

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

SENATE

12th June 2019

MINUTES

Present: Professor Sir David Eastwood (Vice-Chancellor and Principal, in the Chair); Professor K Armour (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)); Professor R Black (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor T Cable; Dr J Curnow; Dr A Davies; Mr A Goldstone; Professor J Green (Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)); Dr C Greenway (Director of Student Engagement); Professor D Hannah; Dr A Hidalgo; Mr A Jaatinen; Dr L Jeffery; Dr L Jenkins; Professor T Jones (Provost and Vice-Principal); Professor P Kearns; Professor P Kraftl; Dr S Kukureka; Dr T Lockwood; Professor P Lumley; Professor M Mahlberg; Professor R Mason (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International)); Professor M Mazzocco; Professor C Needham; Professor J Pritchard; Professor G Schaffer (Director of Postgraduate Studies); Professor A Schofield (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor D Shepherd; Professor M Simmons; Ms J Small; Professor T Softley (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)); Professor M Sterling; Professor I Szmigin; Professor J Taylor; Dr G Timmins; and Professor N Wilkin.

Also present: Ms C Gilbert (Director of External Relations) (for Minute 19/19); Mr S McAuliffe (Academic Registrar); Mr L Sanders (Registrar and Secretary); Mr N Sidney (Governance Officer).

Apologies: Professor D Adams (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor J Arthur (Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Staffing)); Dr S Conner; Dr D Bailey; Professor S Busby; Professor E Fulton; Professor A Ginger; Professor L Green (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor F Lough; Professor P Jackson; Professor U Martin (Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Equalities)); Professor P Moss; Ms G Palazzi; Professor K Rowlingson; Professor M Whitby (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Ms B Williams.

Absent: Professor C Constantinou; Mr Z Khan; Dr N Sigona.

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

19/16 Minutes of previous meeting

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 20th March 2019 be approved (SEN.19.06.01).

19/17 Matters Arising from the minutes not addressed elsewhere on the agenda

Reported: that there were no matters arising.

19/18 Vice-Chancellor's Items

Noted: a report from the Vice-Chancellor (SEN.19.06.02).

Reported:

- (a) that an initial briefing on the Augar review of post-18 education and funding, which was published on 30th May 2019, was included in Paper SEN.19.06.02. The University was currently undertaking more in-depth analysis to understand the potential implications of the review for the University, noting that the government had indicated it would respond to

- the Augar review as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review, and that the timescales for this were currently unclear (but would be unlikely to be before 2020);
- (b) that Council, SPRC and UEB had undertaken scenario planning on the potential implications of Augar, noting that holding the home tuition fee at £9,250 was estimated to be a real terms reduction of 20% in home tuition fee funding over the next five years;
- (c) SPRC had, at its meeting on 11th June 2019, recommended the 2019/20 budget to Council for approval, which included provision for significant investment in new staff appointments, and which demonstrated the University's resilience and continuing commitment to investing in staff;
- (d) the Phase 1 Dubai campus continued to operate successfully, and work on the new phase 2 building continued. The University had submitted an application for institutional licensure to the Commission for Academic Accreditation on 31st May 2019, which would allow the University to be accredited at the Federal Level and consequently be able to access government funding, scholarships and recruit Emirati students. The academic aspects of this were considered and approved by the University Education Committee on 22nd May 2019;
- (e) the Green Heart Festival launch weekend had successfully taken place on 8th and 9th June 2019;
- (f) the Birmingham Business School had recently been re-accredited by EQUIS for a further five years, ensuring that the Business School retained its gold standard 'triple-crown' accreditation;
- (g) a review of the international student experience, developed with input from the Guild of Students, was to be considered by UEB;
- (h) a student member of Senate queried the availability of guidance in relation to LGBT rights for staff and students based in Dubai. The Director of External Resources confirmed that a comprehensive set of resources had been developed with advice from Stonewall, as previously reported to Senate, and offered to provide further details outside of the meeting.

19/19 Recruitment and Admissions

(1) Progress Update

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

Considered: the Recruitment and Admissions Progress Update (SEN.19.06.03).

Reported that:

- (a) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (b) the University was expected to be able to meet its overall home undergraduate target, **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (c) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (d) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]** Based on current position, the University was on track to meet the overseas undergraduate target, **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (e) to (f) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (g) UEB had agreed that all Colleges would meet, rather than exceed, their overall recruitment targets for 2019 entry, noting that each College would determine its own approach as to how this would be achieved. UEB had also supported the option of taking students who had performed better than expected through Clearing even if the programme they wished to study had already met target. **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (h) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

(2) Undergraduate Recruitment and Marketing Update

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

Considered: an update on proposed developments to the University's approach to home undergraduate applicants (SEN.19.06.03).

