



Bangor University

## **COUNCIL MINUTES**

At a meeting of the Council held in the University on Friday, 11<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

### **Present:**

Mrs Marian Wyn Jones (Chair), Mr James Avison, Mr Mabon Dafydd, Professor Iwan Davies, Dr Myfanwy Davies, Mr Eric Hepburn, Dr Griff Jones, Dr Llion Jones, Mr Marc Jones, Sir Paul Lambert, Mrs Alison Lea-Wilson, Ms Julie Perkins, Dr Ian Rees, Professor Gareth Roberts, Professor Oliver Turnbull, Professor Jean White and Mrs Gwenan Hine (Secretary).

**Apologies:** Mr Kailesh Karavadra, Mr Atul Devani and Dr Lynne Williams,

### **In attendance:**

Professor Nicky Callow, Professor Andrew Edwards, Mr Rob Eastwood, Mrs Tracy Hibbert, Dr Kevin Mundy, Professor Paul Spencer, Mrs Lorraine Westwood, and Mr Lars Wiegand.

In addition Mr Pryderi ap Rhisiart, Managing Director of MSParc Ltd, attended for item 21.42, and Professor Mike Larvin, Executive Head of the Inter-Professional Medical and Health Sciences School attended for item 21.52A.

*The meeting was held in the PJ Hall, Bangor University and through Zoom.*

## **21.42 PRESENTATION ON MSPARC**

A. Mr Pryderi ap Rhisiart, Managing Director of MSParc Ltd., provided the Council with a briefing on MSParc, a wholly owned University company. It was noted that MSParc were currently at the beginning of a two-year business planning cycle, and members of Council were warmly invited to contribute to this process, as well as visiting the Parc at its location on Anglesey. Council members were advised that the company sought to:

- Deliver a transformative and regional impact, based on research excellence;
- Collaborate with industry, both locally with SMEs and internationally,
- Develop skills and a vocational offer to retain local talent;
- Be an extension of the University's learning environment;
- Support communities sustainably;
- Impact on economic, social and civic matters;
- Support a sustainable University, financially; and
- Contribute to the brand value of the University.

Mr Rhisiart highlighted in particular some key updates and recent initiatives:

- MSParc had been operational for 4 years, and currently had an occupancy level of 87%, with 40 in-house businesses and 21 virtual tenancies;

- The team were growing, with specialisms particularly in low carbon and digital;
- The company was launching an Accelerator Programme, which would provide mentorship and opportunities to engage with University alumni;
- The company had delivered a modest profit during 2021/22 and had secured a range of contracts delivering innovation. £1.3m funding had been received from the UK Government in support of the company's Innovation Programme, and £360k had been received from the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority.
- The company was partnering with industry and the University on several projects and investing in high growth potential companies.

B. A discussion ensued, and the following points were made:

- Dr Myfanwy Davies enquired how the company measured its impact on local business and communities, and Mr Rhisiart confirmed that a yearly report was provided by Dr Edward Jones from the Bangor Business School on the tenants within the building.
- Ms Julie Perkins asked how the company prioritised its ambitions, and what the key challenges were going forward. Mr Rhisiart noted that the company prioritised the performance indicators and the impact of what it delivered, working with individuals and companies who had a mission to grow, and prioritising companies who had the potential to provide highest value.
- Professor Jean White noted the potential opportunities arising out of the North Wales Medical School for spin off companies, and Mr Rhisiart confirmed that he was already a member of the BCUHB R&D Board and was working closely with the School of Medical and Health Sciences, engaging with the programmes that the new School was developing.
- Following a question from Mr Marc Jones, Mr Rhisiart confirmed that work was ongoing to accelerate the commercialisation opportunities, specifically around particular projects such as the Digital Signals Project and the Nuclear Futures Institute. In addition the company was developing links worldwide to consider best practice and to learn from other similar entities.

C. The Chair, on behalf of the Council thanked Mr Rhisiart for his informative presentation which had enriched the Council's understanding of the work being undertaken by MSParc. The Council wished the company well for the year ahead and looked forward to further updates in the future.

### **21.43 VALEDICTION**

The Chair noted that this was Dr Griff Jones' last Council meeting as he would complete his two terms as an independent member on the Council at the end of March. On behalf of the Council the Chair thanked Griff warmly for his dedication and support to the University over the course of many years, including during his time as Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee.

