Bangor University

**COUNCIL MINUTES**

At a meeting of the Council held in the University on Friday, 13th April 2018.

**Present**:

Mrs Marian Wyn Jones (Chair), Dr Tzo Zen Ang, Mrs Stephanie Barbaresi, Dr Tomos Dafydd, Professor Andrew Edwards, Dr Peter Higson, Professor John Hughes, Professor Jerry Hunter, Dr Griff Jones, Dr Lorrie Murphy, 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 Paul Spencer, Professor Carol Tully, Professor Oliver Turnbull, Professor Graham Upton, Mr David Williams, Dr Olwen Williams, the University Secretary, the Director of Human Resources and the Director of Finance.

**Apologies**:

Professor Gillian Davies, Dr Karen Jones, Mr Marc Jones.

**WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and specifically welcomed Dr Tzo Zen Ang to her first meeting of the Council.

The Chair considered it a privilege to be appointed as Chair and looked forward to building on the past successes of the University and leading the Council to set a clear strategic future direction.

**DEATHS**

The Chair referred to the recent deaths of:

Dr Robert Jones, a former member of staff in the School of Biological Sciences

Mr Martin Davies, a member of staff in the Property and Campus Services Department

Mr Kevin Larkin, a Student at the University

Ms Julia Damassa, a former Student in the School of English

Dr Ian Lucas, a former member of staff in the School of Ocean Sciences

Members stood in tribute to their memory.

**CONGRATULATIONS**

The Chair congratulated:

Gareth Evans, a member of staff working at the University’s Canolfan Brailsford, who secured a Gold medal in weightlifting, and Tesni Evans, a Bangor University Local Athlete Bursary winner, who received a Bronze medal in Squash in the Commonwealth Games.

Lisa Blower, a Creative Writing Lecturer in the School of English Literature, one of 10 authors long-listed for the prestigious 2018 Sunday Times EFG Short Story Award.

The University’s HR department, who won the award for the Best Use of the Welsh Language in HR in the Wales HR Awards last month.

The Chair also noted that the University has been shortlisted for 9 out of 12 Awards in this year’s Whatuni Student Choice Awards 2018, with the nominations based on the excellent reviews and opinions of the University’s own students.

**MINUTES**

1. The Minutes of the meeting held on 9th February 2018 were confirmed and signed.
2. With reference to:

[1] **Medical Education** (page 2); Professor Rycroft-Malone informed Council that an outline of a Medical Education Hub in North Wales has been submitted to Welsh Government, with a view to extending placements and educating a small cohort of new entrants in North Wales in collaboration with Cardiff University. A response is awaited from Welsh Government.

[2] **Estates** (page 2); following an interim appointment to review operations, a report has been presented to the Vice-Chancellor regarding the organisation of Estates. The proposal includes outsourcing higher levels of service and significant changes to procurement. This should result in a more effective service with a reduced cost base. It was ***agreed*** that a summary of the report should be presented to the next meeting of the Council.

[3] **UKVI** (page 3); Professor Turnbull noted that the HEAT Audit was undertaken in early March. The official report is still awaited but informal feedback had been received and a number of issues have been highlighted.

[4] **Institutional Review** (page 4); the documentation has been submitted to the QAA and it was noted that the review team will visit on 23rd April in advance of their main visit at the end of May. Some further information has been requested by the team and staff are being briefed in advance of the main visit.

[5] **MDIS** (page 5); Professor Turnbull informed the Council that he had visited MDIS in March and many of the original concerns had been addressed and discussions had taken place about franchising future provision.

[6] **Teacher Training**; Professor Turnbull informed the Council that the bid for joint delivery with Chester had been submitted and the assessment team had visited the University in February. The outcome is due to be announced in June 2018.

**VICE-CHANCELLOR’S BUSINESS**

1. The Vice-Chancellor gave a presentation on the current situation in relation to resolving the Pontio final account.

[1] The timeline for the project leading up to the Commercial Settlement in August 2014 was noted.

