

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

COUNCIL

30th January 2013

MINUTES

Members present: Mr J E K Smith (Pro-Chancellor, in the Chair); Dr C N Banks CBE (Deputy Pro-Chancellor); Mr D J Davies OBE; Mrs M C Davies; Mr M Devenish; Professor D S Eastwood (Vice-Chancellor and Principal); Professor J Frampton; Dr M G Gilbert (Treasurer); Ms E Halford (Postgraduate Mature Students Officer, Guild of Students); Mr R Halton; Mr D Franklin (President, Guild of Students); Mr R Haywood; Ms S Kaur-Stubbs; Mr R J Keys; Dr N E Price OBE; Hon Alderman D Roy OBE; Professor C Ryan; Professor A Sanders; Professor A J Schofield; Professor M C Sheppard (Provost and Vice-Principal); Ms C Snowball CBE; Dr R Sondhi CBE

Also present: Mrs G Ball OBE (Director of Finance); Mr I Barker (Director of Estates) for item 13/09 only; Ms L Ewers (Governance Support Officer); Dr S J L Gower (Assistant Secretary); Professor J K Heath (Pro-Vice-Chancellor); Ms O Kew-Fickus (Director of Planning) for items 13/05 and 13/06 only; Professor K O'Brien (Pro-Vice-Chancellor); Professor E W Peck (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor M C Press (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Mr L Sanders (Registrar and Secretary); Professor A Tickell (Pro-Vice-Chancellor); Mr T Veit (Director of Recruitment) for item 13/05 only; Professor M Whitby (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor R A Williams OBE (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College)

Apologies: Dr D Anderson; Dr R Horton; Professor E J Jenkinson (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Mrs H Paver (Director of HR)

Papers: The minute book contains copies of all written papers or reports to which reference is made below unless indicated otherwise.

13/01 Minutes of previous meeting

Resolved: to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 29th November 2012 (CO.13.01.01).

13/02 Matters arising not addressed elsewhere on the agenda

(i) Guild Quinquennial Review

Reported: that

- (a) the Guild of Students had planned to hold an Extraordinary General Meeting earlier in the week to consider a number of special resolutions regarding its governance arrangements;
- (b) the EGM had been adjourned following allegations of irregularities relating to proxy votes. These were currently under investigation by the Guild;
- (c) the Review Group had agreed to meet later in the term to discuss the outcome of

the EGM and to finalise the report and set of recommendations to be presented for Council's consideration.

13/03 Pro-Chancellor's Items

Received: an oral report from the Pro-Chancellor.

(i) Meeting of Chairs of West Midlands Universities

Reported: that he had attended a recent meeting of the Chairs of Councils of West Midlands universities with John Cridland, Director-General of the CBI. He appreciated the contribution of the HE sector to the economy and the impact of the government's immigration policies. He had been able to offer helpful advice on how universities could approach this issue in the run-up to a General Election.

(ii) Changes to Statutes

Reported: that the Privy Council had approved changes to University Statutes which had been approved by Council at meetings last year.

13/04 Vice-Chancellor's Items

Received: a report from the Vice-Chancellor containing a number of items for information (CO.13.01.02) and a copy of the BIS Annual Grant Letter (CO.13.01.02 Appendix B).

(i) BIS Annual Grant Letter

Reported: that the Annual Grant Letter set out adjustments to the funding envelope and highlighted to the Funding Council, ministers' priorities. The insistence on putting more information into the public domain created a tension as universities were operating in an increasingly competitive environment. There were continuing moves around efficiency savings in the HE budget, including in QR.

(ii) Open University Agreement to deliver Massive Open Online Courses

Reported: that

- (a) the Open University had last year announced a new platform for open learning courses, called FutureLearn. Along with a group of other universities, including Warwick, the University had signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the OU to explore the possibilities of delivering Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs);
- (b) Professor Karen O'Brien and Professor John Heath were leading the internal work around developing the partnership and were currently identifying a small number of areas for online learning where high profile and high quality courses could be developed. The courses may assist recruitment in the longer term. Although the courses would be free in the first instance it might be possible to charge for them if they became credit-bearing and were assessed.