## 21.44 CONGRATULATIONS

- A. On the award of an Honorary Professorship:
- **Professor Ruben Valbuena**, Professor of Remote Sensing of Forests, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, for the award of Honorary Professor in the School of Natural Sciences
  - **Dr Marjorie Bertolus**, CEA Research Director, CEA on the award of Honorary Professor in the Nuclear Futures Institute
  - **Professor John Lillington** Chief Technologist, Jacobs Limited on the award of an Honorary Professor in the Nuclear Futures Institute
  - **Professor Francesco D'Auria**, University of Pisa for the award of an Honorary Professor in the Nuclear Futures Institute
  - **Professor Yassin Hassan**, Department of Nuclear Engineering and the J. Mike Walker '66 Department of Mechanical Engineering, Texas A&M University for the award of Honorary Professor in the Nuclear Futures Institute
- B. On the award of JISC Community Champion 2022, **Mr Sim Barbaresi**, Director of Digital Services, for his "passionate and enthusiastic" chairing of HEWIT (Higher Education Wales Information Technology
- C. On behalf of the Council the Chair warmly congratulated all those listed.

## 21.45 DEATHS

- A. The Chair referred to the recent deaths of:
- **Dr Mike Alcock** a former member of staff in the School of Agricultural and Forest Sciences
  - **Mrs Gwenda M. Owen**, a member of staff in Digital Services
  - **Mr Sidney Francis Whitaker** – former lecturer in the College of Arts, Humanities and Business
  - **Ms Dilys Williams**, a member of staff in the School of Human and Behavioural Sciences.
- B. Members fell silent in tribute to their memory.

## 21.46 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- A. Members were reminded that they should declare any personal, financial or beneficial interest in any matter under consideration at this meeting prior to that matter being considered.
- B. There were no declarations of interest made in relation to the particular matters on the agenda.

## 21.47 MINUTES

- A. The Minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2021 were **confirmed**.
- B. An action log was provided noting progress on all outstanding Council actions. Council noted the progress reports and completed actions.
- C. In relation to Minute 21.21 (Estates Strategy) the Director of Estates and Campus Services advised the Council that the University had secured 60% funding from Gwynedd Council through the Welsh Government's scheme 'Transforming Towns' to develop the College Park site. It was noted that the work would commence during February, including the removal of the *Caban*, with an ambitious goal of completing the project by the summer of 2023.

## 21.48 FINANCE & STRATEGY COMMITTEE

- A. The Report of the meeting of the Finance & Strategy Committee held on the 14 January 2022 (attached as Appendix I to the official copy of the Minutes) was **approved**.
- B. In relation to minute 2122-32 (Estates Matters): it was noted that the Director of Estates and Campus Services had presented a paper to the Finance & Strategy Committee outlining the strategic context, rationale, development proposals, benefits and value for money considerations associated with the proposal that the University should enter into a long-term lease for the Old Post Office building on Deiniol Road.

Following consideration the Council **approved** the proposal to negotiate and secure a lease for The Old Post Office building. The Director of Estates and Campus Services was asked to keep the Council informed of progress.

- C. In relation to minute 2122-35 (North Wales Growth Deal: Digital Signals Project): It was noted that the Finance & Strategy Committee had been provided with a summary of the Business Case, funding agreement and any future procurement exercises relating to the Digital Signals Project (DSP).

Following due consideration the Council **approved** the DSP Centre Project and its associated investment.

## 21.49 HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

As the Health and Safety Committee had not met since the last meeting of the Council an overview report relating to accidents and incidents and staff sickness absence for the period November and December 2022 was noted.

## 21.50 NOMINATIONS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

- A. The Report of the Nominations and Governance Committee meeting held on the 28 January 2022 (attached as Appendix II to the official copy of the Minutes) was **approved**.
- B. In relation to minute 247G (Annual Assurance to Council) the Committee noted the assurance provided by the Nominations & Governance Committee that the submissions provided by the Council Committees had provided an adequate level of assurance that they were meeting their responsibilities.
- C. In relation to minute 250F (Committee Membership) the Council noted the changes to membership of Council committees, and in relation to minute 252 (Honorary Degrees 2022) the Council noted the process being undertaken in relation to the awarding of Honorary Degrees during the summer and winter 2022 graduation ceremonies.