[2] The Commercial settlement intended to draw a line under all changes and delays as at 2 June 2014, and the contract sum was increased to £31m to compensate Galliford Try for time delays due to changes up to that point. A new programme for handover of sections of building up to 28 November 2014 was also agreed. The building was actually handed over in late November 2015.

[3] The final contract sum agreed by Atkins/AECOM was £31.43m and only £28.7m has been paid by the University to Galliford Try to date. A further £2m has been expended in legal and consultant’s costs since 2014 and the estimated costs of the repairs to the building is £3.7m. The Galliford Try final account is £41.53m, including £7.8m for time-related loss.

[4] The mediation process failed to find any common ground, but the University is awaiting a response to a ‘walk away’ offer made to Galliford Try on 28 March 2018. This would have no ‘bottom line’ impact on the university accounts.

[5] The potential next steps were considered including adjudication or litigation, but it was noted that it was difficult to second guess Galliford Try’s response.

[6] It was ***resolved*** to wait for a response from Galliford Try and that next steps should be delegated to the Chair, the Treasurer and Vice-Chancellor in line with the discussions at the last meeting of the Council and the Finance & Resources Committee in March 2018, consulting more widely with the Council as appropriate.

1. The official opening of the Menai Science Park (M-SParc) by the First Minister is scheduled for the 10th May and all Council members have been invited to attend.
2. The HEFCW Remit Letter for 2018/19 was tabled. Additional funding for capital developments, FE/HE collaboration and civic engagement were noted. The Council were pleased to note the expectation that QR funding will be prioritised.

**REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE**

1. The Report of the meetings of the Executive held between February 2018 and March 2018 (attached as Appendix I to the official copy of the Minutes) was approved.
2. With particular reference to:

[1] **Achieving Financial Sustainability**: The latest financial modelling suggests that it is expected that the full £8.5m will be delivered at the end of the process. It was noted that a number of essential posts in the new structure that are currently vacant have been released for advertisement, others are being held until the financial position for 2018/19 is clearer.

The Council approved the recommendations from Academic Strategy Group to the Executive for the proposed names of the new Colleges and Schools, following extensive consultation.

Following the downturn in recruitment, the Council noted that the Executive were developing strategies for growth and ***resolved*** that the Executive should develop plans for consideration at the next meeting of the Council.

[2] **Welsh Language Policy & Action Plan**: The Council approved the Welsh Language Policy and Action Plan, developed in line with the new Welsh Language Measures.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE**

1. The University Secretary presented the annual KPI Benchmark Report showing Bangor University performance benchmarked against the UK sector, where available. Considerable variation across Schools was noted both in the Bangor data and the benchmarks from across the sector. The recently published KPMG benchmarking of Higher Education Financial Statements 2016/17 was also considered.
2. In the discussion that ensued, the following points were noted:

[1] Employability and earnings after graduation were areas where Bangor performed less favourably against the sector. It was noted that the Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) data was new, and was due to be published shortly without any contextual information to reflect salary variation across the regions of the UK. Several factors influenced the salary of Bangor graduates, especially those who chose to stay in the region, and concern was expressed that this could have a further impact on the University’s attractiveness to new students. Maximising employability was a priority and the effectiveness of the Bangor Employability Award was noted and the opportunity available for all students to get involved in volunteering or work experience. The use of business mentors was suggested as a further enhancement to employability.

[2] Whilst trends in student application data remained variable, our conversion rate remained high when compared with Universities in our competitor group.

[3] A significant improvement in retention and completion in recent year was noted. This was mainly due to new initiatives implemented across the University.

[4] Two areas of potential income generation were noted: non-EU tuition fee income had shown a small downturn in Bangor in 2016/17 against a trend of increased income across the sector; Bangor also showed relatively little fundraising income relative to the sector.

1. The information was welcomed by the Council, but further analysis of the key issues and challenges was requested, including actions which the University is taking to address poor performance, to be presented to the Strategy Committee.