(iii) Reduction in Medical Student Intakes

Reported: that for DoH manpower planning reasons, influenced by recent over-recruitment by Medical Schools, the 2013 intake had been reduced for all Medical Schools. At present the reduction appeared to apply to one cohort, but the Department of Health was undertaking further detailed manpower planning.

(iv) China Institute Launch

Reported: that the University had launched its China Institute on 13th December 2012 in the presence of His Excellency Mr Liu Xiaoming, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the UK. The Institute would help to underpin the University's activities in Guangzhou.

13/05 Admissions and Recruitment Update

(COMMERCIAL AND IN CONFIDENCE)

Considered: papers from the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education) (CO.13.01.03 and 3b).

13/06 Key Performance Targets Update

(COMMERCIAL AND IN CONFIDENCE)

Considered: a paper (CO.13.01.04).

13/07 University Management and Strategic Risk Register

(COMMERCIAL AND IN CONFIDENCE)

Considered: a paper (CO.13.01.05).

13/08 Report from the Strategy, Planning and Resources Committee

(COMMERCIAL AND IN CONFIDENCE)

Considered: a report of the Strategy, Planning and Resources Committee (CO.13.01.06).

13/09 Update on the University of Birmingham School and Sixth Form

(COMMERCIAL AND IN CONFIDENCE)

Considered: a paper CO.13.01.07).

13/10 University of Birmingham / University of Nottingham – Update on the Framework for Collaboration

Considered: a paper updating Council on progress on the Framework for Collaboration between the two universities (CO.13.01.08).

Noted: that

- (a) the Framework emerged from existing projects involving Nottingham and Birmingham, such as the Midlands Physics Alliance, the Manufacturing Technology Centre, and the Midlands Energy Consortium;
- (b) two signature developments had emerged from the collaborations – the joint exploration of the emerging market of Brazil and the establishment of the MRC-ARUK Centre for Musculoskeletal Ageing with major funding from the Medical Research Council (MRC) and Arthritis Research UK;
- (c) the two universities were working closely together on the moving to Grade Point Averages (GPA) as a replacement for the current degree classifications and were leading the national discussion;
- (d) the senior management teams of the two universities met together regularly to keep the Framework Agreement under review;
- (e) the relationship was not an exclusive one and Birmingham continued to work closely with other universities.

13/11 Office of the University Treasurer

Considered: a paper regarding the appointment of the Treasurer (CO.13.01.09).

Resolved: to elect Ms Caragh Merrick as Treasurer with effect from 1st August 2014 for a period until 31st August 2018 in the first instance.

13/12 Provost and Vice-Principal

Considered: a paper regarding the appointment of the Provost and Vice-Principal (CO.13.01.10).

Resolved: to approve the appointment of Professor Adam Tickell as Provost and Vice-Principal with effect from 1st October 2013.

Reported: by the Vice-Chancellor that interviews for Professor Karen O'Brien's successor as Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) had taken place. Senate would be consulted on the appointment and Council's approval sought by circulation immediately thereafter.

13/13 Report from the Council to Court

Considered: a copy of the draft report to be submitted to Court in April 2013 (CO.13.01.11).

Resolved: to agree the draft report to Court.

13/14 Report of Council Grievance Committee

Received: a report (CO.13.01.12).

13/15 Items approved between Meetings of Council

Received: a list of items approved since the meeting of the Council on 29th November 2012 (CO.13.01.13).

13/16 Affixing of the University Seal

Received: a report noting the transactions which had required use of the University Seal since the last meeting of Council (CO.13.01.14).

13/17 Note of Thanks

Noted: that

- (a) Professor Karen O'Brien's was attending her last meeting of Council before moving to King's College, London in March. Council thanked her for her contributions and wished her well in her new role.
- (b) Dr Stephen Gower would leave his post as Assistant Secretary to take up a role in the University's Academic Services in February. Council thanked him for his work and wished him well in his new post. Mrs Colette McDonough, currently at Bath University, had been recruited his successor and would take up her role in April.

13/18 Date of Next Meeting

Reported: that the next meeting of the Council would take place on Wednesday 24th April 2013. This would be a Strategy Day, focussing on a stock-take of the Strategic Framework, concluding with a short business meeting followed by dinner.