

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

MEETING OF SENATE

**Minutes of a meeting held on
Wednesday 8 March 2017**

Present:	The Provost (Chair)	
Professor Atkinson		Professor Martin
Ms E Bailey		Professor Monks
Professor Baker		Mr A Mitchell
Professor Barstow		Dr B Norman
Professor Chakraborti		Professor O'Brien
Professor Clark		Professor Pritchard
Professor Coleman		Professor Purnell
Dr R Dickinson		Professor Radnor
Professor Du Bois		Professor Robinson
Professor England		Professor Schwabe (<i>vice Professor Challiss</i>)
Dr C Gibson		Professor Scott
Professor Gillespie		Dr S Storchi (<i>vice Professor Halliwell</i>)
Professor Goodall		Professor Tansey
Professor Heckel		Dr R Thomas (<i>vice Professor Mattingly</i>)
Dr C Hewitt		Professor Wardlaw
Ms R Holland		Dr K Williams
Professor Knell		Professor Wood
Dr G Lewis		Professor Wynn

In attendance: Mr C Brain (UNITE), Dr D O'Sullivan (UCU), Mr B Welch (Unison), Academic Registrar (Secretary) and Mr A Petersen (Assistant Secretary).

Apologies for Absence were received from the President and Vice Chancellor, Professor Challiss, Professor Dixon, Professor Ellis, Dr L Gibson, Professor Griffiths, Professor Halliwell, Professor London, Professor Mattingly, Professor Pan and Ms C Taylor

UNRESERVED (ONLY) BUSINESS

17/M01 **STANDING BUSINESS**

(a) Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

(b) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Senate considered the minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2016.

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

(c) Matters Arising

Arising from M20(f) Senate noted that the review of Student Discipline procedures had been completed and a number of recommendations were being implemented. These

focussed upon embedding a single consistent process to address student conduct issues across the University, the availability of guidance and training for staff in the area of student conduct, and the publication of information for students regarding these expectations.

(d) Chair's Business

The Provost thanked colleagues for their engagement with the planning process and reported that all of the submissions had been received and the University Leadership Team was in the process of working through submissions to identify a prioritised list for investment. The Provost also reported that although there were insufficient resources to fund all applications the process was looking to capture ambitions over a span of several years.

The Provost also reported that there had recently been a very effective workshop with the pilot departments engaged with the new academic workload model. There would shortly be a circulation to staff regarding the proposed aims and principles of the new model.

Senate noted that there was currently a vacant seat on the University Health and Safety Committee due to be filled by a member of clinical staff nominated by Senate. It was noted that a call for nominations would be circulated shortly.

(e) Summary Report of Items for Approval

Senate considered a summary report of business for consideration arising from reports from subsidiary Committees and other areas where Senate's approval is required.

Consultancy Policy

Senate considered a revised Consultancy Policy. Senate noted that the amendments had arisen from a review of the Policy recommended by the internal auditors. In particular, Senate noted that the policy had been bolstered with clear explicit descriptions of the different types of consultancy giving examples of what would be required to meet each category.

Senate **approved** the revised policy.

Intellectual Property Policy

Senate considered a revised Intellectual Property Policy. Senate noted minor amendments relating to the sections on Protection and Commercialisation of IP and Revenue Sharing.

Senate **approved** the revised policy.

Amendments to Senate Regulations

Senate considered proposed amendments to Senate Regulation 7 governing assessment and Senate Regulation 8 governing Examinations.

Senate considered an amendment to SR7.34 establishing a notice period of three months for External Examiners seeking to resign from or otherwise leave their appointment. This would ensure sufficient time to appoint a replacement and ensure a smooth transition. This amendment was **approved** with immediate effect.

Senate considered an amendment to SR7.83 (a) which empowered Heads of Department to delegate the role of Chairing Boards of Examiners to senior academic staff within the relevant department. Any potential Board Chair would have to undertake appropriate training. This **amendment** was approved with immediate effect.

Senate considered an amendment to Senate Regulation 8.13 which formally reflected the move to using externally sourced invigilators for university examinations as standard. Senate noted that local practical and other examinations supported at departmental level would not be affected by the amendment and could continue to be administered locally. Senate **approved** the amendment in principle however requested clarification on the precise timing of its introduction.