**BREXIT**

1. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & Impact), Pro Vice-Chancellor (Students) and the Director of Human Resources gave an overview on the impact of Brexit on the University. The following points were noted:

[1] The University is reliant on funding from the EEC, including Structural Funds, FP7 and Horizon 2020, with funding of up to £17.5m anticipated in 2018/19. If there was no further access to these grants following Brexit, this would reduce to £5.9m by 2021/22 and £0.5m in 2022/23. The University could expect to lose over 50% of its research income plus the additional income leveraged against this funding.

[2] There would be further non-financial impacts including loss of international visibility, becoming less attractive to international staff, and a reduction in economic transformation and other benefits for the region.

[3] Mitigation is in place by increasing engagement with other international funding sources, and other traditional UK funding sources.

[4] Outgoing Student mobility through the Erasmus+ programme involves 162 partner institutions in 22 European Countries and affects students in 18 participating academic schools in the University. The biggest impact would be on students studying Modern Languages.

[5] Incoming student mobility brings several benefits, including diversification of the student body and further income streams.

[6] The number of EU nationals working at the University is approximately 170, about 7% of the workforce. The University is working to support these staff members as appropriate and to provide information as it becomes available.

[7] It is unclear what mitigation will be put in place by the UK or Welsh Governments, but the University continues to lobby for engagement in programmes moving forward or alternatives to replace structural funds and Erasmus+.

1. The Council noted the opportunities for the University to shape future programmes through working closely with UUK, the Universities Wales Brussels Office, and representation on the Welsh Government Brexit Committee. The disruptive impact on research income also provides opportunities to review and refresh the research strategy.
2. The Council ***resolved*** that the Executive should give further consideration to the wholistic impact of Brexit on the University, including the potential financial impact, for further discussion at the Strategy Committee. All members of the Council were also asked to use their influence to lobby for the continuation of funding streams for research and student mobility.

**EQUALITY ACTION PLAN & REPORT**

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

[1] The Strategic Equality Plan covers the period 2016 to 2020. Against that, the University has produced an Equality Action Plan, which is updated on an annual basis, and covers the period August 2016 to July 2017.

[2] Regarding the representation of females at senior levels, revised promotion processes have been put in place, incorporating new strategies within our Athena SWAN application, such as identifying barriers for female members of staff applying for roles such as Heads of School and other senior roles; providing shadowing opportunities and mentoring schemes.

[3] In relation to the Gender Pay Gap, Welsh Universities meet their equality obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty by publishing their Annual Equality Reports and are therefore not legally obliged to report their information. However, following on from discussions of the Equal Pay Working Group and as agreed with the Trades Unions as part of that group, a separate, mock, exercise has been undertaken to look at the Gender Pay Gap of Bangor University which is in the region of 17.5%. Work will continue with a view to publishing the report later in the year.

[4] 6.77% of staff at Bangor University have declared a disability. This compares with 4.6% of staff working in higher education across the UK and 5.2% in Wales HEIs. This is favourable because either disabled staff feel supported and able to continue to work here or staff feel comfortable in declaring their disability.

[5] 5.44% staff declare themselves as BME, compared with 3.8% in wales and 8.9% in the UK, although the proportion is lower amongst professorial staff.

[6] Concern was expressed that 24% of staff declined to provide information about their sexual orientation. It was noted that a member of staff at BCUHB had been appointed as a Stonewall transgender role model and could advise the University as it develops policies in this area.

[7] Five Equality Champions have been appointed, an aim within the Equality Action Plan, to support the embedding of equality across the University.

1. The Chair of Council was encouraged by the disability statistics and the work being undertaken to address the gender pay gap. The Council requested greater analysis and an executive summary of the key points in next year’s report.

**FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

1. The Report of the meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee held on the 20th March 2018 (attached as Appendix II to the official copy of the Minutes) was approved.
2. With particular reference to:

[i] Minute 699 (**Student Recruitment Update**); the Council noted the level of imminent risk c.£3.0m in 2018/19 and potential long-term risks associated with tuition fee income. It was agreed that this was an important matter that required urgent action by the University to ensure that a further financial gap does not open up following all the financial improvements from the recent restructuring by the FSB.

