Bangor University

**COUNCIL MINUTES**

At a meeting of the Council held in the University on Friday, 28th September 2018.

**Present**:

Mrs Marian Wyn Jones (Chair), Dr Tzo Zen Ang, Professor Andrew Edwards, Dr Peter Higson, Professor John Hughes, Professor Jerry Hunter, Dr Griff Jones, Dr Karen Jones, Mr Marc Jones, Sir Paul Lambert, Mr Gethin Morgan, Dr Lorrie Murphy, Ms. Ellen Parry Williams, Miss Julie Perkins, Miss Ruth Plant, Professor Jo Rycroft-Malone, Professor Carol Tully, Professor Oliver Turnbull, Professor Graham Upton, Mr David Williams, Mr Tudur Williams, the University Secretary, the Executive Director of Marketing, the Director of Human Resources and the Director of Finance.

**Apologies**:

Dr Tomos Dafydd, Professor Gillian Davies, Mrs Alison Lea-Wilson, Professor Gareth Roberts, Dr Olwen Williams.

**STRATEGIC DISCUSSION**

On the morning before the Council meeting, Council members met with members of the Executive to consider the longer-term strategy of the University. Presentations were received from David Blaney, Chief Executive of HEFCW, the Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice Chancellors, and Deans. Discussions focussed on the changing landscape of Higher Education in Wales and UK, the challenges ahead, financial sustainability, the estates strategy, looking back at delivery against the last strategic plan, and the future strategic direction of the University including academic strategy for each of the Colleges.

It was agreed to continue these discussions through the Strategy Committee and the Council with a view to developing a plan to deliver financial sustainability by November and a new strategic plan by the summer of 2019.

**WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed Tudur Williams, the new non-academic staff representative to his first meeting of the Council. The Chair also thanked Mr David Williams for his attendance and all Council members wished him well during his treatment.

**DEATHS**

The Chair referred to the recent deaths of:

**Alwyn Roberts**, a former Student, a member of staff, a Vice Principal, a member of the University Council, Pro Chancellor and Chair of Council and an Honorary Fellow

**John Meirion Davies**, a former lecturer and Librarian of the Normal College

**Julia Davies**, a member of staff in the School of Psychology

**Bruno Bessonies**, a former member of staff in Commercial Services

Members stood in tribute to their memory.

**CONGRATULATIONS**

**On the award of an Honorary Professorship:**

Simon Gollins, Medical Sciences

**The Chair also congratulated:**

The University’s Counselling Service and the North Wales Clinical Psychology Doctorate Programme who, following a ground-breaking collaboration, have been shortlisted for a Times Higher Education Award under the category of ‘Outstanding Support for Students’.

The University, which has won awards for the Best Environmental Management, the Best Student Internet, and the International Accommodation Quality Mark in the National Students Housing Survey Awards. The Awards are based solely on student feedback from tens of thousands of UK students to a survey compiled by Red Brick Research.

**MINUTES**

1. The Minutes of the meeting held on 13th July 2018 were confirmed and signed.
2. With reference to:

[1] **Fundraising** (page 3); it was noted that a draft Gift Acceptance Policy will be brought to the next meeting of the Council.

[2] **UKVI** (page 3); The University received the outcome of the March visit by the HEAT Team in August. The letter stated that there were no concerns with how the University monitored its international staff (under the Tier 2/5 visa processes) but the visit had indicated that the University was not wholly compliant with its Tier 4 duties when monitoring student attendance, in particular the University had not applied its attendance policy correctly.

It was noted that prior to the HEAT visit the University had begun to implement a new process to monitor student attendance, and therefore the Home Office confirmed that it was satisfied that the University was taking the relevant steps to ensure that it had a robust system in place. It was confirmed that the Home Office would maintain the University’s current Sponsor Status, however the University were advised that the HEAT team would re-visit within the next 12 months to ensure that the University has improved its processes.

An Action Plan is in place to ensure that all the concerns raised are being addressed as a matter of priority. Progress is being monitored by the UKVI Compliance Group, reporting to the Compliance Task Group.

