



## COUNCIL MINUTES

At a meeting of the Council held in the University on  
Monday 27 November, and Tuesday 28 November 2023.

### **Monday 27 November 2023**

#### **Present:**

Mrs Marian Wyn Jones (Chair), Professor Edmund Burke, Professor Rhiannon T. Edwards, Dr Ama Eyo, Mr Eric Hepburn CBE, Mr Celt John, Sir Paul Lambert, Ms Nyah Lowe, Dr Aled Ll. Jones, Professor Oliver Turnbull, Ms Julie Perkins, Mrs Emily Rees, Dr Ian Rees, Mr Rheon Tomos, Professor David Viner, Professor Tim Wheeler DL, Professor Jean White CBE, Mr Paul Wood, Ms Elin Wyn and Mrs Gwenan Hine (University Secretary).

**Apologies:** Mr Atul Devani and Professor Enlli Thomas.

#### **In attendance:**

Mr Michael Flanagan (Chief Transformation Officer), Mrs Tracy Hibbert (Chief People Officer), Mr Martyn Riddleston (Chief Financial Officer) and Mr Mike Wilson (Chief Strategy and Planning Officer).

*The meeting was held in Cledwyn Conference Room 3, Bangor University and through Zoom.*

### **23.16 WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS**

- A. The Chair welcomed the following to their first meeting of the Council (as members):
- Mrs Emily Rees, Independent Member
  - Mr Rheon Tomos, Independent Member
  - Dr Ama Eyo, Academic Member of Staff
  - Dr Aled Llion Jones, Member of Senate

### **23.17 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. **[Reserved Business]** The Chief Financial Officer, as Chair of the M-SParc Board, declared an interest in discussions relating to M-Sparc.

### **23.18 to 23.23 RESERVED BUSINESS**

**Tuesday 28 November 2023**

**Present:**

Mrs Marian Wyn Jones (Chair), Professor Edmund Burke, Professor Rhiannon T. Edwards, Dr Ama Eyo, Mr Eric Hepburn CBE, Mr Celt John, Sir Paul Lambert, Ms Nyah Lowe, Professor Aled Ll. Jones, Professor Oliver Turnbull, Ms Julie Perkins, Mrs Emily Rees, Dr Ian Rees, Mr Rheon Tomos, Professor David Viner, Professor Tim Wheeler DL, Professor Jean White CBE, Mr Paul Wood, Ms Elin Wyn and Mrs Gwenan Hine (University Secretary).

**Apologies:** Mr Atul Devani and Professor Enlli Thomas.

**In attendance:**

Mr Michael Flanagan (Chief Transformation Officer) and Mr Martyn Riddleston (Chief Financial Officer).

In addition, Professor Paul Van Gardingen was in attendance online for agendum item 23.36.

*The meeting was held in Cledwyn Conference Room 3, Bangor University and through Zoom.*

**23.24 WELCOME**

A. The Chair welcomed members to the second day of the Council meeting.

**23.25 DEATHS**

A. The Chair referred to the recent deaths of:

- **Mr Francis Glynn Jones**, Benefactor of the University
- **Mr Roger Whittaker**, Alumni and Honorary Fellow 1994
- **Professor Nigel John**, Former Chair in Computing, School of Computer Science, and a founding Director of the Wales Research Institute of Visual Computing (RIVIC) and the NISCHR-funded Advanced Medical Imaging and Visualisation Unit
- **Mr John Perkins**, Alumnus, and former Assistant Registrar
- **Professor Philip Molyneux**, Emeritus Professor and Former Dean of College / Professor of Banking & Finance in the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
- **Mrs Brenda Wyn Jones**, a former member of staff at Coleg Normal

Members fell silent in tribute to their memory.

**23.26 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. No declarations of interest were made for the items under consideration.

### **23.27 MINUTES**

- A. The Minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2023 were **confirmed**.
- B. An action log was provided noting progress on all outstanding Council actions. The Council noted the progress reports and completed actions.

#### **i) Health and Safety Update (minute 23-01)**

The Chief Transformation Officer provided an update on health and safety matters. It was noted that a report is provided which includes a summary of accidents and incidents for the 2022/2023 Academic Year, as well as updates on actions following the health and safety briefing session held on 29 September 2023.

The Council considered the request that the Audit & Risk Committee, on behalf of the Council, receive reports on health and safety matters from the Executive Board and the Health, Safety and Emergency Management Committee. The Committee will, through its minutes, assure the Council, and will escalate matters to the Council where appropriate. In addition, the Council are asked to consider nominating an independent member of the Council to join the Health, Safety and Emergency Management Committee.