Senate considered an amendment to Senate Regulation 8.3 which removed reference to a specific window for publication of the examination timetable. Senate noted that the amendment could impact upon students' workload and travel planning. The University would be able to publish a timetable significantly in advance in most cases, however the amendment was designed to reflect the change in the structure of the academic year which compressed the period between the midsummer and re-sit examination periods. Senate agreed that this proposed amendment should be reviewed to articulate a more specific period for timetable production, and which highlighted in advance any circumstances where this would not be met.

Summary report on External Examiners' reports

Senate considered summaries of the reports from the external examiners for undergraduate programmes in the 2015/16 academic year following a detailed review of the reports. The summary had been considered by the Academic Policy Committee and proposals for action agreed.

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 also noted a small number of areas identified by the Academic Policy Committee for further action, and the proposals for addressing these.

Senate noted the following:

- i) Comments relating to the Scheme of Assessment, with particular reference to borderlines, would be considered in the ongoing review of Senate Regulation 5;
- ii) Current practice would be maintained with regard to the format of the consideration of candidates at Boards of Examiners;
- iii) A notice period would be introduced for External Examiners (see above);
- iv) College Academic Committees would consider issues around consistency of marking practices, late penalties and penalties for exceeding word counts.

Senate **noted** the report and **endorsed** the proposals for action identified by the Academic Policy Committee.

Terms of Reference of Subsidiary Committees

Senate considered and **approved** the Terms of Reference of the Senate Student Discipline Committee for the 2016/17 academic year, noting the addition of a representative of Campus Services to the Membership.

17/M02 **BUSINESS TO CONSIDER**

(a) National Space Park

Senate received a presentation from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Strategic Science Projects) on the development of the National Space Park.

It was proposed to create a new University site in the Abbey Meadows area of the city. The development would bring together a critical mass of staff working in the area of space and earth observation research and teaching, and would initially encompass contributions from all of the departments within the College of Science and Engineering. This would strengthen the existing excellence in research in this area and provide new opportunities for synergies and the development of taught programmes and CPD. The development would support the overall University Transformation agenda and offer a new paradigm of University-industrial collaboration.

Senate noted that this was a substantial project being developed collaboratively between the University, the city, the National Space Centre and a range of local and national businesses. The development was in line with local and national infrastructure priorities, in particular the UK Industrial Strategy which was supported by the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund. The project had developed partnerships with the UK Space Agency, government departments, major industrial partners such as Airbus and Thales Alenia and a range of academic partners.

Funding was being sought from a variety of local and national sources. An extremely detailed costing exercise had been undertaken, and the final business case for the development was due to be presented to Council shortly. A full funding settlement was pending the finalisation of local and national plans, and Senate noted that further funds would be required to realise the full ambitions of the project in due course. Senate noted that the University would stand to make a positive return on the basis of enhanced research grant capture and teaching provision, with numerous other potential income streams identified.

Senate welcomed the development, noting the scale of the opportunities that it offered for the institution, the city and the furthering of the UK's existing excellence in the space industry. Senate noted in particular the opportunities available for other academic areas of the University to engage and encouraged colleagues to contact the project team. Senate also noted that this development would draw together currently fragmented elements of a developing data economy which would strengthen both the local area and the ability of the University engage with wider enterprise activities.

Senate thanked the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Strategic Science Projects) for his contributions to the project to date and noted that it would receive further updates on progress in due course.

(b) Learning Strategy Monitoring and Update

Senate considered a report demonstrating the activities underway to implement the University Learning Strategy. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) gave a presentation highlighting key elements of the strategy implementation.

Senate received the University's Provider Submission as part of the Teaching Excellence Framework Exercise. The University noted that the metrics which formed the core of the TEF exercise had indicated a number of areas of strength for the University however

had also identified challenges in the area of assessment and feedback and student retention, and there were a range of activities in place to address these.

Senate was pleased to note a number of successes aligned to the Learning Strategy over the previous year which included improvements in student satisfaction, a positive outcome of the QAA Higher Education Review and further improvement in student employability. Senate also noted the internal and external challenges in the area of learning and teaching including the need to balance increasing student numbers with enhancing the student experience, increased student expectations, promoting student retention and success, the development of further iterations of the TEF and the general national policy landscape.

