

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

MEETING OF SENATE

**Minutes of a meeting held on
Wednesday 11 March 2015**

Present: The President and Vice-Chancellor (Chair)

Dr Aissaoui	Ms Macleod
Mr Athwal	Dr Maltby
Professor Atkinson	Dr Marsh
Dr Barber	Professor Marshall
Professor Barstow	Dr Norman
Professor Beck	Professor O'Brien (<i>vice Professor Lester</i>)
Professor Challiss	Professor Page
Professor Chapman	Professor Pan
Professor Coffey	Professor Peel
Professor Coleman	Professor Phythian
Professor Davidchack	Professor Pritchard
Professor England	Professor Raven
Professor Foxhall	Professor Schurer
Professor Fulcher	Dr Shackleton
Dr Gibson	Ms Taylor
Professor Heckel	Professor Thompson
Professor Hughes	Professor Wilson
Professor Ketley	Professor Wood (<i>vice Professor Lunt</i>)
Professor King	Professor Wynford-Thomas
Dr Lewis	Mr M Rubin (SU)
Professor Lilley	Mr Y Nikolov (SU)

In attendance: Professor Phoenix, Director of the Research Support Office (for M4), Director of Finance, Registrar and Secretary, Academic Registrar (Secretary) and Mr A Petersen (Assistant Secretary)

Apologies for Absence were received from Professor Andrew, Mrs Bailey, Professor Fry, Professor Hainsworth, Professor Lawson, Professor Lester, Professor London, Professor Lunt, Dr Parry, Professor Samani, Professor Schwabe, Professor Wallace and Professor Yeoman

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

15/M1 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Senate considered the minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2014.

Senate **approved** the minutes as a correct record.

15/M2 **MATTERS ARISING**

No matters arising were identified.

15/M3 PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BUSINESS

The President and Vice Chancellor reported:

- a) That the University Strategic Conversation was ongoing and that workshops had been held with a full range of internal and external stakeholders including staff, students, local civic leaders and university Vice-Chancellors. A range of staff forums were taking place and an all staff survey had also been launched. The President and Vice-Chancellor reported that much helpful feedback had been gathered to date and encouraged all staff to contribute if they had not already done so;
- b) That the funding landscape for higher education in the next parliament would depend heavily on the outcome of the general election. The Labour Party had proposed a reduction in fees to which Universities UK had provided a response;
- c) That feedback from the recent Heads of Department and Professional Services away day had been generally positive. A full report of the event would be circulated in due course, and Senate noted that future such away days would take place in order to focus on particular themes – further ideas for topics to cover at such meetings were welcomed;
- d) That he had recently completed a visit to Indonesia as part of a Universities UK delegation. He reported that the Indonesian government was making scholarships available to both university staff and students wishing to undertake a PhD and that this could represent a valuable source of recruitment to research degrees.

15/M4 STRATEGY AND POLICY: FUNDING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION 2015/16

Senate considered the annual letter from the Department of Business Innovation and Skills to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) outlining the funding allocation for teaching in the 2015/16 academic year. A summary paper to accompany the letter had been prepared and the Director of Finance drew Senate's attention to particular aspects of the national grant allocation.

The 2015/16 teaching grant for the sector would be £1,671 million, which represented a reduction of 12.7% from the previous year. Research funding remained steady however a shift in the research funding to place greater emphasis on 4* research would impact upon the distribution of funding. Senate noted that there was a slight increase in capital funding, however this would be allocated on an increasingly competitive basis. The total HEFCE funding for higher education would be £4,010 million, an overall reduction of 2% on the previous year.

Senate noted that the letter did not include the standard indicative projections for the subsequent academic year (2016/17) in recognition of the level of uncertainty currently surrounding the future funding environment after the outcome of the general election.

Senate noted the contents of the paper, and that this would also be presented to Council.

15/M5 **RESEARCH AND ENTERPRISE**

Senate received a presentation from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) regarding Research, Knowledge Transfer and related metrics and activities.

Senate noted that data had now been published for each of the Units of Assessment (UOAs) with the Research Excellence Framework 2014 (REF) which allowed individual institutions to benchmark their own performance against the sector mean in terms of research income and PhD completions per FTE. The data demonstrated that although some departments performed well in these metrics there were a number of areas which did not perform as well as might be hoped. An analysis of projected research income over the next five years demonstrated a significant funding gap between the amount of research award income generated and the total cost of research undertaken in the institution. Senate noted that the structure of the REF data may not reflect recent improvements in individual UOAs and that the figures were heavily influenced by a small number of research intensive institutions which attracted the majority of the funding. It was further noted that the success rate for research award applications at institutional level was strong. However, it was noted that overall there was significant scope for improvement. Additional resource had been identified to strengthen the Research Support Office and the task and finish group that had been established to consider means of creating a stronger culture of supporting research grant applications would be presenting its recommendations as part of the Strategic Conversation.

