (SN/22-23/031) (on file).

2.2 The Vice-Chancellor welcomed the University's new Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Mr Peter Vermeulen, to his first meeting of Senate, as an observer. Mr Vermeulen had officially joined the University today (19<sup>th</sup> June 2023).

2.3 Senators formally offered their condolences to the University of Nottingham and the families of the Nottingham University students who had tragically lost their lives last week.

2.4 The Vice-Chancellor then introduced her report, and the following was **NOTED**:

2.4.1 The Lifelong Learning (Higher Education Fee Limits) Bill passed second reading in the House of Lords, and will continue on to Grand Committee.

2.4.2 Parliament had recently discussed implementing an obligatory statutory duty of care on UK Universities.

2.4.3 Professor Arif Ahmed had been appointed as the new Director overseeing free speech at the Office for Students.

- 2.4.4 The Academic Freedom of Speech Bill received Royal Ascent on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2023. As part of our preparations for this, the University had revised its complaints process and introduced mandatory training in place for summer 2023. In summary:
- The act strengthened the legal requirements on universities and colleges in relation to free speech and academic freedom.
  - There was a new duty on the OfS to promote the importance of freedom of speech within the law.
  - A new OfS condition of registration related to free speech and academic freedom had been introduced which meant that universities had to comply with free speech duties thereby giving the OfS a direct role in determining whether universities and colleges were meeting those statutory duties.
  - The reframed duties included duties to actively promote free speech and an extension of the duty accordingly.
  - A new complaints scheme was now under operation by the OfS to allow people to complain about universities and students' unions – open to students, staff and visiting speakers.
  - The government has introduced a statutory tort for breach of the duty which means individuals are now able to seek legal redress for any loss they felt they had suffered because of a breach of the free speech duty.
  - HEIs could not enter into non-disclosure agreements.
  - There was a requirement on universities to report their international income – universities were not yet aware of which countries would be included and what the financial threshold would be as these had not yet been defined.
  - Senate members were encouraged to familiarise themselves with the University's free speech and external speaker policies and to undertake the mandatory training as soon as it was available.
- 2.4.5 New REF 2028 guidelines were issued last week although it remained open for consultation. There were a number of rather radical changes being proposed. A summary of the changes can be found [here](#). Senate noted that if these changes had been implemented for the previous REF (2021), then the University would likely have dropped 2 places – so there were some challenges going forward.
- 2.4.6 Industrial action by the University and College Union (UCU) was continuing in the form of Action Short of Strike in relation to a Marking and Assessment boycott that started on the 20<sup>th</sup> April. This action was classed as partial performance, which the University did not accept. In line with the majority of other Universities affected by the Marking and Assessment boycott the University had informed UCU members that it would adopt a 50% deduction rate. The local UCU branch took one days strike action on the 16<sup>th</sup> June in relation to MAB deductions. The University continued to discuss concerns with them and were involved in national level discussions around pay and conditions – in particular the University was working with all three of the unions, led by an independent organisation 'Korn Ferry' to try and work out what could be done locally to mitigate against the genuine cost of living pressures.
- 2.4.7 The Board of Trustees approved, at its meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> May, the role titles for the new 'Pro Vice-Chancellors & Executive Deans' and the University then proceeded to appoint three colleagues internally to these roles – Professor Ian Bond (Science & Engineering), Professor Jeremy Tavare (Health & Life Sciences), and Professor Esther Dermott (Arts, Law & Social Sciences). A proposal to reduce the size of the Faculties down from six to three had been endorsed by UEB today and would be recommended to the Board for approval at its meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> July in line with the University constitution (Ordinances 6 and 8). The Executive Group was now finalising the scope for the immediate academic leadership roles beneath the PVC & Executive Deans to directly support them, with a view to appointing from 1 August 2023 until August 2025 (for a two year period). Subject to Board of Trustees approval the new top-level Faculty structure would be in place from

1 August 2023. There would then be a two-year structured transition to the future fully integrated Faculty structures. This would ensure time to manage the change and impact of change on staff and students whilst evolving in parallel Faculty Professional Services and the new Structure of the Academic Year.

2.5 The following was **DISCUSSED**:

- 2.5.1 The importance of the sequencing of communications about the new academic structures and the impact on staff and students respectively.
- 2.5.2 The staged transition and the importance of ensuring student voice and representation was being carried through at each level.
- 2.5.3 A further meeting of the Senate Academic Structures Working Group to be arranged to discuss the transition plans following US2030 workshops, to inform the group of the BoT decision following the UEB recommendation, and to invite comments on the draft communication plans.

**ACTION: Clerk to Senate**

### **3. REPORT FROM THE ACADEMIC TRUSTEES: UPDATE ON BOARD-RELATED BUSINESS**

- 3.1 On behalf of both staff trustees, Professor Relton provided a verbal update on the business undertaken by the Board of Trustees at its meeting on 26 May 2023:
- 3.2 Agenda items referred to included:
  - Strategic Performance Indicators (SPI) update
  - Budget and Capital Plan 23/24
  - Research sensitisation: Life Sciences (Population Health and Population Studies – Prof Adam Finn)
  - Student Experience programme update
  - Committee reports