[3] **Governance Effectiveness Review** (page 4); The University Secretary reported that Dr Chris Turner has been engaged to undertake our Governance Effectiveness Review. Dr Turner spent some of his early career working at Bangor University and was University Secretary at the University of Wales College of Medicine and then Academic Registrar and Director of Governance and Compliance at Cardiff University until his retirement. Dr Turner has met with the Chair and the University Secretary and will also be attending a meeting of the Council and some sub-committees in November. A questionnaire is being finalised that will be sent to all Council members and this will be followed up with one-to-one interviews.

[4] **Alun Roberts Tower** (page 7); A report will be provided to the next meeting of the Council.

[5] **Senate Membership** (Page 8); The University Secretary reported that a consultation with Senate took place in August. No objections were received to the revised membership proposals and the Ordinance was updated and published. Nominations are currently being received for Senate membership.

1. An action log was provided noting progress on all outstanding Council actions. Council noted progress and completed actions.

**VICE-CHANCELLOR’S BUSINESS**

The Vice-Chancellor updated Council on the current situation regarding Pontio. It was reported that, over the past few months, a new initiative has been taken to try and settle the Pontio dispute with Galliford Try. John Frazer, a former consultant on the project, has been re-engaged to help to broker a compromise with Galliford Try. Mr Frazer was the Welsh Government’s monitor on the Pontio project during the construction phase and it is an advantage that he has maintained a good relationship with the senior personnel at Galliford Try throughout the period of construction.

Both the University and Galliford Try have agreed to stand down the lawyers for a period of three months (August to October) to allow Mr Frazer an opportunity to act as a broker in the dispute. Mr Frazer has had several meetings separately with both the Vice-Chancellor and senior staff at Galliford Try. Some progress has been made in ‘narrowing the gap’ between the parties, with Galliford Try now requesting £33.5m against £32m. Unfortunately, Galliford Try are also attempting to pull resolution of the Marine Centre Wales into the negotiations.

**REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE**

The Report of the meetings of the Executive held between July and September 2018 (attached as Appendix I to the official copy of the Minutes) was approved.

**NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY REPORT**

The Council noted the performance in the National Student Survey, which is an annual survey, aimed at final year undergraduates, that gathers students’ opinions on the quality of their courses. The following was noted:

[1] Bangor’s average satisfaction rate of 88% was lower than last year (90%). However, the UK average dropped from 84% to 83% so that Bangor are ranked 9th in the UK’s non-specialist universities. This is Bangor’s 5th consecutive year in the top 10% of UK universities.

[2] There is a substantial variation across Schools, and many subjects with a good track record did well yet again; this includes 22 subject areas that are top 20 in the UK, 5 of which are first in the UK.

[3] The 2% decline is largely driven by a small number of schools, that have previously done well, that appear to have been adversely affected by strike action.

[4] The poor performance of the School of Education and the School of Healthcare Sciences in recent years was noted. These Schools account for a combined 18% of the NSS responses and represent important outliers of University performance. Actions are underway in both schools to mitigate the problems.

[5] The Students’ Union expressed disappointment in their result, even though it was not out of line with the rest of the sector, and are currently working on a strategy to ensure that they are more widely known.

**RECRUITMENT UPDATE**

1. The Vice-Chancellor reported the current position in relation to student recruitment. It was noted:

[1] The Executive has received weekly updates on student recruitment, comparing the number of admitted students at the same point last year and the number required in order to secure enrolments in line with the financial forecasts assumptions. The latest figures estimate that the total risk in relation to overall tuition fee income to be a shortfall of around £4.2m.

[2] Home/EU student numbers have stabilised with the main shortfall at undergraduate level, due to the demographic dip and fierce competition.

[3] Overseas student numbers show a shortfall at undergraduate level but offers are still being issued.

1. An interim report from the Executive Director of Marketing on student recruitment activity over the summer, including confirmation and clearing, was considered. This noted the intense competition from other universities for both Home and Overseas students and the use of the additional investment of £465k resulting in increased interest in Bangor University. The effectiveness of specific activities will be monitored when enrolment data is available and the lessons learned and further data analysis will be used to influence spend and target campaigns in the current year. A survey of those holding offers who did not come to Bangor will also be undertaken.
2. The Vice-Chancellor noted actions underway to encourage students from Bangor College China to come to Bangor for their final years of study, through the use of bursaries. The University is also applying to the Chinese Ministry of Education for an increase the student intake to BCC.
3. Areas of potential growth in future years were highlighted, including the US and Europe. The Council requested a prioritised business plan linking further investment with income growth, backed up by evidence from recent recruitment activities.

