Bangor University

**COUNCIL MINUTES**

At a meeting of the Council held in the University on Friday, 7th April 2017.

**Present** :

The Rt. Hon Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas AM (Chair), Mrs Stephanie Barbaresi, Dr Tomos Dafydd, Professor Gillian Davies, Professor John Hughes, Professor Jerry Hunter, Dr Griff Jones, Dr Karen Jones, Mr Marc Jones, Sir Paul Lambert, Dr Lorrie Murphy, Ms. Ellen Parry Williams, Mrs Julie Perkins, Dr Alwyn Roberts, Professor Jo Rycroft-Malone, Mr Conor Savage, Professor David Shepherd, Professor Paul Spencer, Professor Carol Tully, Professor Oliver Turnbull, Professor Graham Upton, Mr David Williams, Dr Olwen Williams, University Secretary, Director of Human Resources, Director of Finance, and the Director of Property and Campus Services.

**Apologies** :

Professor Andrew Edwards, Dr Peter Higson, Mr Ifan James, Mrs Alison Lea-Wilson, Professor Richard Parry-Jones.

**DEATHS**

The Chair referred to the recent deaths of:

Dr. Stuart Charles, a fomer member of staff in the School of Chemistry.

and members stood in tribute to his memory.

**CONGRATULATIONS**

The Chair expressed the Council’s congratulations to the following who had been awarded a **Personal Chair**:

Dr Jan Hiddink, Ocean Sciences

**On the award of a Readership:**

Dr Simon Neill, Ocean Sciences

Dr Marketa Caravolas, Psychology

**On the award of a Honorary Chair:**

Professor Tracy Bywater

Professor Martin Ball

**The Chair also expressed congratulations to:**

Professor Angharad Price from the School of Welsh has been named Best Playwright in the Welsh Language in the Wales Theatre Awards 2017.

**The University’s successes in recent awards were also highlighted:**

In the WhatUni Student Choice Awards, Bangor University was listed in the following categories:

1st for clubs & societies

3rd for best courses and lecturers

3rd for giving back

3rd in the overall University of the Year

The University had been nominated for more Awards than any other University in the UK receiving nominations in 10 out of the 12 categories.

Bangor University continues to rise in popularity among its students. The University has risen to 12th place in the UK and is the only university in Wales to make the top 15 in a new university experience survey (Times Higher Education Student Experience Survey 2017).

**MINUTES**

1. The Minutes of the meeting held on 10th February 2017 were confirmed with one minor adjustment to the minute on the Financial Sustainability Board (page 4).
2. With reference to:

[1] **Chancellor and Chair** (page 6): The Secretary informed the Council that an approach is being made to a potential candidate for the post of the Chancellor. In relation to the post of Chair of Council, on recommendation of the Nominations & Governance Committee, the Council ***resolved*** that Dr Alwyn Roberts be appointed as Acting Chair of Council in the interim period, until a permanent appointment has been made.

[2] **Prevent**: Following submission of the annual report in December, HEFCW have confirmed that the information provided demonstrated sufficient evidence of due regard to the Prevent duty and no further action is required by the University.

**VICE-CHANCELLOR’S BUSINESS**

The Vice-Chancellor raised a number of issues with the Council.

[1] **Bangor College China**: Feedback on the campus in China has been positive with 62 students transferring to Bangor in September 2016. A further 100 students are expected to transfer in September 2017. Discussions are ongoing regarding changes to the model proposed by the Ministry of Education in China, whereby teaching staff will be based in China rather than travelling from the UK. Staff will continue to attend Exam Boards and for Quality Assurance purposes.

[2] **Degree Apprenticeships:** The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Impact) apprised the Council on the current position of Higher/Degree Apprenticeships in Wales. Apprenticeship frameworks in Wales must be in one of the 4 priority sectors identified by the Welsh Government and must involve an industry partner. The University have indicated its interest and are awaiting an invitation to workshop run by HEFCW.

**REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE**

1. The Report of the meetings of the Executive held between February 2017 and March 2017 (attached as Appendix I to the official copy of the Minutes) was approved.
2. The Council noted:

[1] **The Future of Initial Teacher Education**: The Welsh Government is reviewing its approach to teacher training and expressions of interest have been sought from HEIs in Wales. The University has been advised to collaborate to create a joint institute with another HEI with a strong track record for outstanding delivery and discussions are ongoing with Chester University with a view to submitting a joint bid in December for delivery in North Wales. The reputational and financial implications of the potential loss of the programme were noted.

**ACHIEVING FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**

1. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor updated the Council on progress towards achieving financial sustainability and the actions of the Financial Sustainability Board. The following points were noted:

[1] The individual work streams and the Financial Sustainability Board continue to meet on a fortnightly basis and report to the Executive. A stakeholder communication and engagement plan is also in place.

[2] £5m of the £6m in-year savings required to meet the banking covenant have been identified. The University is confident that the banking covenants will be met, although there is always a risk of unforeseen circumstances.