Income generated from enterprise activities within the institution had shown a 14% increase in 2013/14 compared with the previous year, with notable expansions in income generated through collaborative and contract research. Evidence from across the institution also demonstrated significant potential to grow this activity further. Senate welcomed the growth in this area and agreed that this could be a significant factor in the development of the University strategy going forwards. Senate noted however that research and enterprise activity should be viewed as part of a common aim to enhance the overall research profile of the institution through both traditional and third stream activities.

Senate noted that the development of the University's research agenda would be a standing item for future meetings.

15/M6 **LEARNING AND TEACHING**

(a) Timetable for amendments to the academic year and University credit framework

Senate considered a proposed implementation plan to support departments in the process of migrating programmes and modules into the harmonised credit and workload hours framework agreed at the meeting of Senate in November 2014.

Senate noted that the process of migration would be undertaken on a departmental basis, with targeted support from central services such as the Registry, the Quality Office and the Leicester Learning Institute. This would also be supported by a range of online resource banks of good practice. Senate noted that the scheduling of the migration would take into account existing departmental commitments as far as possible. The final date for approval of all revised structures for the 2017/18 implementation date would be March 2017.

Senate noted that the approval process for the revised credit structure and workload hours would be proportionate to the scale of the overall change in each case. The process would also seek to allow flexibility as far as possible, for example through the approval of modules which can be delivered at more than one level and the approval of 7.5 and 10 hour per credit version of each module through one process.

Senate **approved** the implementation plan. Senate also agreed that a draft schedule for the migration of individual departments to the new structure and credit hour rating should be produced centrally and circulated to departments for consultation.

(b) Attendance Monitoring Policy

Senate considered a proposal to establish a series of principles for the monitoring and reporting of student attendance, which had been informed by good practice identified at a range of other institutions and by systems that are already in place at Leicester. The proposed policy was designed to ensure a more consistent approach to the monitoring of student engagement, and to assist in identifying as quickly as possible those students who were not engaging and might benefit from support. The policy was also designed to ensure that the University continues to meet the requirements of the UKVI with respect to its Highly Trusted Sponsor status.

Senate noted that the principles and policy had already been considered and endorsed by both the University Leadership team and the Academic Policy Committee. Senate agreed that this represented an opportunity to ensure that students at risk of disengaging from their studies were identified early and appropriate support provided.

The Committee noted that although many areas of the University were already operating a system similar to this, implementation of the policy would require alterations to existing practice in some departments and this may have a resource implication. Senate further noted that it would be helpful to clearly define what would constitute a point of engagement, and whether these may include non-credit bearing activities, online engagement or Library use.

Senate **approved** the principles and policy for immediate implementation, noting that these would be incorporated into Senate Regulations as appropriate for the 2015/16 academic year.

(c) External Examiners reports and recommendations for undergraduate programmes

Senate considered a summary of the reports from the external examiners for undergraduate programmes in the 2013/14 academic year. The summary had been compiled by the Academic Directors of the Colleges following a detailed review of the reports. The summary had been considered by the Academic Policy Committee and proposals for action where required had been included for the information of Senate.

Senate was pleased to note that the reports confirmed that Senate could have confidence in the standards of the University's awards and the operation of the external examining process. The reports also noted that the quality of the learning opportunities for students were at an appropriate level and identified many examples of good practice. Senate has also noted a small number of areas identified by the Academic Policy Committee for further action, and the proposals for addressing these.

Senate noted comments from external examiners with regard to ensuring that markers use the full range of the available marks. Senate noted that the Academic Policy Committee had referred this issue to the Assessment and Feedback Working Group in order to develop further guidance for staff.

Senate noted comments relating to the criteria for consideration as a borderline candidate, and further criteria that may be taken into account when deciding whether to promote a student to a higher classification. Senate noted that the Academic Policy Committee had agreed that these aspects of the undergraduate scheme of assessment in Senate Regulation 5 should be subject to review and that proposals for revisions would be presented in due course. Senate agreed that this review was a helpful opportunity to consider whether the University may wish to adopt a wider range of interim awards to recognise student achievement short of the full degree for which they registered.

Senate **approved** the report and endorsed the proposals for action.

15/M7

BUSINESS TO REPORT

STRATEGY AND POLICY

(a) Corporate Risk Register for the spring term

Senate considered amendments to the University Corporate Strategic Risk Register for the spring term.

Senate **approved** the Risk Register for onward submission to Council.

(b) Appointment of University Orators

Senate considered proposals to the process for appointing University Orators. It was proposed that the number of Orators be increased to four, with one nominated by each College, and that the pool of staff from which they may be nominated should be expanded to include Emeritus Professors, former members of the academic staff now holding Honorary positions, and senior members of the Professional Services. Senate **approved** the proposals.

