

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

SENATE

11th June 2014

MINUTES

Present: Professor Sir D S Eastwood (Vice-Chancellor and Principal, in the Chair); Professor K Armour; Professor J S Bale (Pro-Vice-Chancellor); Professor J Bridgeman; Professor M Calvert; Professor K Chipman (Pro-Vice Chancellor and Head of College); Miss H Craig; Mr J Dolan; Dr S Forcer; Dr D Ghica; Professor D Hannah; Professor J K Heath (Pro-Vice-Chancellor); Professor E Jenkinson (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Mr Giannis Kallika; Professor P Kumar; Ms E Lee; Professor P Lumley; Professor A Lymer; Professor R May; Professor C Miall; Professor E W Peck (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Dr A Phillips; Professor T Ponman; Professor M C Press (Pro-Vice Chancellor and Head of College); Professor S Quigley; Dr C Ray; Professor C Ross; Professor J E Rowe; Dr G Schaffer; Dr A Siniver; Professor A Tickell (Provost and Vice-Principal); Dr G Watson; Professor M Webber; Professor M Whitby (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor R Williams (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College).

Also present: Mr B Casey (Director of Academic Services); Ms C Gilbert (Director of External Relations); Ms C McDonough (Assistant Secretary); Mr L Sanders (Registrar & Secretary); Mr R Smith (Director of Admissions); Mr J Armer (Guild Vice-President (Education) Elect).

Apologies: Professor D Adams; Professor T Arnall; Dr J Green (Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor); Professor A Sanders; Dr I Sansom; Dr R Santos; Dr D Shepherd; Professor M D Stringer (Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor).

Absent: Dr D Bailey; Professor T Dafforn; Professor J Frampton; Dr E Fulton; Professor M Hilton; Dr H Laville; Mr M Afroozi Milani; Dr K Nightingale; Mr K Osman; Professor J Phillimore; Professor M Simmons; Professor S Wolff.

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

14/17 Minutes of previous meeting

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 19th March 2014 be approved (SEN.14.06.01).

14/18 Matters Arising

Reported that:

- (a) the recommendation made by Senate to Council on revision of the structure of the academic year at minute 14/04 had been approved;
- (b) the assessment boycott had been called off by the University and College Union so the provision made at minute 14/08 had not been required on this occasion (but would remain in place);
- (c) Senate thanked the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) and his team for their work on preparation for the assessment boycott.

14/19 Vice-Chancellor's Items

Considered: a report from the Vice-Chancellor (SEN.14.06.02).

Reported:

- (a) that Lord Bilimoria of Chelsea had been appointed by Council following consultation with the Court. The Installation of the Chancellor would be held on 17th July 2014 in the Elgar Concert Hall (Paragraph 1 of Paper SEN.14.06.01 refers);
- (b) further information on The Guardian University Guide 2015 League Table:
 - (i) that the University was now the highest ranked institution of its type (large Russell Group Civic) in all of the national league tables;
 - (ii) the University had improved its rank at subject level in 12 of the 41 subject tables of the Guide. 21 subjects had fallen in their respective tables. However, there was no change in the number of subjects where the University ranked in the top quartile (27 subjects) and 17 subjects ranked in their respective Top Tens;
 - (iii) the University's strong graduate employability had contributed to this performance and improvement by the University in the measures of student satisfaction and average entry tariff was required to progress further in the national league table rankings;
- (c) it was understood that the College of Medical and Dental Sciences was the largest single academic unit to achieve the Athena Swan Silver Award in the country (Paragraph 3 of Paper SEN.14.06.02) refers. Senate congratulated Dr Una Martin, Reader in Clinical Pharmacology, and her team, on this achievement and the Provost and Vice-Principal on his leadership of equality and diversity at institutional level;
- (d) that the University would continue to focus on strengthening the diversity of its senior management team, talent pool and membership of Council and Senate. It was noted that the elections for vacancies on Senate for 2014/15 would present the next opportunity to address this and that candidates who would enhance the diversity of Senate were particularly encouraged to stand for election.

14/20 Recruitment and Admissions Update

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

14/21 The Education Agenda: Current Priorities 2014-16

Considered: an overview of current priority areas and a forward look from 2014 to 2016 in respect of the University's 'education strategy' (SEN.14.06.04).

Reported that:

- (a) the main areas of current activity to 2016 were:
 - (i) Major education projects (Birmingham Project, Widening Horizon modules, Focus on Finals, U21 Online Closed Course (OCC));
 - (ii) Teaching Academy;
 - (iii) Birmingham Fellows (Teaching focused);
 - (iv) Grade Point Average (GPA);
 - (v) Enhanced Transcript;
 - (vi) Academic Skills Centre;
 - (vii) QAA UK Quality Code and Higher Education Review (HER);
 - (viii) National Student Survey, post-2014;
 - (ix) Student plagiarism;
- (b) in respect of the Birmingham Project:
 - (i) the University would continue to engage with students regarding the future content of and arrangements for the Project;
 - (ii) the Birmingham Project would provide a valuable opportunity for students to

- (iii) develop generic skills and mix with fellow students across a range of disciplines; the Project would be supported by both academic staff and Postgraduate Teaching Assistants. The experience of this year's pilot had generated positive feedback from those involved in delivering the teaching of the Project;
- (iv) the assessment arrangements for the Birmingham Project would be refined in the light of the experience of the pilot, including whether attendance would be mandatory;
- (c) postgraduate students might benefit from receiving training on study skills and time management (in addition to the plagiarism support training);
- (d) a policy paper would be prepared over the summer regarding the future strategy for Modules Outside the Main Discipline (MOMDs). It was expected that this would recommend continuation of MOMDs but with the revision of the criteria for their operation;
- (e) the introduction of Canvas as the University's Virtual Learning Environment had been an enormous success and had been widely welcomed by the staff and student community.