*Mrs Marian Wyn Jones left the meeting and Professor Gareth Roberts took the Chair*

- D. The Vice-Chancellor informed the Council that the University had been looking at senior Council appointments and the strengthening of its governance structure. It was noted that currently the Chair of Council did not have a formal role within the wider governance structure of the University, and that the Nominations & Governance Committee was recommending to the Council the appointment of the Chair of Council, Mrs Marian Wyn Jones, as a Pro Chancellor.

Following consideration it was **agreed** to appoint the Chair of Council as Pro-Chancellor effective immediately until the end of Mrs Wyn Jones' term on Council (8 February 2025).

*Mrs Marian Wyn Jones re-joined the meeting and took the Chair*

- E. Professor Gareth Roberts on behalf of members warmly congratulated the Chair on her appointment as Pro-Chancellor, which had been unanimously approved. The Chair noted her thanks and her pleasure in accepting the role.

## 21.51 JOINT ENGAGEMENT FORUM

The Report of the meeting of the Joint Engagement Forum held on 28 January 2022 (attached as Appendix III to the official copy of the Minutes) was **approved**. The Chair welcomed the continued positive discussions around the Charter, Statue and Ordinances.

## 21.52 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BUSINESS

### A. Update on the North Wales Medical School

- [a] Professor Nicky Callow and Professor Mike Larvin provided the Council with an update on the new independent, interprofessional North Wales Medical School. It was noted that the School would build on a world-leading foundation of impact-based research and scientific progress to deliver first class education and robust skills training. In addition it would provide portfolio and service development, improve healthcare outcomes and drive economic ambition, with the theme of prevention at its core.

The Council were reminded of the journey so far with programmes now being delivered in nursing, radiography, health and social care, midwifery, biomedical science, clinical psychology, Physician Associate, sports science. Dental hygiene would commence in 2022, and pharmacology /pharmacy was in the planning stage. Since 2012 the biomedical sciences was a feeder route into Cardiff University's medicine programme, and since 2019 students have joined the Cardiff University C21 North Wales programme delivered wholly by Bangor University. In 2021 the University received funding from the Welsh Government to develop an ALPHAacademy to transform preventative healthcare and innovate in health and social care.

Members were informed that Cardiff University had signed an updated MOU with Bangor University which offered its C21 curriculum to form a basis for further local adaptations. In addition a General Medical Council (GMC) meeting in December 2021 had invited submission of a screening questionnaire, which named Cardiff University as a contingency partner, this being the first of 8 GMC stages. It was envisaged that Bangor University would admit its first students into Years 1 and 2 of the independent North Wales Medical School programme in 2024.

- [b] In response to a question from Professor Jean White relating to the entry programme for graduates of the Physicians Associate programme, Professor Larvin noted that admission on to the C21 North Wales programme was currently constrained by Cardiff University's admissions criteria. However once Bangor University takes over the admissions processes for the programme consideration would be given to a number of graduate entry routes.

It was noted that prospective students on to the C21 programme were making their decisions very early, and well ahead of the 15 October annual deadline for applications. This meant that work had already started to strengthen the marketing and admissions teams, and it had been established that the University already had staff within these areas who had worked on medical school admissions in other universities.

Dr Myfanwy Davies asked what the potential risks to the University were should the programme not reach the projected intakes and the pathways along the timeline provided including the GMC not reaching its decision within the projected timescale. Professor Larvin confirmed that a well-established risk register was in place, which was shared with the Health Board, and that in addition there was some flexibility to move back the recruitment timelines should that become necessary. It was noted however that it would be unusual for the GMC not to reach a decision within the timescale outlined.

In response to a question from the Chair Professor Larvin confirmed that the C21 North Wales programme needed to hit the market strongly, given the competition from already established medical schools in North West England.

The Vice-Chancellor outlined that the next steps would be to establish a Programme Board and associated work streams to continue to take the project forward. The University was determined to move forward with the work needed and had suitably qualified staff in place to do so. It was noted that a further update would be brought to the next meeting of the Finance & Strategy Committee.

- [c] The Chair thanked Professor Callow and Professor Larvin and noted that the University was particularly fortunate to have an individual of Professor Larvin's experience leading on this project.

## **B. Report from the Executive and the Senate**

- [a] The Vice-Chancellor presented the report from the Executive Committee and the Senate which were **noted**.
- [b] In particular the following points were highlighted:

### Institute for Welsh Affairs

The Council were advised that the Executive had approved a plan to enter into a three-year partnership with the Institute for Welsh Affairs (IWA). It was noted that the IWA brought together experts from all backgrounds to share informed ideas with the aim of securing political commitments to improve democracy, public services and the economy. The IWA provided platforms for debate, opportunities for people to make their voices heard, and agenda-setting research. Members of academic staff would be encouraged to be involved in the partnership which included opportunities for academics to talk to audiences beyond their usual horizons, and opportunities to run high-profile events to large audiences of stakeholders.