Mr Hepburn noted that health and safety remained a high risk on the Corporate Risk Register, and asked whether this was the case given the work being undertaken, as outlined in the Chief Transformation Officer's report. It was reported, however, that the risk covers several different areas, including people, buildings, assets, and equipment. A dashboard will be created to cover all areas going forward so that the Council can be suitably briefed.

Following consideration, the Council **agreed** that the Audit & Risk Committee will receive health and safety reports from the Executive Board, and the Health, Safety and Emergency Management Committee. It was further **agreed** that Professor David Viner will join the Health, Safety and Emergency Management Committee, as a Council-nominated member.

#### **ii) North Wales Medical School (minute 23-07)**

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor updated the Council on the September 2024 student recruitment for the North Wales Medical School. It was reported that figures for the undergraduate course are positive.

Members welcomed the positive situation, especially as the University only received the green light to start recruitment in July. In response to a question from Dr Rees and Ms Wyn, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor advised that he did not have the data relating to how many applicants were local and spoke Welsh. It was **agreed** that an update would

be provided to members, which would include a request from Mr John to understand how many of the medical programme modules are available through the medium of Welsh.

It was noted that the University is considering other feeder routes into the medical programme, including within psychology, sports science, and the Physicians Associate programme.

Professor White asked for further information on the cohort of international nursing students being admitted in early 2024. Professor Turnbull noted that the group will be joining the University in the Spring and presents an excellent opportunity for the School of Health Sciences, as the fee the students will pay includes accommodation costs, which the University will use to assist with existing issues around Halls capacity. It was reported that the staff in the School are confident that they can deliver this programme alongside other existing programs.

- C. The latest update of the Council Workplan was noted.

### **23.28 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S UPDATE**

- A. The Vice-Chancellor provided the Council with updates in several key areas:

#### **Queen's Anniversary Prize**

The University, through the work of Professor Davey Jones and his team, has been awarded a Queen's Anniversary Prize for its work on developing a novel system for public health surveillance through the analysis of harmful pathogens in wastewater. It was noted that the system was deployed nationally during the COVID-19 pandemic and has now been adapted to measure a wide range of public health indicators. The University will formally be given the award in February and is then able to use the logo for four years.

In addition, the Vice-Chancellor reported that Professor Davey Jones and his team have been nominated for the Overall Impact Award at the NERC Impact Awards 2023.

The Chair of Council congratulated the University, and particularly Professor Davey Jones and his team for these successes.

#### **Israel / Palestine Conflict**

Following a question from Professor White, the Vice-Chancellor reported that there have been no protests on campus concerning the current conflict in Israel/Palestine. In addition, the University has no staff or students in those countries, and wellbeing support continues to be offered to any staff or students affected by the conflict. It was noted that the Students' Union has also released communication offering support to students.

## **Ministerial Visits**

The Council were informed that the Minister for North Wales, Lesley Griffiths MS, visited the University recently, to learn more about the ongoing progress with the North Wales Medical School.

In addition, Wales Office Minister Dr James Davies visited the University's research vessel, the Prince Madog.

## **M-SParc Board**

Following a competitive recruitment process, the Vice-Chancellor reported that the Chief Financial Officer has been appointed Chair of the M-SParc Board. The University is looking forward to building stronger relationships with the Science Park going forward.

## **Communicable Diseases**

Following a question from Professor White the Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the University has recently updated its Communicable Diseases Contingency Plan, which has been amended following lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Plan is monitored by the Health, Safety and Emergency Management Committee.

### **B. Vice-Chancellor's Objectives**

The Chair noted that she has been discussing the objectives with the Vice-Chancellor over several weeks, and they were now being brought to the Council for discussion and agreement. It was noted that the overarching objectives were intended to provide a framework of expectations, with specific objectives for the current academic year sitting underneath. The Vice-Chancellor noted that, whilst the document is entitled Vice-Chancellor's Objectives, they are in effect the Executive Board's objectives. The list notes key objectives for members of the Executive, rather than noting matters which are seen as business as usual, and they don't encompass the totality of the Executive Board's objectives, with each member having a set of objectives as agreed during the PDR process.

### **[Reserved Business]**

The Chair welcomed the comments made by members and the Objectives were **agreed**.

### **C. Strategy 2030**

The Chair reminded members that the Council had approved a revised version of Strategy 2030 to go out to consultation with staff and students at its July 2023 meeting. It was noted that the revised strategy was shared through the Staff Bulletin, but no feedback had been received. The Students' Union had indicated that they would

provide feedback, and this feedback is included in the revised draft presented to the Council.

Ms Lowe advised the Council that most of the feedback the Students' Union wished to include related to the inclusion of students as partners, and the request for more emphasis on student, as well as staff, mental health, and wellbeing. One further drafting amendment was requested by the Students' Union, which is to include a learning environment in the section around equality, diversity, and inclusion.

