



## MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

FRIDAY 24 MAY 2024  
BURGES SALMON, 1 GLASS WHARF, BRISTOL BS2 0ZX  
MINUTES

**Present:** Ms O Adesanya, Mr M Allan, Mr S Boyd, Mr J Boyer (Chair), Ms G Bowen, Professor A Carr, Ms J Cecil, Professor I Craddock (Academic staff trustee), Ms J Huggins (Prof Services staff trustee), Mr N Joicey, Mr N Keveth, Dr J Khawaja (Prof Services staff trustee), Ms X Levantis (Student trustee), Mr F Quek, Mr S Robertson, Professor J Squires (Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost), Miss H Thornton (Student trustee), Professor E Welch (Vice-Chancellor & President), Professor Dame M Welham.

**In attendance:** Professor Michele Acuto (Pro Vice-Chancellor, Global Engagement) – as an observer, Miss Nicole Antoine (Undergraduate Education Officer) – Item 10, Ms Annabel Chalker (Executive Director of Strategic Communications and Marketing – Item 8, Mr Michael Flay (Head of Governance), Dr Robert Harniman (Technical Specialist, School of Chemistry) – Item 9, Ms Bakhtawar Javed (International Students Officer) – Item 10, Mrs Victoria Jones Parry (Strategic Programmes and Projects) – Item 11, Ms Lucie Lambert (Governance Apprentice), Mr Barra Mac Ruairi (Chief Property Officer) – item 11, Mr Adam Michael (Union Affairs Officer) – Item 10, Dr Natasha Mulvihill (Associate Professor in Criminology) – item 9, Ms Lucy Penrose (Deputy Head of Governance), Lucinda Parr (Chief Operating Officer, Registrar and University Secretary), Mr Ben Pilling (Chief Executive of University Union) – item 10, Mr Matthew Shute (Head of Planning and Business Intelligence) – Item 11, Dr Anya Skatova (Senior Research Fellow, Bristol Medical School) – item 9, Mr Aubrey Slade (Director of Finance: Infrastructure, Planning & Strategy), Professor Philip Taylor (Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Enterprise) – Item 9 and 11, Miss Saranya Thambirajah (Equality, Liberation and Access Officer) – Item 10, Mr Peter Vermeulen (Chief Financial Officer).

**Apologies:** Professor N Edwards (academic staff trustee).

### 1. WELCOMES, APOLOGIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1.1 The Board noted apologies from Professor Natalie Edwards (academic staff trustee).

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 There were none.

### 3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

3.1 The Board **APPROVED** the minutes of the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024 meeting of the Board of Trustees and the action notes from the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024 Board Development Day, as a true and accurate record (*on file*).

### 4. ACTIONS & MATTERS ARISING

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

### 5. CHAIR'S REPORT

5.1 RECEIVED and **NOTED:** the Chair's Report (ref **BT/23-24/049**) (*on file*).

5.2 It was agreed that for future fitness to study reports, assurances would be provided to the Board around staff and student wellbeing support.

### 6. EXECUTIVE GROUP REPORT AND QUESTIONS

6.1 RECEIVED and **CONSIDERED:** the report of the Executive (paper ref **BT/23-24/050**) (*on file*).

6.2 The following was **DISCUSSED**:

6.2.1 Progress updates on two legal court cases.

6.2.2 The 4<sup>th</sup> July UK General Election, including the work underway with the SU to ensure students could register to vote both at their university and home addresses.

6.2.3 The GOLD team management of protests on campus including the University's role in protecting the right to protest within the law whilst ensuring that all staff and students are kept safe. It was noted that the University was working closely with the Department for Education (DfE) to ensure that the language being used was not antisemitic. The University also had an embedded Police Officer within the Security Services team who was able to quickly assess at what point a criminal offence was being committed. The Executive was liaising with other Universities in the UK who were experiencing similar protests and had been undertaking scenario planning as well as advance security to protect key assets for large scale events e.g. Open Days, which were scheduled in the near future.

6.2.4 The sectoral issues around the softening of the international PGT student market and the outcome of the Migration Advisory Committee report.

6.2.5 The publication of the recent OfS Financial Sustainability report for the HE sector, noting that the Executive were working closely with the Faculties to scrutinise their plans as part of IPP, particularly in respect of overall cost reductions and income generation. It was noted that the three year approach to IPP had been helpful for Faculties to give them a strong understanding of direction of travel and workforce planning over the medium to longer term. This approach had also been helpful to scrutinise alongside admissions planning and there had been financial modelling for what might happen should the University end up with a potential undershoot in student numbers. The modelling was due to be discussed By Academic Leadership Board on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, with some refreshed financial modelling being produced for 1<sup>st</sup> July.