**FINANCIAL UPDATE**

1. The Director of Finance gave assurance to Council members that the 2017/18 outurn was an improvement on the quarter 3 forecast. The final accounts for 2017/18 will be presented to the November meeting of the Council.
2. The Council considered a report providing the Council with the latest position following submission of the 2018 5-year Financial Forecasts at the end of July, reflecting the issues agreed at the July Council meeting. The paper summarised progress in reviewing all College and Professional Services budget proposals against an initial objective of a £3m improvement to complement the £2m pay saving proposal that was agreed and built into the submitted forecasts.
3. Mitigation agreed by the Executive to address the tuition fee shortfall was noted. Meetings were held with all Deans and Central Services Directors in August to identify savings; £1.3m in Central Services Departments/Colleges; £2m in Estates (noting the HEFCW grant) and £0.5m in Halls. This, however, still leaves a shortfall of £1.2m.
4. The Vice-Chancellor updated Council on the recent discussions and plans for addressing the financial gap, both in 2018/19 and beyond, which are detailed in the Executive report to Council. A further cut to non-pay will be necessary and Deans and PVCs were tasked to identify pay savings in their areas.
5. The Executive were asked to produce a plan for the November meeting of the Council, which meets both the short-term financial challenges and the longer terms strategic direction and financial sustainability, to ensure the success of the University going forward.

**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY QUARTER**

1. At its meeting in July the Council agreed to support further work, within the existing budget envelope, on a risk assessed and costed suite of options, which are embedded on a robust financial plan and recruitment strategy for the University.
2. The STQ Board has undertaken a re-appraisal of the business case and a long list of 23 separate options have been considered around refurbishing and extending the Memorial Building, refurbishing Tan yr Allt, repurposing the Deiniol Building, and vacating the Alun Roberts Tower. The refurbishment and extension of Memorial is scalable based on the funding available. It was noted that a simpler approach has been agreed and external consultants are no longer required.
3. The Council noted progress to date and that a fully worked-up suite of options will be considered at the November Council meeting. It is hoped that by that time there will be clarity about the funding available from the North Wales Growth Deal.

**STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS**

1. Professors Turnbull and Rycroft-Malone presented a report on progress and actions relating to a variety of significant projects that have been discussed previously at the Council: Nuclear Futures, funded by the Welsh Government’s Ser Cymru programme; recent developments surrounding Medical Education; and Initial Teacher Education in North Wales. Each of these projects is underpinned by a strategic partnership with another UK university. Each collaborative opportunity is being developed under the leadership of a Pro Vice-Chancellor and College Dean at an Executive level.

[1] **Nuclear Futures**: It was noted that two research groups have been established and that a thermal hydraulic facility is being developed at M-SParc.

[2] **Medical Education**: Plans are underway for an entry of 20 graduate students in 2019 and discussions with Cardiff University are considering feeder streams already in place. The importance of the project for attracting Welsh domiciled and Welsh medium students was noted although the initial reliance on feeder streams to recruit may constrain aspirations in the short term.

[3] **Initial Teacher Education**: Discussions are continuing with Chester University regarding quotas and where the teaching will take place.

1. The Council noted progress and the current position of the each of the various partnerships.

**ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE**

1. At the Council meeting in July, members received the draft Quality Enhancement Review report. The final report from the QAA was published on the 2nd August 2018. The Council considered the final report and the accompanying action plan and following points were noted:

[1] The University has met the baseline requirements, which means the University has robust arrangements for securing academic standards, managing academic quality and for enhancing the quality of the student experience.

[2] The report identifies three commendations; three affirmations for areas where the University identified work that was ongoing to address issues; and no recommendations.

1. The Council also considered the QA Annual report, which set out the key developments that took place in the 2017/18 academic year.
2. Considering both reports, the Council ***agreed*** that they have the highest level of confidence in signing the annual quality assurance statements in November.

**SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING STATEMENT**

The University Secretary presented the University’s annual statement on Slavery and Human Trafficking. It was noted that the Statement had been updated to reflect changes in the past year and noted that the majority of actions on the action plan were now complete. The Council ***approved*** the statement which is to be appended to the University’s Accounts for 2017/18.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY REPORT**

1. The University recognises the importance of maintaining the highest standards of research integrity and therefore complies with the Universities UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity. Over the past decade there have been no cases raised.
2. The Council noted that in 2017-18 one case has been raised with respect to research materials published by a Bangor University researcher. The basis of the complaint was that the work of a former PhD student had not been adequately credited in a publication. An Investigation Panel was established and its conclusion was that the accusation was not upheld and both the complainant and respondent were informed of this.

**AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE**

1. The Report of the meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee held on the 12th September 2018 (attached as Appendix II to the official copy of the Minutes) was approved.
2. The Council agreed with the Committee’s recommendation that the revised Risk Management Policy is approved, and that a review of the Risk Appetite is considered at an appropriate time.

**REDUNDANCY COMMITTEE**

1. The Report of the meeting of the Redundancy Committee held on the 13th July 2018 (attached as Appendix III to the official copy of the Minutes) was approved.
2. The Council approved the recommendation that the staff whose fixed term contracts were due to expire between 1st August 2018 and 31st January 2019 be dismissed by reason of redundancy should no suitable alternative employment opportunities be identified.

**NOMINATIONS & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

1. The Report of the discussions held over the summer by the Nominations & Governance Committee (attached as Appendix VI to the official copy of the Minutes) was approved.
2. The Council agreed with the recommendation that Professor Gareth Roberts be appointed as Chair of the Health & Safety Committee for a period of 4 years from the 1st October 2018.

**BILINGUALISM COMMITTEE**

The Report of the meeting of the Bilingualism Committee held on the 13th July 2018 (attached as Appendix V to the official copy of the Minutes) was approved.

**HUMAN RESOURCES MATTERS**

1. The Council received a report on Human Resources matters including discussions on the USS Pensions Scheme and dispute and the CUC Remuneration Code.
2. **USS Pensions:** The Council considered the consultation from Universities UK regarding the Joint Expert Panel recommendations on the USS pension scheme. (10 members of the Council declared an interest as members of the Scheme.) It was noted that, if all parties accepted the recommendations of the JEP in full, the outcome would be that existing benefits, minus the employer match of 1%, could be provided at an indicative employer contribution of 20.1% of salary.

The Council considered the costs and risks attached to the proposal, balanced against the detrimental impact on the Institution, its staff and students of not reaching an early resolution. On balance, it supported the proposal as a pragmatic interim position, noting that the long-term position of the USS pension scheme requires further consideration and the Council looked forward to a collectively agreed approach.

1. **CUC Remuneration Code:** The new CUC Remuneration code was considered by the Council. The Code provides clarity about good practice on how to determine fair and appropriate remuneration for Vice-Chancellors and other senior University staff. At its core is the challenge to be more transparent and better at explaining what institutions are about, what they deliver and what this means in practice. It was noted that the Code was voluntary on an *apply or explain* basis.

The Council agreed:

[1] That the University adopts the principles of the Code and includes a public statement to this effect in both the annual report of the Remuneration Committee and its Terms of Reference.

[2] The University captures the highlights of the Code within a revised set of Terms of Reference.

[3] The Remuneration Committee will be responsible for determining the remuneration of the Vice-Chancellor, those on the University Executive or in receipt of salaries above £100k.

[4] The Nominations & Governance Committee gives due regard to a revised Terms of Reference and composition and recommends to the Council, persons who might be appointed by the Council to serve on the Remuneration Committee, including staff and students.

[5] A Senior Pay Review Group be established to consider the salaries of those above the single spine pay scale but who would not be considered directly by the Remuneration Committee.

1. The Council agreed to award Emeritus Status to Professor Andrew Lemmey and Professor Igor Perepichka.

**KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

The Council received data concerning research grants and contracts awarded, and were pleased to note the increase.

**STUDENTS’ UNION UPDATE**

The Council received a report from the Students’ Union and their recent activities, including Welcome Week, Serendipity; and a recent Student Leadership Conference. The Sabbatical Team’s priorities were considered and it was noted that the Students’ Union is developing a new strategic plan from 2019/20. The UMCB have concentrated on ensuring that the Welsh language is integrated in all SU activities and the Welsh Language Drama Society has been relaunched.

**SEALING**

The Council ratified the sealing of documents listed in Agendum 17.