[3] Longer term sustainability has been addressed through a number of actions, including: the creation of a single admission team to protect future income; a review of a number of academic and non-academic areas; a new procedure for programme approval to increase future income growth; new procurement policies; and bringing commercial activities under a single director.

[4] The sustainable savings required cannot be delivered through current activities and a more systematic and strategic approach to reduce the pay bill is required.

1. In the subsequent discussion, following points were noted:

[1] The need to focus on core provision, especially academic provision, strategically sourcing to others where appropriate.

[2] The priority of moving into good financial heath as soon as possible to allow for investment in facilities and strategic priorities. There is a need to start early and make large savings so that in-year savings are not required annually as these can be both demoralising and damaging.

[3] The majority of income is now from tuition fees and there are increased risks associated with future recruitment.

[4] Research is often loss-making but brings other value to the institution, especially in terms of reputation. We need to understand the value of research, whilst also being more selective about what research we undertake by focussing on areas of excellence.

[5] Academic breadth should be maintained, but underperforming areas need to be addressed. KPIs and benchmarking should be used to make decisions about future activity. It is important to ensure there is capacity for emerging growth areas such as medical sciences and nuclear engineering.

[6] The University is not unique in facing these issues due to the broader funding context in Wales. Despite this, the University has been successful in research, teaching and student satisfaction and must do everything it can to protect this.

1. The Council noted that the University was at a critical point in the development of a financial strategy going forward. It was ***agreed*** that the Financial Sustainability Board should be asked to develop a plan to deliver sustainable savings through academic restructuring, restructuring of professional services and strategic sourcing, in order to deliver the necessary savings and place the University’s finances on a firm and stable path for the future. This plan should be presented to the Council meeting in July 2017.
2. The Council ***resolved*** that, in accordance with Statute XX, paragraph 10(2), it may be necessary that there should be a reduction in the Academic Staff of Bangor University as a whole; or of any School or other similar areas of the University. Council is mindful that any proposals developed will be subject to consultation with the University’s recognised trades unions (under s188 TULRCA 1992) and staff, before any final decisions on those proposals are made or any implementation carried out.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE**

1. The University Secretary presented School profiles and benchmarked KPIs as part of the improved annual cycle of information to the Council.

[1] The School profiles provide a summary of key data and KPIs for each School including information about students, staff, research activity, Welsh medium activity, entry tariff, degree classification, employability and student satisfaction.

[2] The benchmarked KPIs follow on from the annual presentation of KPIs at the December meeting of the Council, and provides information benchmarked against recently published sector data.

1. The information was welcomed by the Council and requested that the data is supplemented with a commentary on each School in future. The need to prioritise the most important indicators was noted.

**NUCLEAR ENERGY CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT**

1. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Impact) updated the Council on the recent developments in relation to Nuclear Energy Capacity. It was noted that:

[1] Bangor University is at the heart of leading efforts to establish regional research and economic capacity linked to nuclear power generation developments on Ynys Môn. This would be a transformational opportunity for both the University and the region.

[2] A bid had been submitted to Sêr Cymru which has received broad support. The £6.5m project would establish a Centre for Predictive Modelling and a Centre for Ceramic Materials in Harsh Environments, each led by globally recognised research leaders.

[3] The University is working with Grŵp Llandrillo Menai and GEN2 to deliver training and professional development. Bangor will build on the Sêr Cymru funding to develop teaching programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate level.

[4] Funding is being sought for facilities and the research environment, including and Advanced Boiling Water Reactor Hub and Network, a Thermo Hydraulic Test Facility and refurbishment of facilities on the Science & Technology Quarter.

1. The costs to Bangor University is approximately £1.7m over the first 5 years. It was ***agreed*** that a business plan should be developed with clear targets for research income and student numbers to ensure sustainability or the project beyond the initial funding period.

**DISPOSAL OF FRON SITE**

A. The Director of Property and Campus Services presented a proposal to dispose of the Fron Site. The Council noted:

[i] the benefits to the University in collaborating with Cwmni’r Frân Wen;

[ii] that the University is required to comply with the Charities Act 2011 in respect of the disposal of land;

[ii] that a Surveyor’s report has been obtained in accordance with Section 119(1)(a) of the Charities Act 2011 and the Charities (Qualified Surveyor’s Report) Regulations 1992;

B. Members of Council confirmed:

[i] that they were reasonably satisfied that Chris Guest, who prepared the report, is a member of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and works for the District Surveyor’s Office, has the relevant ability and experience to undertake the valuation of the property and area in question; and

[ii] that, in accordance with Section 118 of the Charities Act 2011, other than the Connected Persons referred to in the paper, there are no connected persons involved in the sale.

1. The Council agreed:

[i] that, subject to receipt of an order from the Charity Commission authorising the University to proceed, the site should be disposed of to Cwmni’r Frân Wen for £60,000 on the basis of “clawback” arrangements; and

[ii] that, in accordance with Section 119(1)(c) of the Charities Act 2011, members were satisfied that the terms on which the disposition is proposed to be made are the best that can reasonably be obtained for the University and that the sale can proceed, subject to finalisation of the contract.