6.3 During discussions, the following was highlighted, specifically:

6.3.1 The important advocacy position that trustees had and making use of that advocacy to make the case for funding reform in the HE sector.

6.3.2 The fact that the Executive was comfortable with its position on how it engaged with its international recruitment agents since the Sunday Times Article had been published earlier in the year.

6.3.3

REDACTED: Section 43 - commercial interests

6.3.4 The importance of monitoring of diversity trends across the University's recruitment strategies for both staff and students, the fact that the student recruitment diversity data was very positive and the initiatives underway to improve diversity in relation to the recruitment of professional services staff.

6.3.5 Since the last meeting of FIC, the cost of the Modern Network had increased, the timeframe extended to June 2026 and the CIO who led the division had been unwell. The Executive provided assurances to the Board as follows:

- The Chief Property Officer was now the appointed SRO for the Modern Network.
- There had been complications in the deployment of the modern network out into a complicated and busy estate which had been challenging. The programme had recently agreed a deployment timeline for three pilots, the third of which would be completed in full by November 2024.
- The University had invested significantly in cyber security which was instrumental in the change in the scope of deliverables as part of the digital strategy. [REDACTED]

REDACTED: Section 43 - commercial interests

- There was no material financial risk to the budget in relation to Modern Network. The University still had value engineering options open to it and cost mitigation options. The University had strong relationship with its vendors and an open line of communication with them.
- The Executive would engage the Board on the outcome of the trusted research framework evaluation which was currently underway. It was noted that guidance from government was that Universities should be less reliant on its cyber specialists and more aware as an Executive Board and Board of Trustees. The COO, Registrar & University Secretary is leading on this matter. Trusted Research assurances had been added to the Board's forward plan for discussion during academic year 2024/25.

6.3.6 The fact that UUK's position on 'Arms off Campus' was that Universities would not respond to political pressure, and would operate within the law. It was noted that UEB was responsible for making decisions on defence partnerships and other partnerships more broadly with reporting into the Board and Senate. A paper was being openly and transparently discussed at the June meeting of Senate around how the University decided what to work on, in what ways and with whom. Feedback would be taken back to UEB for consideration. Board members were invited to attend the Senate meeting as observers should they wish to.

**7. PROPOSED BUDGET 2024/25 AND IPP to 2028/29**

7.1 RECEIVED and **APPROVED**: the proposed budget 24/25 and IPP to 28/29 (paper ref **BT/23-24/051**) (*on file*).

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**ACTION: CFO and COO**

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7.4 **APPROVED**, on the recommendation of FIC: the budget for 2024/25 to the Board of Trustees. Upon approval, this decision will be communicated to budget holders and spend can be formally committed to.

7.5 **APPROVED**, on the recommendation of FIC: the indicative budgets for 2025/26 and 2026/27. Upon approval, budget holders would be informed that the University intended to issue these budgets, subject to validating the assumptions post the summer 2024 recruitment cycle.

7.6 **NOTED**: the forecasts for 2027/28 and 2028/29 and **APPROVED** the submission of the forecasts to the relevant regulatory authorities, including the Office for Students. Budget holders would be informed that these financials had not been approved for them to work to, and a steer on these would be provided during next year's planning cycle.

**8. DEEP DIVE: STRATEGIC BRAND AND MARKETING**

8.1 **RECEIVED** and **CONSIDERED**: a PowerPoint Presentation from the Executive Director of Strategic Communications and Marketing on strategic brand and marketing (PowerPoint slides *on file*).

8.2 The following was **DISCUSSED**:

8.2.1 The budget that might be required to deliver improvements in this area. It was agreed that the Cubane data would be shared with the Board of Trustees for additional context as part of an update to the July Board meeting.

**ACTION: Head of Governance**

8.2.2 REDACTED: Section 43 - commercial interests

8.2.3 REDACTED: Section 43 - commercial interests

- 8.2.4 REDACTED: Section 43 - commercial interests
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- 8.2.7 REDACTED: Section 43 - commercial interests

- 8.3 Board members were encouraged to contact [governance@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:governance@bristol.ac.uk) should they wish to be engage with the University as part of its brand positioning work.
- 8.4 Board members were invited to complete a brand survey which the Secretary to the Board would circulate via email.
- 8.5 The Board agreed to continue to support this initiative by sharing practice and experience on brand strategy from their own perspectives and experiences, and it was noted that further discussions at Board meetings on this subject would be scheduled over the coming year.

**ACTION: Head of Governance**

**9. UOB RESEARCH POSITION**

- 9.1 RECEIVED and **CONSIDERED**: a PowerPoint presentation from the PVC Research & Enterprise on the University of Bristol’s Research Position 2020-2024 and Beyond (PowerPoint slides *(on file)*).