Professor White also requested that where the Strategy talks about equality, diversity, and inclusivity the current draft notes a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, harassment, or bullying. It would be proactive to also include taking an active anti-racist approach.

Subject to these amendments the Council **approved** the updated draft Strategy 2030.

#### **D. Report from the Executive Board**

The Vice-Chancellor presented the report from the Executive Board which was **noted**.

*Mr Michael Flanagan left the meeting.*

#### **E. Chief Operating Officer**

##### **[Reserved Business]**

- F. The Chair of Council thanked the Vice-Chancellor and Executive Board members for the comprehensive updates, and members **noted** the update from the Executive Board concerning the Chief Operating Officer role.

*Mr Michael Flanagan re-joined the meeting.*

- G. The Chair of Council congratulated Mr Flanagan on his appointment, and Mr Flanagan confirmed that he was looking forward to taking forward the role from January.

### **23.29 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE**

- A. The Report of the meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee held on 2 November 2023 (attached as Appendix III to the official copy of the Minutes), and the Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report 2022/23 were **noted**.
- B. A report of the High-Level Risks was presented to the Council, and Sir Paul Lambert noted that the risk updates presented on the previous day had been extremely useful.

### 23.30 PEOPLE & CULTURE COMMITTEE

- A. The Report of the meeting of the People & Culture Committee held on 2 November 2023 (attached as Appendix IV to the official copy of the Minutes), was **noted**.
- B. At the recommendation of the Committee, the Council **agreed** that the staff whose fixed-term contracts were due to expire between 1 November 2023 and 31 March 2024 be dismissed by reason of redundancy should no suitable alternative employment opportunities be identified (minute 64).

### 23.31 NOMINATIONS & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Report of the meeting of the Nominations & Governance Committee held on 10 October 2023 (attached as Appendix V to the official copy of the Minutes), was **noted**.

### 23.32 JOINT ENGAGEMENT FORUM

The Report of the meeting of the Joint Engagement Forum held on 10 November 2023 (attached as Appendix VI to the official copy of the Minutes) was **noted**.

### 23.33 STUDENTS UNION STRATEGIC REPORT

- A. Ms Lowe and Mr John provided a report on activities since the last meeting of Council. The following items were highlighted in particular:
- The *RhyngGol* Dance had taken place recently in Aberystwyth.
  - The 'Movember' campaign has reached its target of £500, and the *Aelwyd* JMJ Christmas Concert will be raising funds for War Child.
  - A student volunteering project led by a member of the Athletic Union was providing free hot meals to the Bangor community in the Town Hall. Funding and support had been provided by the Students' Union and Bangor City Council.
  - Building on last year's work on the cost of living the Students' Union had recently held a cost-of-living day, during which an interview clothes library was launched, and a clothes swap shop took place, along with awareness raising for the free period product campaign.
  - The Students' Union continued to raise awareness of the challenges faced by students around registration, and student administrative issues. The Academic Registrar was working with the Union to look at the challenges experienced by students. The Vice-Chancellor also noted that work on the admissions system was a priority for the University, and the Union were not alone in raising these challenges, which had also come up during his visits to Schools and Professional Services. The Chief Marketing Officer advised the Council that she would be attending the Postgraduate Forum in December to better understand the challenges faced.
  - Members of Council were shown a website from Newcastle University which brought all student well-being matters together, and Ms Lowe noted that this was also being discussed with the Academic Registrar.

Dr A.Ll. Jones welcomed the huge variety of work undertaken by the Students' Union and welcomed the reintroduction of *Y Llef*, and the John Gwilym Jones Society.

Professor Viner requested a tour of the Students' Union, and the University Secretary **confirmed** that she would take this forward. In addition, the Chair of Council asked for a more detailed update on student volunteering at a future Council meeting.

The Chair, on behalf of the Council, thanked both Ms Lowe and Mr John for their informative updates and reports and welcomed the feedback on the continued positive working relationship with the University.

### **23.34 QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF UNIVERSITY TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- A. Professor Callow advised the Council that HEFCW's Quality Assessment Framework for Wales (2020) places responsibility on the Council to ascertain that the University meets the standards set out in the Framework. The 2022/23 Degree Outcome Statement, the 2022/23 Quality Assurance Report, and the 2023/24 Student Charter provide key assurance information to Council as part of the University's quality assurance and governance process. In addition, with a shift towards Quality Enhancement in the Higher Education sector and as part of the Quality Enhancement Review methodology in Wales, the University's first Quality Enhancement Report is also presented.
- B. The Council were updated on the 2022/23 Degree Outcome Statement. It was noted that the statement highlights that the proportion of 1st and 2:1 degrees combined increased year on year up until 2020/21, with a significant decrease (-7%) for 2021/22, and a further decrease (-5%) in 2022/23. Currently, the University does not have benchmarking data to establish if the 2022/23 decrease is in line with the sector. However, it was reported that the decrease in 2021/22 was in line with the sector, with the Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide ranking Bangor in 69th position (out of 132) for the 1st/2:1 indicator, and within the interquartile range (Q2). In addition, the proportion of 1st and 2:1 degrees combined has increased year on year over the five-year reporting period, driven by the increase in the proportion of 1st class degrees awarded (+19% since 2016/17).