Further investment in marketing to improve conversion was noted and the Council looked forward to the outcomes of the Executive workshop on the matter. It was suggested that the views of students should also be taken into account. It was agreed that the Student Recruitment Strategy should be considered at the next meeting of the Council.

The Director of Finance was asked to give further consideration to financial scenarios to mitigate the risks associated with the potential drop in student recruitment and pension valuations.

[ii] Minute 706 (**Fee & Access Plan 2019/20**); The Council noted that the Committee had endorsed the overall direction of the draft plan and authorised the Chair to sign-off the initial submission to HEFCW and any subsequent re-submissions.

**AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE**

1. The Report of the meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee held on the 5th March 2018 (attached as Appendix III to the official copy of the Minutes) was approved.
2. With particular reference to Minute 467 (**Tender for External Audit Contract**); the Committee noted that only one response had been received to the tender for the external audit contract. The Director of Finance explained that KPMG were the biggest in the market and our geography could have made others reluctant to bid. The Council **agreed** that KPMG be reappointed for a five-year term commencing with the audit of the 2017/18 Accounts, subject to an annual performance review by the Audit & Risk Committee.

**BILINGUALISM COMMITTEE**

1. The Report of the meetings of the Bilingualism Committee held on the 24th November 2017 and the 1st March 2018 (attached as Appendix IV to the official copy of the Minutes) was approved.
2. The Council confirmed that the strategy on promoting the use of Welsh in the Workplace should be fully implemented in order to protect Welsh speaking domains following the recent restructuring.
3. The Council ***agreed*** that the University should implement the Welsh Language Standards Compliance Notice from 1st April 2018.

**HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE**

1. The Report of the meeting of the Health & Safety Committee held on the 31st January 2018 (attached as Appendix V to the official copy of the Minutes) was approved.
2. With particular reference to:

[i] Minute 529(b) (**HSE Visit**); The recent visit of the Health and Safety Executive had not resulted in any recommendations.

[ii] Minute 530 (**Organisational Change**); work will be commencing shortly with Professional Services and Colleges to revise existing systems and align their new managerial arrangements with the University’s health and safety policy.

[iii] The biannual review of fire safety is due and all fire refuges across the campus will be reviewed.

1. It was agreed to ask Health & Safety Services to consider providing performance statistics at each meeting of the Council, where the data would be meaningful.

**NOMINATIONS & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

1. The Report of the meeting of the Nominations & Governance Committee held on the 23rd March 2018 (attached as Appendix VI to the official copy of the Minutes) was approved.
2. With particular reference to:

[i] Minute 153 (**Membership of the Council and its Committees**); it was noted that Dr Griff Jones and Dr Peter Higson both reach the end of their first term on the Council on 31 March 2018 and it was ***agreed*** that both Dr Jones and Dr Higson be appointed for a further term of 4 years from 1 April 2018.

[ii] Minute 153 (**POMOS Board Membership**); it was noted that two members of the POMOS Board are leaving the University in the next few months and it was ***agreed*** that:

* Mr Carl Shipton replaces Mr Selwyn Hayward from the 1st May 2018
* Professor David Thomas replaces Professor Mike Kaiser from 1st August 2018

[iii] Minute 154 (**Strategy Committee**); the revised membership and terms of reference of the Strategy Committee were ***agreed***.

[iv] Minute 156 (**Ordinances**); the revisions to the wording of Ordinance I as recommended by the Committee were ***agreed***.

[v] Minute 157 (**Governance Effectiveness Review**); a number of improvements to governance arrangements have been made in recent years but a formal review is required every four years. The Council ***agreed*** that a Governance Effectiveness Review be undertaken in 2018 in line with the proposed timetable.

**REDUNDANCY COMMITTEE**

1. The Report of the meeting of the Redundancy Committee held on the 9th February 2018 (attached as Appendix VII to the official copy of the Minutes) was approved.
2. The Council ***agreed*** that the staff whose fixed term contracts were due to expire between 1st February 2018 and 31st July 2018 be dismissed by reason of redundancy should no suitable alternative employment opportunities be identified.