### Office for Students

The recent announcement by the Office for Students that they were launching a consultation to set minimum thresholds for student outcomes including completion rates, and employability outcomes was noted. Whilst the OFS' jurisdiction was in England and therefore did not impact directly on the University the outcome of the consultation would be closely monitored.

### Internationalisation

The University is currently working on its internationalisation strategy and putting new processes in place to take advantage of the opportunities in the market. In response to a question from Professor Jean White the Vice-Chancellor confirmed that a further update on this, including information on the University's TNE agreements, would be brought to the next meeting of the Council.

## **21.53 STUDENTS UNION UPDATE**

- A. The Chair on behalf of the Council congratulated Mr Avison on his election as a member of the HEFCW committee representing Students' Unions across Wales.
- B. Mr Avison and Mr Dafydd presented their reports to the Council, and in particular the following items were highlighted:
  - The VP Sports and Healthy Living has stepped down from her role as a sabbatical officer. It was noted that the Students' Union would not be holding a by-election to fill the position for the remainder of this academic year, with duties being taken over by the remaining Sabbatical Officers.
  - Work was progressing well on the transformation of the space above Bar Uno into an area for student groups to utilise as an Activities Hub, although it had not been possible to make use of the space from the start of Semester 2 a handover date was now imminent.
  - The Students' Union were working with the University on a collaborative project reviewing the Student-Led Mental Health and Well-being Strategy. In addition UMCB had been supporting the national project led by Bangor University and funded through HEFCW funding to improve Welsh-medium mental health resources - Myf.Cymru, by sharing materials with students.
  - It was noted that the Sabbatical Officer nominations were closing on Friday 11th February. This would be followed by campaigning both in person and online, with voting taking place between the 16th -18th of March.
  - Mr Dafydd had represented Students' Unions in Wales on the Welsh Parliament's Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee discussing the impact of Covid-19 and Brexit on students.



- C. The Chair, on behalf of the Council, thanked both Mr Avison and Mr Dafydd for their reports.

#### **21.54 INTERIM DEGREE CLASSIFICATION REPORT**

- A. Professor Callow presented the Interim Degree Classification report which analysed trends in degree classifications over a six-year period up to the academic year 2020/21. It was noted that the document contained analysis and overview for the University's internal data only, with the sector data currently being unavailable due to a national technical issue with the system which provided universities with access to benchmarking data (JISC HEIDI Plus). The Council were advised that an updated report would be provided to the next meeting of the Council, which would include analysis of the University's performance against the sector.

It was noted in particular that:

- The proportion of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2:1 degrees (good degrees) had increased year on year over the period, whilst there had been a concurrent reduction in the proportion of 2:2 and 3<sup>rd</sup> class / pass degrees. During 2020/21 45% of the student cohort received a first-class degree, and 39% received a 2:1.
  - The data indicated that there was variability in the proportion of good degrees awarded within differing demographic groups.
  - Female students had generally attained a higher level of good degrees than males, and a lower proportion of good degrees had been awarded to mature students in comparison to younger students. There was also a disparity in good degree attainment within minority ethnic groups, being 8% lower than that of white students in 2020/21.
  - Students from low participation areas generally had lower attainment levels, with this gap widening in 2020/21 to -12%.
- B. In response to questions submitted by Professor White in advance of the meeting Professor Callow confirmed that once the University was able to access the HEIDI data that it would be possible to identify programmes where students from more deprived areas and from minority ethnic groups either did much worse or much better than the norm, and in addition it would be possible to assess the non-completion rates for students in these categories against the UK benchmark data.

In addition the Council were informed that an update on the University's work on equality, diversity and inclusion had been presented to the Executive earlier in the week. It was reported that Professor Callow and Mrs Hibbert were working together on a short-term (12 months) plan which included three areas of immediate need, with associated investment of time and resource:

- Athena Swan Silver Award University Application;

- The Race Equality Charter/Action Plan;
- Ensuring inclusive practice in learning, teaching and assessment.

The Executive had also agreed to create an Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Diversity) role to take forward the step-change needed in relation to the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda, including working with Professor Callow to develop and take forward an institutional inclusive practice approach in learning, teaching and assessment.