*Doug Jennings & Lucy Collins joined the meeting*

### **4. WIDENING PARTICIPATION UPDATE (UG)**

- 4.1 RECEIVED and **CONSIDERED**: paper ref (**SN-22/23/032**) including a PowerPoint presentation (*both on file*).
- 4.2 The DVC & Provost introduced the item, and both the Deputy Director of Home Recruitment and the Director of Home Recruitment & Conversion then jointly delivered a detailed PowerPoint presentation. The headlines were:
  - In recent years the University's student body had diversified;
  - Progress had been made against the majority of external and internal targets – this had been achieved through the collective institutional endeavour, a focus on admissions incentives and rigorous evaluation;
  - Challenges still remained – mature student numbers needed to improve; the University started from a low baseline; progress was not university; and the University had entered a period of intense selectivity;
  - The OfS was changing its framework in relation to access and participation and there would be an increased focus on supporting students during their time at university. Universities would be required to help raise pre-16 attainment in schools to grow the pool of students who could access HE;
  - REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests

- 4.3 The following was **DISCUSSED**:
- 4.3.1 The importance of bringing back to Senate an update on access and participation activities for PG students as there was much happening in that space.
- 4.3.2 Challenging our pedagogy and having an inclusive curriculum should benefit the entire student community and in future perhaps the university could move away from seeing students as belonging to 'groups' because there was much that united students in terms of their learning needs.
- 4.3.3 The work that the SU was doing with the widening participation team around intersectional factors arising as a result of the cost of living crisis, and associated adaptations to the access and participation plan.

*Doug Jennings & Lucy Collins left the meeting*

## **5. EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT**

- 5.1 RECEIVED and **CONSIDERED**: paper ref: **(SN/22-23/033)** (*on file*).
- 5.2 The PVC Education introduced the report.
- 5.3 The following was **NOTED**:
- 5.3.1 The University was in the process of implementing a new system for student attendance (Campus M) and some Senators put themselves forward to act as 'early adopters'.
- 5.3.2 The recent student research festival was a great success and the fourth edition of the student research journal was due to be published imminently (written and edited by students across the University).
- 5.3.3 The BILT education conference was scheduled to take place on 4<sup>th</sup> July.
- 5.3.4 The NSS response rate was up by 6% compared with last year, but the PG survey was lagging behind at 12%.
- 5.4 **APPROVED**: the Annual Quality Assurance Report 21/22 for recommendation to the Board of Trustees.
- 5.5 **APPROVED**: the Degree Outcomes Statement for recommendation to the Board of Trustees.

*Liang-Fong Wong joined the meeting*

## **6. UPDATE ON INTERNATIONALISATION**

- 6.1 RECEIVED and **CONSIDERED**: a PowerPoint presentation delivered by the APVC Internationalisation (*on file*).
- 6.2 The APVC Internationalisation delivered a presentation to Senate which outlined with the University had been doing to deliver on its Internationalisation and Global Engagement strategic ambitions.
- 6.3 It was agreed that Senate would receive a Global Civic update at the October Senate meeting.

**ACTION: Clerk to Senate**

*Liang-Fong Wong left the meeting*

## **7. DRIVING THE RESEARCH STRATEGY FORWARD**

- 7.1 RECEIVED and **CONSIDERED**: paper ref: **(SN/22-23/034)** (*on file*).
- 7.2 The Pro-Vice Chancellor Research introduced this item. Senate noted that at its upcoming Away Day the University Research Committee would be discussing how to identify the most efficient and effective way to pursue the Research and Enterprise Strategy – how to prioritise, how do balance tensions, how to optimise what the University did in this particular space and how we might be able to measure our performance.

7.3 The following was **DISCUSSED**:

- 7.3.1 The fact that being in the Top 50 was very metrics-driven and the University could not be chasing every single metric, especially as some conflicted with the Top 10 ambition.
- 7.3.2 Whether there were any simple messages that the University could develop to communicate to staff to encourage them to pursue their research and enterprise activities in particular ways which might help the University to navigate through its ambitions in this area. Perhaps being more collaborative in the way staff did their research e.g. with the NHS, the third sector, with industry, with international researchers etc.
- 7.3.3 The importance of making use of early career researchers and supporting them as they moved into their early career positions.
- 7.3.4 The visibility of collaborations and the importance of sharing data with Senate to provide advice on where researchers should seek international collaborators.
- 7.3.5 The interplay between where the University was doing well already and where there might be new competition in the recruitment and retention with industry and other institutions. Senators noted that consideration was being given to mitigations for this

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Other suggestions from members of Senate was very much welcomed outside of today's meeting.

## 8. **RESEARCH COMMITTEE REPORT**

- 8.1 RECEIVED and **NOTED**: paper ref: (SN/22-23/035) (*on file*)).

## 9. **ANNUAL REPORT ON APPOINTED EMERITUS PROFESSORS & HONORARY APPOINTMENTS**

- 9.1 RECEIVED and **NOTED**: paper ref: (SN/22-23/36) (*on file*)).
- 9.2 CORRECTION: the Governance team would formally remove Professor Peter Skrine's name from this report because unfortunately he passed away a few years ago.

## 10. **ANNUAL REPORT: 2023/24 PHILANTHROPIC SCHOLARSHIPS**

- 10.1 RECEIVED and **NOTED**: paper ref: (SN/22-23/037) (*on file*)).

**MEETING CLOSED:** Next meeting 9<sup>th</sup> October 2023, 2pm.

SIGNED BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR and PRESIDENT (CHAIR):

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Date: 9 October 2023