Senate noted the wide range of activities underway within the University to support specific elements of the Learning Strategy under the key themes of:

- Offering a vibrant and successful academic portfolio
- Assuring and enhancing quality
- Excellent recruitment, induction and transition
- Transformative Learning and Teaching
- A student experience that engenders success

Senate noted the stated ambition to achieve TEF Gold and the core activities that would support achievement of this aim. Following this, Senate noted that there are currently five key activities for departments:

- Active management of assessment strategy implementation, including a drive towards online marking and effective feedback
- Regular review of progress towards the target of 90% of teaching staff with ATQs
- Closing the feedback loop
- Consistent implementation of the new Personal Tutoring processes
- Making students feel valued and welcome

Senate thanked the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) for the presentation and welcomed the extent of the work and clear success that had been achieved in enhancing the learning experience for students at Leicester.

Senate noted in particular the extent of the student engagement with the opportunities offered through lecture capture. National data had indicated that this did not have an impact upon student attendance, and Senate noted that the new attendance monitoring system would allow the University to analyse any impact at a local level.

Senate explored the nature of the partnership between departments and students in terms of establishing clear expectations for behaviour in the academic environment. Senate noted and welcomed work underway within the Standing Together Project to challenge issues around sexual harassment in University premises. It was however noted that there needed to be a reciprocal understanding between staff and students

as to general expectations of conduct in all aspects of the University community. Senate noted that there was already an excellent relationship between the University and the Students Union and agreed that this represented an opportunity to further explore how such conduct expectations could be more effectively articulated and managed.

(c) Departmental Restructuring

Senate considered a proposal to restructure the current departments of Geography and Geology into a newly formed School of Geosciences and Geohumanities. Senate noted that the proposal had been developed following a detailed process of consultation with staff within the current departments. The proposed restructuring was intended to transform and enhance the excellent research profile of the existing departments, increase student recruitment and achieve some efficiency savings.

Senate welcomed the proposal to bring the two departments together, particularly to support the development of a more focussed and multidisciplinary research agenda. Senate explored the proposed title for the new School. While noting that this was a bold proposal and that recognition of geohumanities was developing within the sector, it was also noted that the title could be perceived to create artificial distinctions within inherently interdisciplinary areas of academic study. Furthermore, it was noted that it was unclear at this stage whether the term geohumanities would continue to be recognised within the external environment in the future.

Senate **approved** the restructuring and the creation of a new School with effect from 1 August 2017. Senate agreed however that the project team should be asked to reconsider the proposed title in line with the comments set out above. Senate agreed that further consideration of the title could take place either at the next meeting of Senate, or via correspondence and Chair's action on behalf of Senate if the timescales required.

(d) Disestablishment of Career Development Advisory Board

Senate considered a proposal to disestablish the Career Development Advisory Board, currently a Committee of Senate.

The Committee had been established to provide a leadership and governance framework for the development of the Career Development Service (CDS) and Employability Strategy. Senate noted however that recent policy shifts and structural changes within CDS reduced the role for the Board. Furthermore, a number of the functions of CDAB were addressed within other groups and the disestablishment of the Board would rationalise the Committee structure of the University, without compromising the overall strategic priority of developing student employability.

Senate noted in particular that the move would not reduce opportunities for engagement with employers, as the University had a separate Employer Liaison Board.

Senate **approved** the disestablishment of the Career Development Advisory Board with immediate effect.

17/M03

BUSINESS TO NOTE

(a) Risk Register, Spring Term 2017

Senate received for information an extract from the Corporate Risk Register for the Spring Term 2017. Senate noted in particular the updates to the Register with

reference to the Learning, Research, Enterprise and International Strategies, for which Senate maintained oversight. Senate also received a summary report identifying amendments to the risk factors underpinning the above named strategies.

Senate noted that there were no new risks added to any of the areas above. Senate noted an increase to the risk rating around the level of competition in the area of international student recruitment and the potential impact of a lower average tariff. Senate noted that risk level had decreased in relation to generating sufficient student applications, conversion rates and innovation in the portfolio.

Senate considered whether the register needed to reflect an additional risk in the area of staff recruitment and retention as a result of BREXIT. Senate requested that this be considered as part of the risk identification and management process.

Senate noted that it would receive extracts from the Register for information at each meeting. Consideration of the Risk Register and Risk Appetite Statement would be a substantive item annually at the November meeting of Senate.

(b) Reviews of Senate Regulations 5 and 7

Senate, as the owner of the academic regulatory framework for the institution, noted that major reviews of two Senate Regulations were underway. Senate Regulation 5 governing undergraduate programmes was underway in order to review the University's progression, award and classification criteria, and also consider the introduction of interim exit awards at undergraduate level. Additionally, those elements of Senate Regulation 7 governing assessment that regulated the process for the consideration of mitigating circumstances was also under review.