14/22 Research and Knowledge Transfer Performance – Key Areas of Current Focus

Considered: an update on the key areas of current focus for research and knowledge transfer (SEN.14.06.05).

Reported:

- (a) that the ten key areas of current focus were:
 - (i) producing a new Research Strategic Framework;
 - (ii) increasing research grant and contract income to drive knowledge generation and translation;
 - (iii) planning for the outcome of the 2014 Research Excellence Framework;
 - (iv) overseeing large-scale grant applications and projects;
 - (v) engaging with key research funders;
 - (vi) working with colleagues to ensure that the University was compliant with open access and open data requirements;
 - (vii) working with interest groups such as the Russell Group Pro-Vice-Chancellors for Research and the Universitas 21 Research Leaders Group on common issues;
 - (viii) supporting the College Directors of Research;
 - (ix) ensuring that the University was well-placed to capture funds from the EU's Horizon 2010 programme;
 - (x) supporting key relationships that were predicated on research collaborations;
- (b) that the key institutional priority for 2014/15 was enhancement of the research performance of the University. This would include revision of the University's research grants income targets for 2014/15 and beyond;
- (c) that the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Knowledge Transfer) was leading the development of a Research Strategic Framework for the University in accordance with the following seven principles:
 - *Excellence* - achieving high quality in everything that we do;
 - *Focus* - forward looking and concentrate on our strengths;
 - *Opportunity* - remaining open to new opportunities in the context of the continually changing higher education landscape and being in a position to respond quickly to such opportunities;
 - *Funding* - being aware of the priorities of funding agencies and working with funders to gain early intelligence and influence their future funding strategies;
 - *Partnerships* - developing strong partnerships, both in the UK and internationally;
 - *Community*
 - internal, eg leadership, supporting and developing colleagues and establishing high quality performance thresholds,

- external eg. relationships with external organisations such as Learned Societies and HEFCE, international partnerships, profile raising;
- *Engagement* - communication of our research and its impact, business engagement and knowledge transfer.

This work would feed in to the next phase of the University's Strategic Framework 2015 - 2020;

- (d) there was a need to convey to students the benefits of studying at a research intensive institution in terms of having the opportunity to be taught by world leading researchers;
- (e) that the outcome of the Research Excellence Framework would be published on 18th December 2014 (and from 16th December 2014 under embargo);
- (f) recruiting researchers with a strong international profile and nurturing early career talent to enhance the research performance of the University was a key priority;
- (g) that work was in progress to identify the best means of incentivising members of staff who attracted grant funding and achieving the most appropriate flow of income to their Schools to recognise their contribution;
- (h) the University's search for Global Chairs was progressing. This was being undertaken in partnership with Perrett Laver.

14/23 Student Complaints, Appeals and Grievances to Council and Complaints to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator

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14/24 Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor

Resolved: Senate supported the extension of the term of office of Professor Martin Stringer as Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor (Staffing) by one year from 1st August 2014 at 50% FTE (SEN.14.06.07).

14/25 Report from Heads of Colleges

Noted: the report from the Heads of Colleges regarding recent developments (SEN.14.06.08).

14/26 Report from the Nominations Committee

Considered: a report from the meeting of the Nominations Committee held on 28th May 2014 (SEN.14.06.09).

Resolved: that the recommendations be approved as set out in Paper SEN.14.06.09.

14/27 Report from the Research Committee

Noted: a report from the meeting of the Research Committee held on 13th May 2014 (SEN.14.06.10).

14/28 Report from the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

Noted: a report from the meeting of the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee held on 21st May 2014 (SEN.14.06.11).

Resolved: that the amendment of Ordinances 1 (Definitions) and 4 (Degrees of the University) be approved as set out in Paper SEN.14.06.11.

14/29 Report from the University Education Committee

Noted: a report from the meetings of the University Education Committee held on 27th March and 22nd May 2014 (SEN.14.06.12).

14/30 Report from the University Quality Assurance Committee

Noted: a report from the meetings of the University Quality Assurance Committee held on 11th March, 10th April and 8th May 2014 (SEN.14.06.13).

14/31 Items Approved Between Meetings

Noted: that the award of the honorary degree of Doctor of the University (DUniv) to Lord Bilimoria, the next Chancellor of the University, had been approved by correspondence since the last meeting of Senate on 19th March 2014.

14/32 Programme of Meetings 2014/15

Noted: the programme of meetings of Senate for 2014/15 as follows:

Wednesday 17th September 2014 at 2:00pm (if required)
Wednesday 12th November 2014 at 2:00pm
Wednesday 25th March 2015 at 2:00pm
Wednesday 10th June 2015 at 2:00pm

14/33 Any Other Business

(1) Farewell and Thanks

On behalf of the University, the Vice-Chancellor thanked:

- (a) all members who would be retiring from Senate at the end of the session;
- (b) Professor Edward Peck, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of the College of Social Sciences, for his contribution to the University. It was Professor Peck's last meeting of Senate before he took up the post of Vice-Chancellor of Nottingham Trent University. His leadership of the University's engagement with Guangzhou, China, was particularly commended.