In response to questions from Ms Perkins and Dr Rees Professor Callow confirmed that further information would be provided to the Council in May on attainment rates and also on the work undertaken to ensure that standards remained consistent across the years. Mr Hepburn requested that it would be useful to receive projected trends for the forthcoming academic years at the next meeting.

Dr Davies advised the Council that in her role as Head of Quality Enhancement she could confirm there was evidence for grade inflation year on year, and that the University was ensuring that it followed the Quality Assurance Agency's Quality Framework for Wales in relation to setting and maintaining academic standards.

- C. The Chair thanked Professor Callow for her update and noted that there would be further opportunity for discussion at the next meeting of the Council.

### **21.55 ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS**

- A. The Council received and considered the final Annual Report and Financial Accounts for the year to 31 July 2021, which would be presented to the Court at its meeting that afternoon. The Interim Director of Finance noted that there were no substantive changes to the version which Council had approved at its meeting in November, and this point was confirmed by Sir Paul Lambert, Chair of the Finance & Strategy Committee.

The Interim Director noted that the recommendation to Council was that the Annual Report and Financial Accounts were approved for submission to the Court.

- B. After full consideration, it was resolved that the Annual Report and Financial Accounts for 2020/21 be **approved** for submission to the Court.

### **21.56 USS PENSION SCHEME**

The Interim Director of Finance updated the Council on the current situation in relation to the USS consultation. It was noted that the President of Bangor UCU had also submitted a letter to the Chair of Council, and the Vice-Chancellor requesting support for the UCU proposals to resolve the issues around the USS pension scheme. The Interim Director advised the Council that UUK were requesting a response to the proposals by the following Friday, and he would therefore raise the matter at the Executive before consulting with the

Chair, and the Chairs of Council Committees, following which a response would be provided to UUK.

### **21.57 FUNDRAISING REPORT**

- A. The Council noted the contents of the Fundraising Annual Report. Mrs Westwood reported that in 2020-21 the University received donations of £190,027, a marginal drop from the prior year's income of £501,960, which when excluding an exceptional one-off legacy gift was a comparable income of £201,960. It was noted that the Alumni Board has recently been reinstated, and the Vice-Chancellor had hosted four meetings with high levels of engagement and interest in University business. Mrs Westwood informed the Council that recruitment to a Head of Fundraising post would commence shortly, and in addition, following an external review of fundraising in 2021, the University was following up on recommendations.
- B. In response to a question from Mr Marc Jones the Interim Director of Finance confirmed that a new appointment had recently been made, and that work would commence shortly on identifying and understanding the University's endowment portfolio. In addition, following a query from Mr Eric Hepburn, Mrs Westwood confirmed that as part of changing processes within the Alumni and Development Office more transparency on the return on investment would be provided.

### **21.58 UK MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT STRATEGY**

- A. Mrs Westwood provided the Council with an update on the UK Marketing and Recruitment Strategy, which had recently been approved by the Executive following a consultation period. It was reported that the Strategy aimed to develop and establish a leading market position for the University as an extraordinary and exceptional University, which was research-led and student-centred. Becoming a University of first choice across all subject areas and for students from across the UK.

It was noted that these aims were expressed and monitored through five key objectives and associated KPIs:

- To develop strong brand messages which are promoted in an outstanding and consistent way to significantly increase recognition;
- To develop timely, high quality, high impact marketing and recruitment activities which stand out in a busy market;
- To take an evidence-led and targeted approach to portfolio and course content development, and marketing and recruitment activities to maximise the return on investment;
- To increase UK study recruitment numbers and market share, ensuring the appropriate mix to support University objectives; and

- To become an aspirational and desirable brand within the UK higher education market.

In particular Mrs Westwood advised the Council that there were four key areas of priority for the University, namely business, computer science, law and psychology, and that extensive work was underway in these areas to maximise the potential for recruitment.

- B. In response to a question from Mr Avison Mrs Westwood confirmed that the University's sustainability credentials were being promoted extensively through its marketing activities, including an interview piece with the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Sustainability) in the new prospectus.
- C. The Chair thanked Mrs Westwood for the update on the strategy and noted that the Council looked forward to seeing the impact on student recruitment patterns over the coming years.

### **21.59 STUDENT RECRUITMENT**

- A. Professor Andrew Edwards provided the Council with an update on the current student recruitment position and noted that the position was significantly more positive than it had been at the last Council meeting in November.

