

Draft:	22-Nov-2018
Approved for circulation:	29-Nov-2018
Confirmed by Committee with / without amendments	Date

## Joint Senate- Council

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### Open Minutes

Date of meeting: **Monday, 19 November 2018**

Duration of meeting: **4.00 PM to 5.30PM**

Location: **S3.01, High Wycombe Campus**

### Attendance

<b>Name</b>	<b>Senate/Council</b>
Jo Boardman	Council
Karen Buckwell-Nutt	Senate
Rebecca Bunting	Senate/Council
Gurdeep Chadha	Council
Anna Crabtree	Council
Lee Curtis	Senate
Cass Davenport	Senate
Dearbhla Gallagher	Senate
Margaret Greenfields	Senate
John Hathaway	Senate
Michael Hipkins	Council
Florin Ioras	Senate
Julie Irwin	Senate
Maggie James	Council
Richard Jones	Senate
Sri-Kartini Leet	Senate
Lise Llewellyn	Council
Ken McCrea	Council
Julie McLeod	Senate
Sean Mackney	Senate/Council
Kevin Maher	Senate
John Mariampillai	Senate
Tim Marshall	Council
Rod Mercer	Council
Paul Morgan	Senate
Jenny Newton	Council
Georgia Nosal	Senate

<b>Lauren O'Shea</b>	Senate
<b>Rob Penhaligon</b>	Senate
<b>Cheryl Pitt</b>	Council
<b>Ellie Smith</b>	Senate/ Secretary Council
<b>John Smith</b>	Council
<b>Megan Staples</b>	Council
<b>Lynn Viatge</b>	Senate
<b>Phil Wood</b>	Senate/Council

## University Officers

<b>Name</b>	<b>Faculty / Directorate</b>
<b>Miriam Moir</b>	Senate
<b>Marcus Wood</b>	Council

## Apologies

<b>Name</b>	<b>Faculty / Directorate</b>
<b>Helen Ayo-Ajayi</b>	Senate
<b>Nick Braisby</b>	Senate
<b>Baljit Dhillon</b>	Council
<b>Irene Kirkman</b>	Council
<b>Anthony Murphy</b>	Council
<b>Stephen Partridge</b>	Senate
<b>Bob Shennan</b>	Council
<b>Lauren Vincent</b>	Senate

## Welcome

18.01 The Chair of Council welcomed members to the annual joint meeting of Senate and Council.

## Minutes of the last meeting

18.02 The Chair of Senate noted that the Minutes of the last joint Senate/Council meeting held on 20 November 2018 had been circulated. The Minutes were agreed as a true record.

## Context for meeting

18.03 Through a presentation, the Chair of Senate set the context for the meeting as outlined in the Annual Monitoring Policy, and noted the following:

- Annual Monitoring discussions take place at two stages: firstly at Programme stage, School Annual Monitoring Meetings (SAMMs) consider an evidence base of data, discuss outcomes, and identify areas of good practice and actions to be taken for improvement.
- At the Institutional Stage Education Committee considers the SAMP Reports and Quality Reports, University Partnerships Board considers the Partner

Reports and Research & Enterprise Committee considers the Research Degrees Report.

18.04 The purpose of the joint Senate/Council meeting was to consider the overview reports presented in advance, to make observations, to discuss in groups issues arising from them, and for members to challenge the University over academic quality and standards through questions to a Panel.

### **Annual Monitoring 2017-18 Outcomes: UG, PGT and PGR Student Academic Experience and Achievement**

18.05 The following papers had been made available in advance of the meeting:

- a) Quality & Standards: Education Committee Report to Senate and Council on the outcome of Annual Monitoring for 2017-18
- b) Student Achievement Annual Summary Report 2017-18
- c) Annual Summary Reports 2017-18 for:
  - External Examiners
  - Application of Standards
  - Research Degrees
- d) Compliance with “The Concordat to Support Research Integrity” Annual assurance statement to Research England

18.06 To place the papers in context, themes identified by Education Committee and Research & Enterprise Committee were highlighted as follows.

#### From Education Committee:

- Recruitment remains a challenge but good practice has been identified where greater working between Schools and Marketing has produced positive results
- Achievement of good honours at 61% remains below the target of 70%
- BAME gap in achievement – narrowing but still of concern
- Module Evaluation participation from students remains of concern, but good practice identified in some areas
- Partnership activities continue to grow but issues have been identified around retention, progression and achievement which is impacting the overall university statistics
- Education Committee concluded that standards had been upheld and that robust processes were in place to assure quality.