**EQUALITY ACTION PLAN & REPORT**

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Welsh Medium & Community Engagement) presented the University’s Annual Equality Report and Action Plan to the Council.

**STUDENTS’ UNION: INCORPORATION AND GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

1. The President of the Students’ Union presented the proposal for the Students’ Union to become an incorporated charity. This would limit the personal liability of trustees, simplify the process for entering into contracts, allow the charity to hold assets in its name, and enable the charity to have its own legal identity.
2. After discussion, in line with the Education Act (1994) the Council agreed to approve the change of structure from an unincorporated association to an incorporated charity limited by guarantee and noted that the new Undeb Bangor Constitution would be brought to the next meeting of the Council for approval.

**FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

1. The Report of the meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee held on the 23rd March 2017 (attached as Appendix II to the official copy of the Minutes) was approved.
2. With particular reference to:

[i] Minute 650[d] (**EIB Loan**); as agreed, the final tranche of funding has been drawn down and ring-fenced, to be spent only with the explicit approval of the Council.

[ii] Minute 653 (**Estates Matters**); further information regarding the Pontio legal dispute was requested. It was ***agreed*** that this would be provided to Council at the next meeting.

[iii] Minute 656 (**2018/19 Fee & Access Plan**); the Council ***agreed*** that authority be delegated to the Finance and Resources Committee and its Chair to make decisions regarding the submission of the University’s Fee & Access Plan to HEFCW.

**AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE**

The Report of the meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee held on the 13th March 2017 (attached as Appendix III to the official copy of the Minutes) was approved.

**BILINGUALISM COMMITTEE**

1. The Report of the meeting of the Bilingualism Committee held on the 17th February 2017 (attached as Appendix IV to the official copy of the Minutes) was approved.
2. The Council affirmed the University’s commitment to ensuring that the Welsh language continues to be central in planning the workforce and that the challenging financial situation will not weaken this commitment.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**

1. The Report of the meeting of the Health and Safety Committee held on the 1st February 2017 (attached as Appendix V to the official copy of the Minutes) was approved.
2. With particular reference to Minute 507 (**Impact of the new Sentencing Council Guidelines**); the Council noted the impact of the sentencing guidelines for health and safety offences. It was further noted that the guidelines direct the Courts when imposing a sentence for health and safety, corporate manslaughter and food hygiene offences, and have now been in place for a year. Fines have been issued in excess of £1m increasing six-fold during this period, and custodial sentences increasing seven-fold. It was agreed that there was a need to communicate these matters effectively and to ensure processes are well documented.

**HUMAN RESOURCES MATTERS**

1. The Council received a report on Human Resources matters including: the negotiations being held on pay; events to celebrate International Women’s Day; Brexit; and the launch of the Cambrian Credit Union Partnership.
2. A list of recent senior appointments was received for information.

**SENATE**

The minutes of the Senate meeting held on the 28th February 2017 were received for information.

**KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

The Council received data concerning research grants and contracts awarded, student numbers, applications, and quarterly financial performance indicators.

**UPDATE FROM THE STUDENTS’ UNION**

The Council received an update report from the Students’ Union for information.

**SEALING**

The Council ratified the sealing of documents listed in Agendum 16.

**CHARITY COMMISSION SUBMISSION**

The Council noted that the annual return to the Charity Commission for 2015/16 was submitted on the 4th April 2017, well within the deadline set by the Charity Commission.

**HONORARY FELLOWS**

It was reported that Honorary Fellowships will be conferred on the following in July 2017:

* **Dr Cen Williams**, am wasanaeth I’r iaith Gymraeg – **for services to the Welsh Language**
* **Nicholas Lawrence Jackson, MBE**. Chief Executive Officer, National Zoological Society for Wales - **For services to Zoology**
* **Professor Julian Evans, OBE** Chair of the Forestry Commission Expert Committee on Forest Science and immediate past-president of the Institute of Chartered Foresters – **For services to Forestry**
* **Yr Athro Emeritws Gareth Ffowc Roberts** am wasanaeth I’r maes Addysg – **for services to Education**
* **Gwion Lewis**, Bargyfreithiwr/ Barrister - am wasanaeth I’r Gyfraith – **for services to Law**
* **Llion Williams**, Actor - Am wasanaeth I ddrama – **for services to drama**
* **Ifor ap Glyn**, Wales' National Poet – Am wasanaeth i’r iaith Gymraeg – **for services to the Welsh Language**
* **Lord Mervyn Davies,** Ex Chair of Council – **For services to Business and the University**
* **Kailesh Karavadra**, Electronic Engineering, BSc. and MSC. Silicon Valley Office managing partner, Ernst & Young LLP - **For Services to Business**
* **Prof. Constantinos Grammenos CBE**, Professor of Shipping, Trade and Finance at Cass Business School, City University of London - **For Services to Shipping, Trade and Finance**
* **Dr Raj Jones – For services to conservation and the community**

**VALEDICTION**

The Pro-Chancellor expressed the thanks of the members to Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas who will be stepping down as Chair of the Council after many years of service to the University as both President (and more recently, Chancellor) and Chair.