



Advisory Board Meeting June 2022

Steve Hollis (Chair) began the hybrid meeting by announcing that [Jane Lodge](#) has elected to step down from the Board after many years' service to the School. It was Jane who agreed for Deloitte to spearhead the [Birmingham MBA Deloitte Consultancy Challenge](#) during her time there as Partner, which has since become the jewel in the crown of Birmingham's MBA offer, as well as providing numerous guest lectures on our programmes, and giving the [Annual Birmingham Business School Advisory Board Guest Lecture](#). In recent times, Jane has been both Vice Chair of the Board and mentor to the Dean. We are immensely grateful for everything that Jane has done for Birmingham Business School and truly sorry to see her leave.

The Board then discussed the School's recent REF success, particularly in regards to the strong return on impact cases, for which the Dean gave thanks to the Board for their regular hands-on critique of the cases over the last four years. This led into a review of the School's current strategy, with robust discussion around how to position the School in light of competition post-COVID.

The agenda then moved to the MBA programme. The Board advised that responsibilities of managers and leaders have expanded considerably in recent years. Global organisations, notably the United Nations, have made active interventions into previously academic debates on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), business ethics, and Responsible Business, to guide managers and leaders towards Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) changes in their practice. These initiatives suggest acceptance of business and management responsibility in relation to, for example, climate change, colonialism, and social or economic inequality. This shift has significant implications for business schools, and especially their elite MBA programmes. This is recognised in the UN's Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME), which reach directly into curricula in content and pedagogy. The Board cautioned that it will be hard to judge exactly what current managers and leaders want or expect from Responsible Management Education (RME), as opposed to focusing on skills gaps in fin-tech, quants and digital. **Yogi Dewan** pointed out that the real benefit of an MBA relies on elevating the financial acumen of the students and warned not to lose sight of this.

In acknowledgment that this would be her last meeting as Dean of the Business School, Professor Cathy Cassell, who is leaving to take on the post of Executive Dean of Durham Business School, gave her view on the direction of travel for the Business School sector, and gave a strong signal to the Board as to what she thinks the opportunities and challenges will be for Birmingham Business School itself moving forward, and what the Board should seek to monitor and advise on.

The meeting ended with a short session with Perrett Laver, the search firm tasked with finding Cathy's replacement, followed by a huge vote of thanks from the whole Board to Cathy on her time as Dean and a reception with those present in person.

