

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

SENATE

22nd March 2017

MINUTES

Present: Professor Sir David Eastwood (Vice-Chancellor and Principal, in the Chair); Professor D Adams (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor K Armour (Pro-Vice-Chancellor); Professor J Arthur (Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Staffing)); Ms D Baskin-Atkinson; Ms R Bennett; Professor C Bunce; Dr S Conner; Dr D Fuller; Dr J Gilson (Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience)); Professor J Green; Professor A Guariglia; Professor D Hannah; Professor M Hannon; Professor T Jones (Provost and Vice-Principal); Professor P Kearns; Professor P Kraftl; Ms N Ma; Professor J Martin; Professor R Mason, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International); Professor H Mehanna; Mr K Nelson; Professor P Kumar; Dr T Lockwood; Professor F Lough; Professor P Lumley; Professor M Mahlberg; Professor U Martin; Dr D Moran; Professor M Nimmo (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor Z Pikramenou; Dr J Pritchard; Professor C Ross; Professor J Rowe; Professor K Rowlingson; Professor A Schofield (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor M Simmons; Professor M Sterling; Dr G Timmins; Professor M Whitby (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Ms C White; Dr N Wilkin and Mr C Wilkinson (Education Officer, Guild of Students); Dr H Yusuf.

Also present: Mr P Clack (Director of International Relations) (for Minutes 17/07 and 17/08); Ms C Gilbert (Director of External Relations) (for Minutes 17/08 and 17/09); Dr L Jeffery; Mr S McAuliffe (Academic Registrar); Ms C McDonough (Assistant Secretary); Mr L Sanders (Registrar & Secretary).

Apologies: Professor S Becker (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Dr A Davies; Dr N Hotchin (Director of Postgraduate Studies); Professor I Mandel; Professor P Moss; Dr C Needham; Professor D Shepherd; Professor T Softley (Pro-Vice-Chancellor); Dr K Voelz.

Absent: Dr R Brandstaetter; Dr D Bailey; Professor G Watson.

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

17/01 Minutes of previous meeting

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 9th November 2016 be approved (SEN.17.03.01).

17/02 Matters Arising from the minutes not addressed elsewhere on the agenda

Reported: that there were no matters arising.

17/03 Vice-Chancellor's Items

Considered: a report from the Vice-Chancellor (SEN.17.03.02).

Reported: that the Higher Education and Research Bill was now expected to return to the Commons after Easter.

17/04 Education Update

Considered: an update from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) (SEN.17.03.03).

Reported:

- (a) the arrangements for the forthcoming PGT Review, particularly noting the importance of increasing the response rate for the next Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey;
- (b) that a new Code of Practice for the use of Panopto would be implemented for the start of the next academic year;
- (c) the plans for development of an online plagiarism awareness course for students in collaboration with the University of Nottingham;
- (d) progress with the University's plans for the delivery of Degree Apprenticeships.

17/05 Assessment and Feedback

Considered: the proposed introduction of a revised Code of Practice for Assessment and Feedback for 2017/18 (SEN.17.03.04).

Reported that:

- (a) there was a need to improve assessment and feedback on undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes, noting that this was an area identified for improvement by the National Student Survey and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey. The introduction of a revised Code of Practice for Assessment and Feedback was therefore proposed to address assessment load, quality and consistency and the arrangements for and enhancement of staff feedback to students;
- (b) that this proposal had been considered by Education Committee on 16th March 2017. The Committee had recommended the revision of the Code of Practice to Senate, subject to a number of minor amendments to the proposed wording;
- (c) that Heads of Education were responsible for implementing the revisions of the Code of Practice at School level, noting that there was sufficient flexibility for local discipline variations where required. However, Heads of School were expected to retain oversight to ensure implementation was progressed within the required timescale;
- (d) the difficulties of providing tailored feedback of quality on programmes with large cohorts within the required 15 day turnaround target. It was noted that this workload issue would need to be addressed at School level, noting that the Provost was leading work on optimising staff/student ratios across the University which would also contribute to ensuring that staff resources were allocated appropriately according to student cohort size, and local needs of Schools.

Resolved: that a revised Code of Practice for Assessment and Feedback be adopted across the University for 2017/18 as set out in Paper SEN.17.03.04.

17/06 Research Performance Update

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

Considered: the research grants performance information for the six month period from 1st August to 31st January 2017 (SEN.17.03.05).

Reported that:

- (a) to (e) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (f) a member of Senate enquired about the impact of Brexit on the University's future research funding performance. The University was conscious of the potential negative impact of Brexit and had adopted the following strategy to address it:
 - (i) continuing to encourage academics to apply for EU research funding where they met the criteria;

- (ii) positioning itself to apply for national research funding (e.g. global challenges, industrial strategy) which had been increased by the government;
- (iii) lobbying for a commensurate increase in the funding of UKRI to compensate for what would be a loss of £800m EU research funding if this occurred following Brexit;
- (iv) positioning itself to take advantage of the preliminary indications from the EU about the possibility of their future research funding being offered on the basis of a more inclusive approach to non-EU countries via the designation of associate country status;
- (g) a further update would be provided at the next meeting of Senate. In the meantime, members of Senate were encouraged to continue to promote the generation of greater research income within their Colleges.