It was noted that, when the HESA data is available, the University will benchmark the decrease in good degrees. In addition, and irrespective of the benchmarking process, given the 45% difference in the proportion of good degrees across the institution, the University will review Schools' Degree Classification Action Plans to establish that they are fit for purpose and that the actions are being delivered. The University will also continue the work on decreasing award gaps with the prioritisation of mature students, BAME students and students from high-deprivation areas.

Following consideration, the Council **noted** the 22/23 Degree Outcome Statement.

- C. Professor Callow presented the Annual Quality Assurance Report 2022/23, and the Council noted the information received over the past year to provide further assurance.



These included receiving reports from the Senate, Key Performance Indicators relating to education, student experience and research, the full NSS results and subsequent Action Plans, the PTES and PRES results for 2022, and regular updates from the Students' Union including receiving the Relationship Agreement and the Student Charter.

To assure the Council that the University effectively safeguards the standards of the University's awards, it was noted that the report provides an update on the revised governance structures concerning teaching and learning and Quality Assurance processes, including the establishment of an Education and Student Experience Committee with a wider remit enabling the University to work in a more integrated way to provide an excellent learning environment and a positive student experience for its students. Responsibilities of School Boards of Studies and Curriculum delivery groups are also delineated. The University's assessment and marking policies are described including the role of External Examiners, and it is noted that out of more than 150 External Examiners, none raised serious concerns during 2022/23.

To assure Council that the University undertakes and reports on its dialogue with the student body and responds effectively to student surveys, the report also provides evidence of the University's response to the Undeb Bangor Student Experience Report, shared with Council at its November 2022 meeting, and the response discussed at its May 2023 meeting. Key issues concerning student surveys have been discussed by Council and have been agreed upon with the student body, and action plans requested by HEFCW are set out in detail.

Sir Paul Lambert asked what the University is doing to record student experience during the year, to have early warning of issues in terms of student experience. Professor Callow reported that the University has recently undertaken a pulse survey, which had over 500 responses from 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> years. The data is currently being analysed and themes will then be taken forward with the respective schools.

Professor Turnbull, as Executive Head of the School, updated the Council on the work being undertaken in the School of Health Sciences. It was noted that meetings have taken place with both staff and students, the reception in Fron Heulog has been re-opened during the working day, and a School Manager re-introduced. The concerns raised by students with Professor Turnbull were not around teaching and learning, but more around communication and course administration. It is hoped that these early steps will ensure that the School's NSS scores will improve in the 2024 survey.

Mr Hepburn noted that the Council was fully behind the steps being taken within the School and thanked Professor Turnbull for his work.

Following discussion, the Council **noted** the Quality Assurance Annual Report, 2021/22.

- D. Professor Callow presented the University's first Quality Enhancement Report. It was noted that the report seeks to provide evidence of Bangor University making improvements to the student learning experience aligned with sector definitions of

enhancement. This is achieved using evidence to plan, implement and evaluate deliberate steps intended to improve the student learning experience. It was noted that the Quality Enhancement Report is a first step towards providing a systemised way of capturing progress against key priorities in the University Teaching and Learning sub-strategy from an enhancement perspective and providing an annual update to the University and Council. In addition, and given the University's 2023 NSS performance, the University's NSS response to HEFCW is presented, to assure the Council of the NSS delivery and enhancement plans for 2023/24.

- E. In addition, the Council **noted** the 2023/24 Student Charter and the Relationship Agreement with the Students' Union. Ms Lowe noted that the work on the Student Charter had come following a review of best practices, and to make the document more understandable for students.
- F. Considering the information provided in A. to E. above, the Council **agreed** to the six annual assurance statements for submission to HEFCW.

The Chair of Council thanked Professor Callow and Professor Turnbull for the updates.

#### **23.35 RESERVED BUSINESS**

#### **23.36 RESERVED BUSINESS**

*Dr A.Ll. Jones left the meeting.*

#### **23.37 WINTER GRADUATION**

The University Secretary provided the Council with an update on the arrangements for the Winter Graduation ceremonies in mid-December. It was noted that the ceremonies will include five honorary graduands.

#### **23.38 CLOSING REMARKS**

The Chair thanked all those who had taken part in the two-day Council meeting, which had proved informative, with several key matters taken forward.