#### From University Partnerships Board:

- Noted that University Partnership Board found that it was not assured that quality and standards had been upheld in one partner, Amsterdam Fashion Academy
- Further information had been required from a further three partners to enable UPB to assure quality and standards (one now approved, and two with Action plans submitted to Heads of Schools and to be taken by Chair’s Action)
- Annual Monitoring process has been followed by the Partners, and actions put in place to address issues

From Research and Enterprise Committee:

- Despite an increase in enquiries, recruitment to research degrees has remained low, primarily due to availability of eligible supervisors.
- Withdrawal rate remains high, with a variety of factors involved
- Student numbers are small, but the student publication record and engagement with the wider research community shows a strong external focus.
- Support for researcher development has improved over the year.

18.07 Following the introductions all members were invited to hold discussions in groups and to formulate questions arising from the papers received.

### Panel Question & Answer Session

18.08 A Panel constituted of the following University representatives then received questions from the members:

- |                   |                                       |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| • Rebecca Bunting | - Vice-Chancellor                     |
| • Julie McLeod    | - Pro Vice-Chancellor                 |
| • Sean Mackney    | - Pro Vice-Chancellor                 |
| • Ellie Smith     | - Academic Registrar                  |
| • Julie Irwin     | - Director of Student Success         |
| • Florin Ioras    | - Director of Enterprise and Research |

The questions covered three areas.

- 1. Academic Partnerships: It was noted that the statistics of the Partners had had a negative impact on the University statistics overall. The Panel was asked about the long term strategy for addressing issues with poorly-performing partners, and asked whether the subsequent resources for this would dissipate actions to be taken at Bucks.**

The Panel noted that Partnerships generated vital income for the University. The market for UK undergraduate students was challenging, so diversification in recruitment was needed. In the UK academic partners enabled the University to fulfil its mission to reach students who might not otherwise participate in HE. International partners enabled the University to grow its international student base. Partners enabled staff to develop international connections.

As regards the detrimental effect on the University's league table positions, the Panel explained that it was not always possible to know exactly how the different league tables used such information. It was also noted that when Partners become registered with the OfS, the data would be returned separately.

- 2. Attainment gap: The Panel was asked how staff were being held to account for ensuring attendance monitoring was undertaken and that support for students was put in place.**

The Panel explained that the University had recently moved from a paper-based register to an online system, from which reports would allow for the identification of students requiring interventions. Attendance monitoring also considers student engagement with other activities such as submitting assessments and use of the VLE and Library.

The Fitness to Study process also helps to identify students who require additional tailored support.

It was noted that student retention had improved, although at Level 4 there was still room for further improvement, and the student retention action plan would be implemented to specifically:

- Monitor engagement levels and identify students at risk
- Identify “pinch points” and ensure students are contacted
- Implement automatic messages when students fail to submit assessments
- Ensure Personal Tutors are working to the expectations of the role
- Work closely with the Students’ Union
- Implement the new In-Year Retrieval Attempt process (for Foundation Year and Level 4 students)

As to the question regarding staff being held to account, the Panel noted that expectations had been built into the Bucks Academic Framework which was now being embedded.

**3. Research culture: The Panel was asked what could be done to create a revived research culture at Bucks.**

The Panel noted that many of the University’s research students were part time, and had many pressures from their work and personal lives competing with their studies. A start had been made to build a sense of community within the research environment through organising activities for the students such as specialised conferences and discussion groups. The decline in research culture had partly resulted from the loss of research staff, but a concerted effort was now being made to recruit new staff with PhDs. The research culture would therefore be built on this foundation of a broader based research community which was actively engaging externally.

### **Agreement of Assurance Statements**

18.09 Following consideration of the evidence provided, the discussions held and the recommendations from the Education Committee, and separately from the Research and Enterprise Committee, Senate and Council agreed that academic standards had been maintained by the University.

18.10 Council members further considered the assurances required by HEFCE for the Accountability Return and confirmed its agreement with the following:

- “The governing body has received and discussed a report and accompanying action plan relating to the continuous improvement of the student academic experience and student outcomes. This included evidence from the provider’s own periodic review processes, which fully involve students and include embedded external peer or professional review”
- “The methodologies used as a basis to improve the student academic experience and student outcomes are, to the best of our knowledge, robust and appropriate.”
- “The standards of awards for which we are responsible have been appropriately set and maintained.”

- The annual assurance statement to Research England regarding compliance with “The Concordat to Support Research Integrity” which outlined the University’s commitment to upholding its principles, and noted the policies and procedures in place to support research integrity.

**Date of next meeting**

18.11 The date of the joint Senate/Council meeting for 2019 will be confirmed.