17/07 The University's International Strategic Framework

Considered: the latest draft of the University's International Strategic Framework (SEN.17.03.06).

Reported that:

- (a) much had changed since the University had last reviewed its international engagement strategy in 2015. It was, timely, therefore, to review and refresh the University's international strategic framework. The purpose of the framework was enabling: to support and enhance the University's size and shape plan, its research strategy and its education strategy. The paper opened by describing the characteristics, within the University's broad strategic framework, that would make the University a global university. It then identified 16 objectives that the University should seek to achieve over the next 5-10 years to develop these characteristics;
- (b) the draft Strategic Framework would be submitted to Council for approval on 25th April 2017;
- (c) the Framework was framed at a highly strategic and aspirational level in broad terms and would therefore be underpinned by an annual operating plan to articulate how the strategy would be implemented on an annual basis;
- (d) the four key priorities of the Framework:
 - (i) strengthening of the University's international reputation by securing and maintaining a top 100 position in all the major international league tables;
 - (ii) diversifying and growing international research and industrial income;
 - (iii) increasing the proportion of international students to at least the Russell Group average;
 - (iv) extending partnerships with leading global universities, including maximisation of student mobility opportunities, with at least 25% of each graduating cohort choosing to study, research, work or volunteer abroad during their degree over the next ten years;
- (e) the comments of Senate were as follows:
 - (i) the promotion of opportunities for students to study abroad for a semester was welcomed, noting that:
 - (a) the current restrictions of the structure of the University's academic year would need to be addressed to facilitate student mobility for a semester;
 - (b) a series of actions would be put in place to promote student mobility;
 - (ii) although the target of increasing the number of highly cited researchers to at least 10 by 2020 was welcomed, it was suggested that there should be a parallel statement about the strategic objective of raising citations more generally across the academic community;
 - (iii) further work was in train to articulate the international strategy for alumni and fund raising, noting that the Guild of Students would be involved in this work in due course.

Resolved that:

- (i) Senate welcomed the draft International Strategic Framework;
- (ii) the comments of Senate would be taken account of on refinement of the final version of the Strategic Framework for submission to Council on 24th April 2017;
- (iii) members of Senate would receive the final version of the University's International Strategic Framework after it had been approved by Council.

17/08 **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

17/09 Recruitment and Admissions Update

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

Considered: the Recruitment and Admissions Update (SEN.17.03.08).

Reported that:

- (a) to (f) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (g) that future editions of the report would be presented with less appendices;
- (h) the University was also planning for future service provision (for example, by strengthening student welfare support);
- (i) a student member of Senate emphasised the importance of the quality of student services, citing the shortage of lecture theatre space and the difficulties presented by managing a large undergraduate cohort in Psychology. Senate was assured that the University continued to invest in enhancement of the student experience, noting, for example,:
 - (i) the plans for a New Teaching Block (including 600 seat lecture theatre) adjacent to New Main Library and Green Heart site;
 - (ii) that academic staff provision in Psychology had been strengthened with seven new appointments in recent weeks;
 - (iii) the work being led by the Provost to optimise staff/student ratios across the University;
 - (iv) that the University was strengthening its management of the timetable, including by increasing the number of centrally controlled teaching spaces, noting that curriculum complexity and student choice of options impacted on the ability to improve timetabling and space usage.
- (j) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

17/10 Key Information Sets (KIS) 2016

Noted: the report on the 2016/17 Key Information Sets (SEN.17.03.09)

17/11 Reports from Heads of College

Noted: the report from the Heads of College regarding recent developments (SEN.17.03.10).

17/12 Report from the Nominations Committee

Considered: a report from the meeting of the Nominations Committee held on 21st February 2017 (SEN.17.03.11).

Resolved: that the recommendations for the award of honorary degrees, appointment of a Public Orator, and extension of the term of office of a Public Orator be approved as set out in Paper SEN.17.03.11.

17/13 Report from the Research Committee

Noted: a report from the meetings of the Research Committee held on 15th November 2016 and 24th January 2017. (SEN.17.03.12).

17/14 Report from the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee

(1) Report

Considered: a report from the meeting of the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee held on 13th December 2016 (SEN.17.03.13A).

(2) Amendment of Ordinance 4, Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates

Resolved: that the amendment of Ordinance 4, Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates to add the Master of Nursing (M.Nurs) to the list of degrees awarded by the University be approved (SEN.17.03.13B).

17/15 Report from the University Education Committee

Noted: a report from the meetings of the University Education Committee held on 23rd November 2016 and 25th January 2017 (SEN.17.03.14).

17/16 Report from the University Quality Assurance Committee

Noted: a report from the meetings of the University Quality Assurance Committee held on 1st December 2016, 26th January 2017 and 14th February 2017 (SEN.17.03.15).

17/17 Report to Senate on the work of Council-approved Panels during 2016

Noted: the report to Senate on the work of Council-approved Panels during 2016 (SEN.17.03.16).

17/18 Programme of Meetings 2016/17 and 2017/18

Noted: the programme of future meetings of Senate:

2016/17

Wednesday 14th June 2017 at 2.00pm

2017/18

Wednesday 8th November 2017 at 2.00pm

Wednesday 21st March 2018 at 2.00pm

Wednesday 13th June 2018 at 2.00pm