



Advisory Board Meeting October 2020



Traditionally the autumn meeting of the Advisory Board is a grand two-day affair, complete with the Annual Lecture, the opportunity for members to meet our students, and our loyal members flying in from all over the world to meet together round the table with the Dean. Not so in 2020 – the year of the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead the Board came together via Zoom to collectively discuss the Business School's financial position, response to the crisis and our longer term strategy moving forward. Worst and best case scenarios were discussed in terms of the length of time government restrictions could last and how best to adapt, innovate and contingency plan.

What has been striking about this period has been the efforts our members have made to support the Business School throughout this period and the advice dispensed to the Dean, academics and students. **Andraea Dawson-Shepherd** has continued to oversee the School's Marketing Review and ensure this is not lost sight of. **Baroness Rita Donaghy** has been reviewing and advising on one of our leading REF Impact Case submissions. **Sarindar Sahota** has been securing partners for a major research funding bid we are preparing. **Marc Stone** has been active in helping with the speedy redesign of course materials on three different modules, and numerous members, including **Billie Major**, **Charlotte Conlan** and **Simon Freakley** have been scripting and filming talks, module introductions and case-studies to help the School make our online teaching as innovative, engaging and cutting edge as possible for our students.

Steve Hollis concluded the meeting expressing a hope and preference that the Board get to meet in person soon, whilst stressing the importance of offering zoom access as standard for all future meetings so as to ensure all members have a chance to be present without travel logistics getting in the way. **Billie Major**, who is CEO of the HMRC Market Unit that has provided the systems for Furlough throughout this period, offered a reflection on what she's learnt leading her team during this period that is worth sharing:

"We don't want to go back to the old ways of working because we've seen how much more successful we can be with these new ways of working, and actually, how much better it is for people. People respond best when they feel they can relax, when they can be themselves and they can work in a way that suits them, allowing work to be a harmonious part of their overall life, fitting in seamlessly and productively with all else. They know they've got to work but it can in a way that works for them, rather than overshadows them. And by moving from a mindset of presenteeism to a mindset of trust, and giving people that flexibility, we have found that we've got great results. This is what leadership needs to look like from now on: trust, flexibility and measuring by results, rather than the old one-size-fits-all mode of working."