Senate noted that the outcome of these reviews and revised regulations would be presented for consideration at its meeting in June 2017.

(c) Reports from Committees

(i) Academic Policy Committee

Senate received reports of the meetings of the Academic Policy Committee that had taken place on 1 December 2016, 16 January 2017 and 16 February 2017.

Senate noted that those elements which required approval had already been considered under item M01(e).

Senate noted the extensive work that had been undertaken to support the multi-phase implementation of the Curriculum Transformation project, and the development of a series of tools and metrics to evaluate its overall success. A Working Group of the Committee was reviewing the quality and consistency of training available for students in the avoidance of plagiarism, and that recommendations were due to come forward during the summer term. The Committee had also developed of a new consistent and transparent University wide process for module evaluation, and that a Project Board had been established to support implementation.

Senate noted the consideration of proposals for the future of the University's Virtual Learning Environment. Senate noted in particular that the current contract with Blackboard would expire shortly and detailed work was underway to define the institution's requirements for a Virtual Learning Environment and

how these might be met going forwards. The Committee had undertaken initial consideration of a revised timetabling policy which would shortly be disseminated for consultation with Trade Unions and College Academic Committees.

Senate noted the Committee's ongoing oversight of programme development, approval, monitoring and review as detailed in the reports. Senate also noted the appointment of External Examiners, as detailed in the reports.

Senate **approved** the reports.

(ii) Postgraduate Research Policy Committee

Senate received reports of the meetings of the Postgraduate Research Policy Committee that had taken place on 28 November 2016, 16 January 2017 and 17 February 2017.

Senate noted that the Doctoral College Project Board had been established, Chaired by the Interim Graduate Dean. The Board was considering the structure and physical location of the Doctoral College, as well as its interactions with academic departments and the Professional Services.

Senate **approved** the reports.

(iii) Research Strategy, Policy and Performance Committee

Senate received reports of the meeting of the Research Strategy, Policy and Performance Committee that had taken place on 1 December 2016 and 31 January 2017.

Senate noted the Committee's ongoing review of the institutional research centres and that the outcome of this process had fed into the University Leadership Team. Senate was pleased to note that the University's quarter 1 research and award application rates were ahead of the equivalent point in the previous academic year and congratulated colleagues on this achievement.

The Committee was leading the University's preparations for REF 2021 which included co-ordinating a response to the consultation arising from the Stern Review, and developing a methodology for the more effective monitoring of research output quality.

Senate **approved** the reports.

(iv) Enterprise Strategy, Policy and Performance Committee

Senate received a revised report of the meeting of the Enterprise Strategy, Policy and Performance Committee that took place on 26 October 2016 and the report of the meeting that took place on 21 February 2017.

Senate noted that those elements which required approval had already been considered under item M01(e).

Senate noted the minor technical corrections to the report of 26 October 2016. Senate also noted the Committee's oversight of performance in the area of Enterprise and third stream activities, in particular the development of a more

formal framework for the development of CPD provision. Senate also noted that the Committee had developed the institutional Higher Education Innovation and (HEIF) 5 year Knowledge Exchange Strategy and this had been accepted by HEFCE.

Senate **approved** the reports.

(v) Senate Student Discipline Committee

Senate received a report of the meeting of the Senate Student Discipline Committee that took place on 8 December 2016.

Senate noted that those elements which required approval had already been considered under item M01(e).

Senate noted the Committee's review of Student Discipline cases in 2015/16 and the development of a more consistent approach to student training and guidance for the avoidance of plagiarism.

Senate **approved** the report.

(d) University Officer Appointments

Senate received for information a list of all University Officer level appointments that had been made since 10 November 2016.

(e) Programmes Approved and Withdrawn

Senate received a list of programmes and pathways that had been approved in principle, in full and withdrawn.

(f) Senate Student Discipline Panels

Senate received the outcomes of recent Senate Student Discipline Panels.

17/M04 **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Senate noted the date and time of its next meeting in 2016/17 as follows:

Wednesday 28 June 2016, 2pm

17/M05 **INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**

Senate thanked colleagues around the institution, and particular the Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Equality and Diversity) for the work that had gone into supporting and delivering a successful programme of events to mark International Women's Day.

Duration of meeting: One Hour and Thirty minutes

CHAIR