- 9.2 The following was **DISCUSSED**:

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**10. SUMMARY OF SU SABBATICAL OFFICER ACHIEVEMENT**

- 10.1 RECEIVED and **CONSIDERED**: a PowerPoint presentation from the SU Sabbatical Officers (Presentation and paper ref **BT/23-24/052**) *(on file)*.
- 10.2 The Board discussed the effectiveness and impact of the agreement that had been put in place at the start of the academic year between the Students’ Union and the University Executive Board (entitled “University Executive Board and Bristol SU Officers working together”).
- 10.3 The Board was impressed with the progress made so far, and thanked the Sabbatical Officers for all of their excellent hard work over the course of the 2023/24 academic year. Trustees wished them all the best of luck for their future endeavours.

**11a. STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

- 11.1 RECEIVED and **NOTED**: (ref **BT/23-24/053a**) *(on file)*.
- 11.2 The following was **NOTED**:

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**11b. UPDATE ON CARBON NET ZERO**

11.3 RECEIVED and **CONSIDERED**: a workshop delivered by the PVC Research and Enterprise and Chief Property Officer (paper ref **BT/23-24/053b** and PowerPoint slides) (*on file*).

11.4 The following was **DISCUSSED**:

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11.5 The Board agreed that there should be a further discussion on this at a future board meeting.

**ACTION: Head of Governance**

11.6 The Board thanked the outgoing Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Enterprise for his excellent leadership at the University over many years and wished him luck in his new role as the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bath.

**12. UNIVERSITY SECRETARY REPORT**

12.1 RECEIVED and **CONSIDERED**: a report from the University Secretary (ref **BT/23-24/054a** and **BT/23-24/054b**) (*on file*).

12.2 **APPROVED** the proposed amendments to Ordinance 11 in respect of the Alumni Association.

12.3 **CONSIDERED** the SU Elections Report (an Education Act 1994, Section 22 requirement) and **CONFIRMED** that it was satisfied that the SU elections for this year have been fairly and properly conducted

12.4 **NOTED** that there would be further Ordinance amendments scheduled for the 5th July Board meeting. Board approval would be sought for the new Terms of Reference for the Infrastructure Planning Committee and the refocused and rebranded Terms of Reference for the Finance and Investment Committee. The Board would also be asked to approve a revised Terms of Reference for the Audit & Risk Committee, which was being reviewed to ensure alignment with the CUC HE Code of Practice for Audit Committees, with the recent changes to the UK Corporate Governance Framework, and recent updates to the associated FRC guidance for Audit Committees. All of the above would include amendments to the Board delegation schedule, as appropriate.

**13. ANNUAL REPORT ON ACADEMIC QUALITY & STANDARDS**

13.1 RECEIVED: the Annual Report on Academic Quality & Standards (ref **BT/23-34/055**) (*on file*). **NOTED**: due to time constraints, this report would be deferred to the 5<sup>th</sup> July Board meeting.

**ACTION: Head of Governance**

**14. REPORT FROM NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

14.1 RECEIVED and **APPROVED**: the Nominations Committee Report (ref **BT/23-24/056**) (*on file*).

14.2 **APPROVED**: that Leonardo Coppi be appointed as Student Trustees on the Board of Trustees effective from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.

14.3 **APPROVED**: that Xenia Levantis be appointed as Student Trustees on the Board of Trustees effective from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.

14.4 **APPROVED**: that Ordinance 4: Appendix F - Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Oversight Committee Terms of Reference be amended as referenced in the paper.

14.5 **APPROVED**: that Margaret Simmons-Bird be appointed to the Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Oversight Committee as an Additional Member for a final term of 2 years from 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2026.

14.6 **APPROVED**: that Jack Boyer be re-appointed as Chair of the Board of Trustees for a third and final term of three years effective from 1 January 2025 until 31 December 2027.

14.7 A trustee raised a query about Ordinance 2 in relation to the trustee appointment process and the Head of Governance agreed to discuss with the trustee outside of today's meeting.

**ACTION: Head of Governance**

**15. REPORT FROM FINANCE & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE**

15.1 RECEIVED and **NOTED**: (ref **BT/23-34/057**) (*on file*).

**16. REPORT FROM AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE**

16.1 RECEIVED and **NOTED**: (ref **BT/23-34/058**) (*on file*).

**17. REPORT FROM HONORARY DEGREES COMMITTEE**

17.1 RECEIVED and **APPROVED**: (ref **BT/23-34/059**) (*on file*).

17.2 **REDACTED**: Section 22: Information intended for future publication

17.3 **NOTED**: the approval by the Board via email on 25 April with regard to the awarding of the honorary degrees as listed in the paperwork for today's meeting.

**18. REPORT FROM PENSIONS TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

18.1 RECEIVED and **NOTED**: (ref **BT/23-34/060**) (*on file*).

**19. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

19.1 There was none.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 5 JULY 2024**