

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

SENATE

19th March 2014

MINUTES

Present: Professor D S Eastwood (Vice-Chancellor and Principal, in the Chair); Professor K Armour; Professor T Arnall; Professor J S Bale (Pro-Vice-Chancellor); Dr M Calvert; Professor K Chipman (Pro-Vice Chancellor and Head of College); Miss H Craig; Professor I Fairchild; Dr S Forcer; Professor J Frampton; Professor P Fryer; Dr E Fulton; Dr J Green (Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor); Professor J K Heath (Pro-Vice-Chancellor); Professor E Jenkinson (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Mr Giannis Kallika; Ms E Lee; Professor P Lumley; Professor A Lymer; Dr R May; Professor C Miall; Mr M Afroozi Milani; Professor E W Peck (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor T Ponman; Professor M C Press (Pro-Vice Chancellor and Head of College); Professor S Quigley; Dr C Ray Professor J E Rowe; Dr I Sansom; Dr R Santos; Dr G Schaffer; Dr D Shepherd; Professor A Tickell (Provost and Vice-Principal); Dr G Watson; 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).

Apologies: Professor D Adams; Dr D Bailey; Professor J Bridgeman; Professor T Dafforn; Mr John Dolan; Dr D Ghica; Professor D Hannah; Professor M Hilton; Professor P Kumar; Dr H Laville; Dr K Nightingale; Mr K Osman; Dr J Phillimore; Professor M D Stringer (Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor); Professor C Ross; Professor A Sanders; Dr A Siniver; Professor M Webber; Professor S Wolff.

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

14/01 Minutes of previous meeting

Agreed: that the minutes of the meeting held on 13th November 2013 be approved (SEN.14.03.01). There were no matters arising.

14/02 Vice-Chancellor's Items

Considered: a report from the Vice-Chancellor on a number of items for information (SEN.14.03.02).

Reported:

- (a) the main decisions of the HEFCE Board on funding for 2014/15 and the recurrent teaching grant for 2012/13 and 2013/14. These were:
 - (i) maintenance of the recurrent funding for research and knowledge exchange (through the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF)) at the same level as 2013/14 (although the funding for HEIF would be re-distributed amongst the sector);
 - (ii) capital funding of £440m for 2014/15, including £160m for the third year of the UK Research Partnership Investment Fund;
 - (iii) a reduction of 5.85% to most recurrent teaching grant budgets;

- (iv) re-calculation of the recurrent teaching grant allocations for 2012/13 and 2013/14.
- (b) that the University would receive its grant letter on 24th March 2014. The expectation was for further funding reductions in 2015/16;
- (c) that Health Education England was considering its funding of health programmes for the next three years but indications were that this might reduce by 4% each year;
- (d) that the developments at (a) to (c) demonstrated the difficult financial climate faced by the University. It was therefore important that the University capitalised on its opportunity to generate further income by increasing student numbers given the positive recruitment position for 2014 entry;
- (e) that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had announced £222m for science and engineering projects in his budget for March 2014. This included an Alan Turing Institute working on big data and algorithm research (£42m over five years), a cell therapy manufacturing centre and a graphene innovation centre as part of the UK's Catapult network (£74m over five years) and 20 new Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council Centres for Doctoral Training (£106m over five years);
- (f) that a strategic alliance agreement had been signed between the University and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC);
- (g) the recent advertisement of the Birmingham Teaching Fellows;
- (h) the congratulations of Senate to Professor Edward Peck on his appointment as Vice-Chancellor of Nottingham Trent University and to Dr Jon Green on his appointment as the Director of the University's Teaching Academy.

14/03 Recruitment and Admissions Update

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14/04 Structure of the Academic Year

Considered: the proposed revision of the structure of the academic year (SEN.14.03.04).

Reported:

- (a) that the context for the proposed revision of the structure of the academic year was:
 - (i) that comparison with other higher education institutions had revealed that the University was starting its autumn term earlier than its comparator institutions;
 - (ii) the benefits for postgraduate taught students of a later start to the autumn term in early October;
 - (iii) the need to offer more scheduled academic activities in the summer term;
- (b) that the proposed post-examination activities would only apply to new student cohorts;
- (c) that the activities in the summer term would be centrally organised on an interdisciplinary basis and included in the academic workload model;
- (d) the importance of demonstrating the value of the University's educational offering;
- (e) that further work on the detailed implementation of the scheme would be required if the revised structure of the academic year was approved by Council on the recommendation of Senate. This would:
 - (i) clarify the detailed assessment arrangements;
 - (ii) consider options for diversity of the provision (e.g. the potential delivery by Massive Open Online Course);
 - (iii) determine whether a different academic year structure to undergraduates might be more appropriate for postgraduate taught students;
 - (iv) clarify how the arrangements would operate for four year degree programmes;

- (v) take account of the specific needs of programmes which already had activities scheduled in the summer term. It was intended that such activities would continue - the aim of the new arrangements was to support and enhance existing provision;
- (vi) clarify the arrangements for the training of Postgraduate Teaching Assistants.

Recommended: to Council that the proposed revision of the structure of the academic year be approved as set out in Paper SEN.14.03.04, noting that:

- (i) the above points would be addressed during the next stage of development of the new arrangements;
- (ii) a further report would be submitted to Senate in due course;
- (iii) M3 would be briefed further on the revision of the structure of the academic year following the next meeting of Council on 9th April 2014.

14/05 Update on Curriculum Review

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14/06 Update on Enhancements recently provided for Undergraduate Students (January 2014)

Considered: an update on the recent enhancements recently provided for undergraduate students (SEN.14.03.06).

Reported that the University:

- (a) had made a number of enhancements for undergraduate students in response to feedback from students;
- (b) in respect of the library stock of essential reading materials, the library was progressing the acquisition of new stock. They had received 270 updated reading lists and were currently negotiating with suppliers regarding acquisition;
- (c) the Guild of Students was very supportive of the enhancements.

14/07 Research Performance

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14/08 Assessment Arrangements

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14/09 Report from Heads of Colleges

Noted: the report from the Heads of Colleges regarding recent developments (SEN.14.03.09). This included an update on the outcome of the consultation on Nursing (SEN.14.03.09a).

14/10 Report from the Nominations Committee

Considered: a report from the meeting of the Nominations Committee held on 25th February 2014 (SEN.14.03.10).

Resolved: that the recommendations be approved as set out in Paper SEN.14.03.10.

- 14/11 Report to Senate on the work of Council-approved Panels during 2013
Noted: the report to Senate on the work of Council-approved Panels during 2013 (SEN.14.03.11).
- 14/12 Report from the Research Committee
Noted: a report from the meetings of the Research Committee held on 4th December 2013 and 6th March 2014 (SEN.14.03.12).
- 14/13 Report from the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee
Noted: a report from the meeting of the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee held on 5th February 2014 (SEN.14.03.13).
- 14/14 Report from the University Education Committee
Noted: a report from the meetings of the University Education Committee held on 5th December 2013 and 23rd January 2014 (SEN.14.03.14).
- 14/15 Report from the University Quality Assurance Committee
Noted: a report from the meetings of the University Quality Assurance Committee held on 3rd December 2013 and 21st January 2014 (SEN.14.03.15).
- 14/16 Programme of Meetings 2013/14
Noted: the remaining meeting of Senate for 2013/14 as follows:

Wednesday 11th June 2014