Bangor University

**COUNCIL MINUTES**

At a meeting of the Council held in the University on Friday, 9th February 2018.

**Present**:

Dr Alwyn Roberts (Chair), Mrs Stephanie Barbaresi, Dr Tomos Dafydd, Professor Gillian Davies, Professor Andrew Edwards, Dr Peter Higson, Professor John Hughes, Professor Jerry Hunter, Dr Griff Jones, Mr Marc Jones, Mrs Alison Lea-Wilson, Sir Paul Lambert, Ms. Ellen Parry Williams, Miss Julie Perkins, Miss Ruth Plant, Professor Gareth Roberts, Miss Mirain Llwyd Roberts, Professor Jo Rycroft-Malone, Professor David Shepherd, Professor Paul Spencer, Professor Carol Tully, Professor Oliver Turnbull, Professor Graham Upton, Mr David Williams, University Secretary and the Director of Finance.

**Apologies**:

Dr Karen Jones, Dr Lorrie Murphy, Dr Olwen Williams, the Director of Human Resources and the Director of Property and Campus Services.

**DEATHS**

The Chair referred to the recent deaths of:

Dr Edward Davies, an Honorary Fellow of the University

Mr Maurice Charlesworth, a former member of staff

Lord Sutherland of Houndwood, an Honorary Fellow of the University

and members stood in tribute to their memory.

**CONGRATULATIONS**

The Chair expressed the Council’s congratulations to Dr Liming Fang who had been awarded an **Honorary Chair**.

The Chair also noted the success of a first year Bangor University Psychology student, Catrin Jones, who has won the BBC Wales Carwyn James Young Sportswoman of the Year 2017 award. Catrin, 18, has won many titles and became the Welsh Champion in 2017 and won a silver medal at the Youth Commonwealth Games in Australia.

**MINUTES**

1. The Minutes of the meeting held on 24th November 2017 were confirmed and signed.
2. With reference to:

[1] **Pontio** (page 2); the Vice-Chancellor updated the Council on the current position in relation to resolving the final account for Pontio. It was noted that Galliford Try have agreed to mediation; the CEO of Galliford Try and the Vice-Chancellor will both be present. The Council endorsed the view that the Vice-Chancellor should attempt to make an acceptable deal that would not further financially disadvantage the University.

[2] **Disciplinary Appeal** (page 3); Following a lack of response from the appellant, the appeal was dismissed by the solicitor appointed to hear the appeal. The Chair of Council noted that he has been fully informed at each step of the case.

**VICE-CHANCELLOR’S BUSINESS**

1. The Vice-Chancellor reported back from a successful meeting with HEFCW as part of their triennial programme of Institutional Visits. The openness of the University to discuss successes and challenges created trust with members of the HEFCW Council.
2. The Menai Science Park (M-SParc) is due to open at the end of February 2018 on time and within budget. An official opening by the First Minister will take place in May and Council members will be invited.

**REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE**

1. The Report of the meetings of the Executive held between December 2017 and January 2018 (attached as Appendix I to the official copy of the Minutes) was approved.
2. The Council noted:

[1] **UCU Strike**: A recent UCU ballot had been undertaken resulting in overwhelming support for strike action regarding the proposed changes to the USS pension scheme. Fourteen days of strike action are due to begin later this month. Due to the strength of feeling over pensions, it was noted that this could be a long running dispute as it is difficult to see how the situation can be resolved. Regulations are already in place to protect students’ degree outcomes and staff who are participating in strike action have been asked to inform their students prior to cancelling lectures.

[2] **Student Recruitment**: Recruitment remains challenging and applications from Home/EU undergraduate students are currently 7% lower than at the same point last year.

[3] **Medical Education in North Wales**: Discussions are ongoing with both Cardiff and Swansea Universities in relation to the provision of medical education in North Wales. Discussions are also continuing regarding the infrastructure costs and a plan is being developed to spend the £14m funding announced by Welsh Government to support medical education in north Wales.

[4] **Estates**: An interim appointment has been made following the departure of the Director of Property and Campus Services. Mr John Stevens had been appointed as a transformation manager to work with the estates team and senior management to roll out a programme of transformation, mentoring and training, and to lead on recruitment to rebuild the team. The first phase of work is to develop a plan to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Property & Campus Services. An update will be provided at the next meeting of the Council.

[5] **MDIS Revalidation:** It was noted that MDIS is due for re-validation in the coming months.

[6] **UKVI**: The Higher Education Assurance Team are scheduled to undertake an audit on the University’s UKVI compliance between 6-8 March. Work is currently underway to prepare the 2300 files required for inspection.

**FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY BOARD**

1. The Vice-Chancellor updated the Council on progress towards achieving financial sustainability and the actions of the Financial Sustainability Board. It was noted that:

[1] Regular constructive meetings have taken place with the Trade Unions together with weekly e-mail updates and a regularly updated Frequently Asked Questions page.