Senate considered and **approved** the nomination of the following as University Orators until July 2017, noting that the nomination from the College of Arts, Humanities and Law would be put forwards for consideration in due course:

Dr Paul Jenkins, Honorary Senior Lecturer, Department of Chemistry, College of Science and Engineering

Professor Emma Smith, School of Education, College of Social Science

Mr Nigel Siesage, Director of College Administration, College of Medicine, Biological Sciences and Psychology

RESEARCH AND ENTERPRISE

(a) Research Policy Committee

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) presented reports of the meetings of the Research Policy Committee held on 4 December 2014 and 27 January 2015.

Senate considered a paper proposing a series of research data management principles. It was noted that these had been developed by the Research Infrastructure Advisory Group and had cross-University support. Senate welcomed and **approved** the principles.

Senate noted the Committee's consideration of research investment priorities at College level. The Committee had agreed that following College level feedback these should be harmonised into a single prioritised list for the purpose of informing future investment.

Senate **approved** the reports.

(b) Enterprise Policy Committee

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) presented reports of the meetings of the Enterprise Policy Committee held on 26 February 2015.

Senate noted in particular the recommendations of a working party of EPC to examine means of providing incentives to staff to undertake enterprise and knowledge transfer activity. The recommendations would feed through the various task and finish groups established as part of the strategic conversation, and further comments on these findings from members of Senate were welcomed.

Senate **approved** the report.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

(a) Academic Policy Committee

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) presented reports of the meetings of the Academic Policy Committee held on 27 November 2014, 20 January 2015 and 19 February 2015.

Senate noted that the Committee was leading the development of a new University Learning and Teaching Strategy, and that this would be aligned with the wider strategic conversation at institutional level.

Senate noted that the Committee had considered a proposal to roll Lecture Capture technology out across the institution. Feedback from students on the recent pilot had been very positive and evidence suggested that students did not view lecture capture as a replacement for attendance at learning and teaching events, but rather as an additional resource to supplement in-class engagement. While acknowledging that arrangements for 2015-6 would remain partial, the Committee strongly supported the roll-out of lecture capture technology across the University and Senate noted that a proposal would be developed for the University Leadership Team.

Senate noted that the Committee had approved a proposal, previously endorsed by the Postgraduate Research Policy Committee to reduce the credit weighting of the thesis component of the professional Doctor of Education (EdD) programme from 360 to 330.

Finally, Senate noted the Committee's approval of a new Code of Practice for Admissions, which has been directly informed by the requirements of Chapter B2 of the UK Quality Code.

Senate **approved** the reports.

(b) Arrangements for the QAA Higher Education Review 2016

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) reminded members that the QAA Higher Education Review of the University was taking place in February 2016. He thanked members of Senate for the feedback that had already been provided on the range of excellent practice in learning and teaching across the institution, and reported that a small working group was leading preparations for the review, including the drafting of the Self Evaluation Document.

(c) Postgraduate Research Policy Committee

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) presented reports of the meetings of the Postgraduate Research Policy Committee held on 1 December 2014 and 19 January 2015.

Senate considered proposals for minor amendments to Senate Regulation 9 governing research degrees. The amendments were intended to clarify the policy regarding contact between students and their examiners, and confirm that a thesis may not be put forwards for examination if it had previously been submitted to another institution.

Senate **approved** the reports.

(d) Programmes of Study

Senate received a list of programmes of study recently approved or withdrawn.

COMMITTEES OF SENATE

(a) Staffing Policy Committee

The Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Resources) presented a report of the meeting of the Staffing Policy Committee held on 5 February 2015.

Senate noted the Committee's approval of a new Shared Parental Leave policy.

Senate **approved** the report.

(b) Information and Communications Technology Committee

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of the College of Science and Engineering presented reports of the meetings of the Information and Communications Technology Committee held on 17 December 2014 and 26 February 2015.

Senate noted in particular the Committee's consideration of the level of risk associated with IT Recovery Capability and Out of Ours cover, and the strategies in place to manage these.

Senate **approved** the reports.

(c) Senate Student Discipline Committee

The Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Resources) presented a report of the meeting of the Senate Student Discipline Committee held on 11 November 2014.

Senate approved the Terms of Reference and Membership for the Committee for the 2014/15 academic year. Senate also noted the Committee's consideration of potential amendments to Senate Regulation 11 governing student discipline in light of an analysis of recent disciplinary cases and to more clearly reflect disciplinary processes in the event of inappropriate behaviour by students, for example the harassment of those with protected characteristics. Senate noted that full proposals for amendments would be presented in due course.

Senate **approved** the report.

(d) Senate Student Disciplinary Panel report

Senate received the outcome of a recent Senate Student Discipline Panel.

15/M8 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Senate **noted** that its next meeting would take place on Wednesday 1 July at 2:00pm.

15/M9 **FEEDBACK ON ASSESSED WORK**

Senate noted that there was evidence of a misunderstanding on the part of students regarding the timescale for the provision of marks and feedback on examinations, and that this had the potential to impact upon the National Student Survey outcome. Senate noted that the University policy clearly stated the feedback policy for examinations, however agreed that this should be made more clear to students wherever possible.

Duration of meeting: One hour and thirty minutes

CHAIR