Reported that:

- (a) Paper SEN.19.06.03 proposed two developments to the University's approach to home undergraduate applicants:
 - (i) firstly, to replace the University's current unconditional scheme (UO) with an offer of no less than grade C in three subjects (or the equivalent qualifications for BTEC and IB). This would be known as an Attainment Offer;
 - (ii) secondly, to reposition the University's various offers under the headline of "Your Birmingham Offer" which supports the move away from UO. The Attainment Offer would be a key element of this;
- (b) the Unconditional Offer (UO) scheme was introduced in 2012 and was developed to improve the conversion rates of high achieving applicants. It had been successful to date, although its effectiveness was reducing due to the number of other universities now offering UO, and school negativity being driven by challenges to the approach by government and in the media. Whilst students in receipt of a UO from the University did not experience the attainment gap seen in other parts of the sector, some subjects made a relatively large proportion of their offers through the UO scheme;
- (c) as reported to Senate in March 2019, UEB had been considering the University's future approach to its offer making strategy during 2018/19, including the development of a personalised offer strategy, as an alternative to the Unconditional Offer scheme. This work preceded concerns raised by the Education Secretary in April 2019 in relation to the use of unconditional offers;
- (d) a range of options had been considered to replace UOs, including: **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (e) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (f) the Attainment Offer would be articulated as part of "Your Birmingham Offer". Critically, it would allow the University to explain the different types of offer a student could receive, bringing A2B and contextual offers into the forefront in support of the University's approach to Widening Participation, in line with the new Access and Participation Plan and supporting the delivery of the Quintile 1 target;
- (g) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (h) the Guild of Students was supportive of the proposal;
- (i) the recommendations had been considered and approved by UEB on 3rd June 2019 and by SPRC on 11th June 2019, and would be reported to Council on 26th June 2019;
- (j) Senate would receive an update on the progression of the new approach during the autumn term of 2019/20, as part of the regular report to Senate on recruitment and admissions.

Endorsed: the developments in the University's approach to home undergraduate applicants, as set out in Paper SEN.19.06.03.

19/20 Education Update

Considered: an update from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) (SEN.19.06.05).

Reported:

- (a) that the implementation of the New Academic Teaching Year (NATY) continued to progress on track. Following on from last year's successful 'town hall' meetings, further meetings had taken place in May 2019 to raise awareness amongst staff. Additionally, the first formal student communications would be sent out in June 2019;
- (b) the future development of the TEF remained unclear and awaited the outcome of the independent review being led by Dame Shirley Pearce;
- (c) the Higher Education Futures Institute (HEFI) Conference 2019 would take place on the 20th and 21st of June 2019, and, for the first time, would be open to colleagues from the

wider UK higher education sector;

(d) the University would be communicating the launch of the LinkedIn Learning initiative during the summer, which would provide comprehensive online learning opportunities to students, staff and alumni from September 2019.

19/21 Quality Assurance

(1) Undergraduate and Postgraduate Annual Review 2017/18

Considered: a report on the outcomes of the University-wide annual review processes pertaining to undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision in the academic year 2017/18 and the resulting School Education Plans for 2018/19 (SEN.19.06.06).

Reported that:

(a) during summer 2018, the University's Annual Review process, which covered undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision, asked Schools to consider key quantitative and qualitative data for the 2017/18 academic year, and complete a School Education Plan (SEP) for the 2018/19 academic year;

(b) following completion of the process within Schools, College Quality Assurance and Approval Committees, College Education Committees and College Boards considered the SEPs. The SEPs were then reviewed by the University Quality Assurance Committee (UQAC) and University Education Committee (UEC), which reported to UEB on the common themes arising from the SEPs and summarising the actions underway;

(c) key themes from the SEPs had been identified and, as requested by UEB, a pilot RAG-rating had been developed for each School to indicate the extent to which the previous year's actions were completed;

(d) UQAC and UEC had noted that Schools' engagement with the Annual Review process and preparation of SEPs was on the whole very positive, with notable improvements in the quality of submissions.

Noted: the report on the outcomes of the University-wide annual review processes pertaining to undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision in the academic year 2017/18 and the resulting School Education Plans for 2018/19, as set out in Paper SEN.19.06.06.

(2) UG and PGT External Examiners Reports 2017/18

Considered: a summary of comments made by external examiners assigned to undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate programmes (PGT) for the academic session 2017/18 (SEN.19.06.07).