[2] The Voluntary Redundancy scheme has closed and to date 103 cases have been approved. Projected savings in 2017/18 are currently £6.7m exceeding the target of £6.1m. A sustainable saving of £7.5m from 2018/19 has been delivered; a further £1m is required to deliver the original target of £8.5m. A number of steps are being taken to address this shortfall, including revisiting vacant posts. The Executive remain committed to doing everything it can to deliver these savings through voluntary means where possible, and negotiations are ongoing with under 20 staff.

[3] New Heads of School have been appointed and will ‘shadow’ current Heads prior to the start of the next academic year. Assimilation interviews will be undertaken during the next month and it is hoped that any gaps in the structure will be filled by redeployments/new appointments.

1. The Council noted that, in the light of current risks to income, further savings may be necessary. Further non-pay savings may be possible once budgets have been assessed and re-aligned to the new management structures.
2. After a full discussion, members of the Council:

[1] Noted progress to date and congratulated Human Resources on the huge amount of work undertaken in recent months.

[2] Encouraged the Executive to continue to take steps to deliver the savings in full.

**RESEARCH MATTERS**

1. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & Impact) provided an update on research matters including the current research environment, the transition from REF2014 to REF2021, and a number of new strategic developments. It was noted that:

[1] The research strategy currently focuses on 3 areas:

* Environment, energy and sustainability;
* Health, wellbeing and livelihoods; and
* Language, culture and communication.

[2] In 2014 the University submitted 64% of eligible staff and made submissions in 14 units of assessment. The overall Grade Point Average (GPA) was 2.99 and Bangor University was ranked 39th in the UK (with specialist & single discipline organisations removed).

[3] A number of changes have been agreed for REF2021, including: Increased weighting for impact and reduced weighting of outputs; all staff with significant responsibility for research must be submitted; flexibility over the number of outputs (but the average number of outputs per FTE must be 2.5); and an increased focus on interdisciplinary research and collaboration.

[4] If the University wishes to maintain or better the 2014 GPA all research active staff will need to have at least one 3\* output, with an average of 2.5 per FTE submitted. Further discussion is needed about ensuring staff are on the right pathways and are aware of expectations in terms of research performance. An approach to staff who are eligible but not with the required number of outputs will be agreed by the Executive and recommended to the Council.

[5] Two new developments are being launched this year which will have a significant impact on our research strategy going forward – the Nuclear Futures Institute and the Centre for Environmental Biotechnology.

B. Council members welcomed the presentation and particularly noted the cultural changes needed to ensure that staff are on the right career pathway. Each School will have different requirements for the balance between research, teaching & research and teaching & scholarship staff; and there is a need to clarify promotion routes and ensure appropriate recognition for all career paths.

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW**

1. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning) provided an update in relation to the forthcoming Institutional Review. It was noted that:

[1] The review will take place in the week commencing the 21st May 2018.

[2] Two documents have been produced; a Self-Evaluative Analysis and a Change Report.

[3] The review team uses the Change Report throughout the review process as a starting point for understanding how the University engages with the European Standards and Guidelines and the 5 baseline regulatory requirements of the HEFCW Quality Assurance Framework. In each case a summary and a mapping document has been provided. The review team will scrutinise the Change Report to confirm compliance in each of the baseline requirements.

[4] The Self-Evaluative Analysis (SEA) summarises the University’s approach to enhancement and its plans. The review team will explore the range and overall effectiveness of those ongoing and routine evaluative activities and use the SEA throughout the review process as a starting point for understanding how the University systematically monitors and reflects how effectively it enhances the quality of learning opportunities.

[5] The SEA includes a number of areas of focus highlighted by the University. Four areas form the Student-led Teaching and Learning Strategy have been identified (student engagement, curriculum design, assessment & feedback, and student outcomes & retention) alongside three other areas – employability, Welsh medium and postgraduate research experience. In each case the general strategy has been to highlight excellence, the robust processes in place to identify problems, and the actions taken.

[6] Each document has been produced jointly and collaboratively with the Students’ Union where there has been good engagement with students on the process.

B. The Council noted that Collaborative Provision was addressed in the documentation. Whilst our relationship with Grwp Llandrillo-Menai and Bangor College China are very positive, MDIS remains a challenge in this regard. Following 18 months of close engagement, a number of mitigations are in place and training has been arranged for staff. These will all be well documented in the report. It was also noted that MDIS is due to undergo re-validation in the spring.

C. The Council agreed that we should not compromise the quality of provision being offered in the name of Bangor University and that re-validation of MDIS should only proceed if the following conditions are met:

* All provision should be franchised, rather than validated, to exercise greater control over the areas of QA risk that have been identified.
* Improvements must be made to the quality of teaching staff in place.
* No programmes in India should be approved.
* The fee level should be renegotiated to an appropriate level to appoint dedicated academic resource to oversee the activity.