It was noted that the update focussed on the current position in relation to four key markets which were the home undergraduate, international undergraduate, home postgraduate (taught), and international postgraduate (taught) markets. In addition further information had been provided for the home, undergraduate market, due to the disproportionate impact of the reduced quota for HEIW commissioned provision (professional health science programmes), which had impacted the overall home, undergraduate statistics. It was noted that care needed to be taken when interpreting application trends at the moment, however as the University moved beyond the UCAS application deadline of 26<sup>th</sup> January recruitment outcomes would become clearer. In addition the Council were advised that many international and postgraduate applications were made directly to the University, with applications for those markets potentially being made later in the cycle. Uncertainties surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic were also likely to persist throughout this cycle and may have some impact on the conversion of international applicants.

It was noted in particular that:

- Overall, home undergraduate applications were 1% up on last year, however this was significantly impacted by the 17% drop in applications for HEIW-commissioned programmes.
- When HEIW programmes were excluded the % change in home undergraduate applications increased to +5% highlighting the impact of the significant decrease in applications to HEIW programmes.
- UCAS applications were 2% up across the sector, with the University's competitor group also seeing a 3% rise in applications. It was noted that the University was

therefore performing relatively strongly for non-HEIW applications, with overall applications running slightly behind the sector.

- International undergraduate applications were not affected by this issue, and demand from this market was currently robust, showing a significant 28% increase on last year. Similarly, demand was currently strong from the international postgraduate (taught) market, and applications were currently 27% up on last year.
- Applications from the home postgraduate (taught) market were relatively low currently and were showing a drop of 8% against this point last year.

- B. The Council welcomed the positive news in relation to student recruitment and noted, with thanks, the hard work and dedication of staff across the institution.

### **21.60 RESEACH GRANT KPIS**

- A. Professor Spencer outlined to the Council the key points relating to the research grants and contracts data provided. It was noted that the easing of Covid-19 restrictions and the emergence of new funding opportunities would provide the University with the potential to improve the current grant capture trend and to see a return to increasing annual grant capture. A programme of work was in place to enhance academic support and embed monitoring of grant capture performance.
- B. The Council were made aware of some notable awards which the University had captured. These included the first project to be funded by the North Wales Growth deal, the Digital Signal Processing Centre, with a £3m grant allowing the University to purchase equipment to aid development and impact of the centre's own research and provide a pilot scale testbed to collaborate with industry. In addition the wastewater analysis team had continued to secure contracts to identify pathogens in wastewater, with the work not restricted to only public sector contracts, with major private sector facilities, such as airports now being included.

### **21.61 SEALING**

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

### **21.62 VICE-CHANCELLOR**

- A. The Vice-Chancellor provided the Council with an update on a number of areas of success for the University, and particularly highlighted the following achievements:
- The delivery of Strategy 2030, and the various Sub-Strategies;
  - The commitment by the Welsh Government to fund a North Wales Medical School, and the continued dedication of staff to move this agenda forward;
  - The digital transformation project, including work on Curriculum 2022 and the scaffold projects, which helped to steer the University out of the pandemic and into a more business as usual approach;
  - Work on the internationalisation strategy;

- The leadership the University has shown particularly in relation to *Taith* and *Global Wales*;
- The establishment of IRIS, bringing together the different services which staff need to move forward with impressive and ground-breaking research;
- The much-improved financial position, as outlined by the Chair of the Finance & Strategy Committee, and the Interim Director of Finance earlier in the meeting;
- The positive working relationship with the Campus Trades Unions as evidenced by the Memorandum of Understanding, and the Joint Engagement Forum.

The Vice-Chancellor acknowledged that there would be challenges ahead for the University in particular around REF 2022, affordability of pay and the USS pensions issues. However the University had reached a far more sustainable position and found itself at the start of a cycle of research, and a delivery programme for the Strategy which would take it through the next few years.

The Vice-Chancellor informed the Council that it was his intention to step down from the role at the end of the 2021/22 academic session and it was his hope that a new Vice-Chancellor could be in place by September 2022.

- B. The Chair of Council expressed her personal appreciation and gratitude, as well as those of the Council, for all that the Vice Chancellor had achieved against the backdrop of a particularly challenging and turbulent period within higher education. The Chair noted that the University was in a much more stable financial position and could look forward with some confidence to the future. Council members were informed that a public announcement would be made following the Court meeting that afternoon.