Reported that:

(a) external examiners were required to provide the University with an annual report on the quality and standards of the provision to which they are appointed, in particular matters relating to assessment, marking and award. Externals were also invited to suggest areas for enhancement and to identify and strengths or distinctive/innovative features in relation to learning, teaching or assessment;

(b) individual reports were scrutinised by senior academic staff in Colleges and by the College Academic Policy Partners (CAPPs). A University summary of key themes and issues relating to undergraduate programmes was considered by the University Quality Assurance Committee (UQAC) and UEB in September and October 2018 respectively. A University summary of key themes and issues relating to postgraduate programmes was considered by UQAC and UEB in February and March 2019 respectively;

(c) the vast majority of comments from UG and PGT External Examiners were positive and confirmed that academic standards were consistent with those across the sector;

(d) following discussion at UQAC, the University summary reports, alongside College-specific summaries, were considered at College Quality Assurance and Approval Committees (or equivalent) to ensure actions to address any identified issues were taken forward and

items of good practice were disseminated to School colleagues;

(e) UEB had agreed at its meeting on 10th June 2019 to revise the template documents for Boards of Examiners meetings. This would ensure that discussion of actions taken in response to comments made by external examiners in the previous year, and key information considered by external examiners in reaching their decision to endorse the Board's decisions, was formally recorded.

Noted: the summary of comments made by external examiners assigned to undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate programmes (PGT) for the academic session 2017/18, as set out in Paper SEN.19.06.07.

(3) Annual Report on Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals

Considered: the annual report on student conduct, complaints and appeals (SEN.19.06.08).

Reported that:

(a) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]** for the sixth year in succession, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) had not found any complaint to be justified;

(b) to (d) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

(e) a new online academic integrity module had been launched for all students for 2018/19, as part of Personal Academic Tutoring resources. Work would continue during the next academic year on developing and embedding this module, including enhancements that would make the module easier to read for students;

(f) the paper would be considered by Council on 26th June 2019.

Noted: the positive trends in the University's student complaints and appeals, especially relative to the rest of the sector.

19/22 University Strategic Framework Key Performance Targets

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

Considered: the University Strategic Framework Key Performance Targets Update (SEN.19.06.09).

Reported:

(a) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

(b) the current set of KPIs would be reviewed and refreshed as part of the development of the new Strategic Framework beyond 2020, which would be discussed at the Council Strategy Day in October 2019. Further information on the development of the new Strategic Framework would be shared with Senate in 2019/20;

(c) that the KPT Update would be considered by Council on 26th June 2019.

19/23 Reports from Heads of College

Noted: the report from the Heads of College regarding recent developments (SEN.19.06.10).

19/24 Report from the Honorary Degrees Committee

Noted: a report from the Honorary Degrees Committee held on 14th May 2019 (SEN.19.06.11).

Resolved that:

(i) the recommendations for the award of honorary degrees be approved as set out in Paper SEN.19.06.11;

(ii) the recommended appointment to the membership of the Committee be approved, as set

out in Paper SEN.19.06.11.

19/25 Report from the Research Committee

Noted: a report from the meeting of the Research Committee held on 19th March 2019 (SEN.19.06.12).

19/26 Report from the University Education Committee

Noted: a report from the meetings of the University Education Committee held on 13th March 2019 and 22nd May 2019 (SEN.19.06.13).

19/27 Access and Participation Plan

Noted: the University's Access and Participation Plan, as submitted to the Office for Students (SEN.19.06.14).

19/28 Amendment of Ordinances

Endorsed: the amendment of Ordinances 2.9.1, 3.7.1 and 3.7.2, prior to their consideration by Council (SEN.19.06.15).

19/29 Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor Appointments

Noted: a report on Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor appointments (SEN.19.06.16).

Endorsed: the following recommendations for Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor appointments, prior to their consideration by Council on 26th June 2019:

- (i) the re-appointment of Professor Paul Bowen as Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Industrial Partners) for three years from 1st August 2019 to 31st July 2022;
- (ii) the re-appointment of Professor Simon Collinson as Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Regional Economic Engagement) for three years from 1st October 2019 to 30th September 2022.

19/30 Senate Nominees on Council-appointed Panels

Resolved: that the list of nominees to serve on Council-appointed Panels be approved (SEN.19.06.17).

19/31 Programme of Meetings

Noted: the 2019/20 programme of meetings of Senate:

Wednesday 6th November 2019 at 2.00pm

Wednesday 18th March 2020 at 2.00pm

Wednesday 10th June 2020 at 2.00pm

19/32 Closing Remarks

On behalf of Senate, the Vice-Chancellor thanked:

- (a) all members who would be retiring from Senate at the end of the session;
- (b) Professor Michael Whitby, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of the College of Arts and Law, who would be retiring from the University at the end of the academic year;
- (c) Professor Graham Timmins, who would be standing down as the College of Social Sciences Director of Education at the end of the academic year;

- (d) Mr Adam Goldstone, for his work as the Guild's Education Officer and a student member of Senate.