D. The Council noted the documentation and the progress to date, and supported a submission in line with that outlined.

**ABER-BANGOR : SUMMARY ANNUAL REPORT**

The Annual Report was noted and the Council were informed that currently there is little activity outside of the ongoing research collaborations.

**FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

1. The Report of the meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee held on the 10th November 2017 (attached as Appendix II to the official copy of the Minutes) was approved.
2. With particular reference to :

[i] Minute 687 (**Student Recruitment Update**); the Council noted the level of risk associated with tuition fee income and the need to consider an appropriate response to these risks. As well as keeping a control on costs, there also needs to be a focus on delivering income targets. Further work will take place with colleagues in Marketing and Recruitment to refine the potential recruitment scenarios.

[ii] Minute 689 (**Resources Management Strategy**); the current projection results in a small improvement in EBITDA from £13.3m to £13.7m; this falls just short of the EIB covenant test, but further improvement is anticipated.

[iii] Minute 693 (**Human Resources/Pensions Matters**); the USS pension valuation is high on the University’s risk register and, if further compromises are agreed, could have a significant impact on University financial forecasts.

1. The Council ***resolved*** that authority be delegated to the Finance and Resources Committee and its Chair to make decisions regarding the submission of the University’s 2019/19 Fee and Access Plan to HEFCW.

**NOMINATIONS & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

1. The Report of the meeting of the Nominations & Governance Committee held on the 24th November 2017 (attached as Appendix III to the official copy of the Minutes) was approved.
2. With particular reference to:

[i] Minute 146 (**Chair of Council**); the Council noted that, following open advertisement, five applications had been received and the Nominations & Governance Committee agreed that two candidates should be shortlisted and invited for interview. A panel was established to interview the candidates and to make a recommendation to the next meeting of the Council. The panel was chaired by the Pro-Chancellor, Professor Gareth Roberts, and included the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, lay Council members, the Students’ Union President and an external advisor.

Following a recommendation from the panel, the Council ***agreed*** that Marian Wyn Jones be appointed as Chair of Council for an initial period of 3 years, with immediate effect.

[ii] Minute 148 (**Membership of Council**); the Council ***agreed*** with Dr Karen Jones be re-appointed for a further term of 4 years.

[iii] Minute 148 (**Appointment to Committees and Other Representatives**); it was ***agreed*** that the following Council members be appointed to serve on the Committees shown:

* Nominations & Governance Committee : Mrs Alison Lea-Wilson
* Bilingualism Committee : Professor Gareth Roberts

[iv] Minute 150 (**Ordinances**); the Council noted that full details of the proposed changes to Ordinances had been circulated to Council members and were approved subject to a few minor changes.

**REMUNERATION COMMITTEE**

1. The Report of the meeting of the Remuneration Committee held on the 24th November 2017 (attached as Appendix IV to the official copy of the Minutes) was approved.
2. With particular reference to:

[i] Minute 2 (**Terms of Reference**); the Council noted that the Vice-Chancellor was no longer a member of the Committee. It was noted that no staff have ever been present when their own personal remuneration has been discussed.

[ii] Minute 4 (**Senior Remuneration**); it was noted that, in light of the financial situation, there had been no promotion or senior remuneration round this year.

**HUMAN RESOURCES MATTERS**

The Council received a report on Human Resources matters including discussions on the USS Pensions Scheme; the forthcoming strike action; and the launch of the Coaching and Mentoring Scheme.

**SENATE**

The minutes of the Senate meeting held on the 20th November 2017 were received for information.

**UNIVERSITY TRENDS AND SCHOOL PROFILES**

The University’s Secretary presented the annual report on Student, Staff and Financial Trends, and Academic School Profiles. The Council welcomed the report.

**KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

The Council received and noted data concerning research grants and contracts awarded, and quarterly financial performance indicators. The Council were pleased to note the increase in grants awarded from Research Councils this year.

**UPDATE FROM THE STUDENTS’ UNION**

The Council received a report from the Students’ Union on recent activities. It noted that

* The Charitable Incorporation process is still underway.
* A new support service for students to replace Nightline, the Big White Wall, has now been launched, which is an online peer supported service.
* Recent campaigns for Healthy Living Week and Black History and Disability History Months had been a success.
* The Students’ Union General Meeting has been held recently with over 250 students in attendance.
* The Students’ Union are currently recruiting for a new Director.

**SEALING**

The Council ratified the sealing of documents listed in Agendum 15.

**VALEDICTION**

The Vice-Chancellor expressed the thanks of Council members to Dr Alwyn Roberts, Acting Chair of Council, whose term as Pro-Chancellor and Acting Chair of Council ends today, after many years of service to the University as both a member of staff and a Council member.