**HUMAN RESOURCES MATTERS**

The Council received a report on Human Resources matters including discussions on the USS Pensions Scheme and dispute, the negotiations in relation to pay, the Living Wage and the Wales HR Awards.

The following key points were noted:

[1] **UCU Strike**: Following further discussions involving ACAS, UCU and Universities UK proposed to jointly establish a panel of experts to agree key principles to underpin the future joint approach of UUK and UCU to the valuation of the USS fund. The Joint Expert Panel will review the basis of the scheme valuation, assumptions and associated tests.

This proposal was subject to consultation with USS employers and UCU members were balloted on the proposals. The ballot closed at 2.00pm and confirmation was received during the meeting that the ballot resulted in a majority in favour of accepting the proposal, leading to the suspension of further industrial action.

[2] **Pay Negotiations**: UCEA’s negotiating team met with all five HE trade unions on 26th March in the first of three planned negotiating meetings in the 2018-19 pay round. UCEA and the trade unions explored all the points in the joint pay claim and the Employers’ Statement. No initial offer was made but all parties are committed to the further two meetings in the negotiating process, with the employers’ side committing to making an offer at the next meeting.

**SENATE**

1. The minutes of the Senate meetings held on the 16th January and 27th February 2018 were received for information.
2. The Council ***agreed*** to give further consideration to what information it requires to give increased assurance about academic quality and standards.

**KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

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

**UPDATE FROM THE STUDENTS’ UNION**

The Council received a report from the Students’ Union. It noted recent activities including University Mental Health Day, Blue Monday, the Period Poverty campaign, work within the local community, preparations for Varsity, the Student-led Teaching Awards, and recent successes of UMCB. It was also noted that the Students’ Union have appointed Ms Mair Rowlands as the new Director.

The Council expressed its congratulations to Miss Plant on her re-election as President of the Students’ Union and wished the Students’ Union well in the upcoming Varsity event.

**SEALING**

The Council ratified the sealing of documents listed in Agendum 14.

**CHARITY COMMISSION SUBMISSION**

The Council noted the annual return for 2016/17 that was submitted to the Charity Commission on the 15th March 2018, 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 2018:

* **Ann Catrin Evans,** a renowned international sculptor and jeweller from North Wales - for services to Art.
* **Dr Alwyn Roberts**, involved in the life of the University for over 50 years as a student, member of staff, member of Council and Pro Chancellor – for services to the University.
* **Howard M Clarke,** an alumnus,an engineer and entrepreneur, and Chairman of Morgan Innovation & Technology - for services to Electronic Engineering.
* **Llio Rhydderch,** a local traditional Welsh harpist – for services to Music.
* **Lord David Lloyd-Jones,** a distinguished judge and legal scholar, recently appointed as Justice of the Supreme Court – for services to Law.
* **Dr Philip Trathan,** an alumnus and Head of Conservation at the British Antarctic Survey – for services to Conservation.
* **Professor Julie Williams**, a leading figure in the field of Alzheimer’s disease research and recently Chief Scientific Officer for Wales - for services to Science.
* **Professor Robin Grove White**, an academic, and Chair of the Institute for the Study of Welsh Estates. Resident on Anglesey and a committed and active environmentalist – for services to the Community**.**
* **Stavros Ioannou,** alumnus and Deputy CEO of Eurobank who has made an overwhelmingly positive contribution to Greece’s banking sector – for services to Banking.
* **Dr Margaret Wood,** an academic and co-author of the first full Geology of Anglesey – for services to Geology.

**VALEDICTION**

The Council thanked Miss Mirain Llwyd Roberts whose term as President of UMCB will come to an end before the next meeting of the Council.

Council members also expressed their thanks to Professor David Shepherd for his hard work and contribution to Council over recent years. David has recently stepped down from the role of Deputy Vice-Chancellor and has returned to his substantive role in the School of Biological Sciences.