

Senate

Minutes

date: Wednesday, 11 June 2014
time: 1.30 p.m.
location: G5.05, High Wycombe Campus

14.21 Welcome / Apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. Apologies for absence were noted separately.

The Chair also welcomed Alison Chambers, Pro Vice Chancellor and Executive Dean in the Faculty of Society & Health to her first meeting of Senate, and Lynda Buckley from the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) who would be observing the meeting.

The Students' Union President Elect and Vice President Elect (Education and Welfare) were also observing the meeting.

14.22 Minutes of the last meeting – 19 March 2014

The minutes were approved as a true record.

14.23 Matters Arising

There were no actions from the previous meeting and no further matters arising from the minutes.

14.24 Chair's Business

- [a] Chair's Actions
(Paper SEN14.17)

The updated list of Chair's Actions was noted and formally endorsed.

- [b] Vice Chancellor's Report
(Paper SEN14.32)

The Vice Chancellor gave an oral update on the following aspects of the report as circulated:

Section 1.1: Acceptances to offers of places for FTUG courses for 2014 entry

A recent presentation from Business Planning would be circulated to Senate members for discussion by FMTs.

Action: Secretary

Headlines show that acceptances in DMM were down by 15%, S&H HEFCE acceptances were broadly level, while International acceptances showed a 43% increase.

Assuming Clearing followed a similar pattern to this year's recruitment cycle the University could expect to recruit 177 fewer full-time undergraduate students than last year. If, however, the same performance at Clearing is seen as in 2013, we would be 143 (10%) down. A strong marketing campaign was being planned to improve the

situation.

It was noted that applications from outside the Bucks-London M1/M40/M4 corridor are less likely to accept an offer from Bucks than applicants from within the corridor. In DMM 70% of applications are not from the region, but in terms of acceptances this falls to 62% - showing greater take-up of offers from within the corridor. The situation in S&H is similar with the comparable percentages 53% and 37% respectively.

It was further noted that 95 FE colleges and schools in the region are providing 40% of our total acceptances giving clear targets for reinforcing the University's message.

Section 1.3 League Tables

An update had been intended for the meeting but the analysis was not yet available.

14.25 Impact of Government Policy on the Educational Character of Bucks

A presentation was given to Senate by the Vice Chancellor looking at how the University can grow both recruitment and income for 2015 entry, given the changes in government policy including the removal of the student number control and a focus on earning while learning. It was noted that some of these changes may make recruitment harder for 2015.

Senate discussed the presentation in detail and attention was drawn to the following headlines arising from the debate:

- The need for a clear sales strategy and a strong narrative as part of the marketing to prospective students
- Existing work experience models can be transferred to new content (although there are no specific models for work based or placement learning)
- The need to explore what student engagement would look like under the new model
- The need to promote to businesses the support from the government for them to take advantage of work-based solutions
- That flexible delivery does not necessarily mean students are also distance learners
- The need to consider carefully the impact of changes in respect of the UK Quality Code ensuring careful articulation of approaches and mitigation of risks
- The need to be bold in any approach taken

The discussion will be used to inform the plan as the University develops mitigating actions to minimise the negative impact of the removal of the student number control.

Action: Vice Chancellor

14.26 UK Quality Code: UK Frameworks for Higher education qualifications – QAA Consultation

(Paper SEN14.18)

The Director of Academic Quality noted that the QAA was revisiting Part A1 of the UK Quality Code relating to frameworks for qualification. The two current frameworks, the FHEQ (covering England, Wales and Northern Ireland) and the FQHEIS (covering Scotland) are to be combined into one publication covering the whole of the UK.

No substantive changes are being proposed for the FHEQ although some reordering has been undertaken. A revised document has been prepared by the QAA and is under consultation until 17 June. AQD representatives would be attending a workshop on Friday 13 June and would respond formally to the consultation. Survey questions had been published.

It was emphasised that there were no major changes for the University as qualification frameworks are already embedded in the validation process.

14.27 Institutional Audit Action Plan - Update
(Paper SEN14.19)

It was noted that the action plan had been drawn up in response to the University's institutional audit undertaken in March 2010. The action plan has been updated annually for Senate.

The next review of the University will take place in 2016-2017 using the Higher Education Review (HER) method. The University will need to demonstrate how recommendations have been followed up.

A detailed mapping of the UK Quality Code is currently being undertaken, which will support actions being taken forward.

The Director of Academic Quality reported to Senate that in relation to the 'advisable' and 'desirable' actions identified in the Action Plan, she was confident that the University could demonstrate clear progress.

Senate noted the need to keep discussions in relation to work based learning clearly on its agenda, especially given its previous discussion (minute 14.25 above).

14.28 Learning and Teaching Strategy - Amendments
(Paper SEN14.20)

The Pro Vice Chancellor Learning and Teaching introduced proposed amendments to the current University Learning and Teaching Strategy. It was noted that some areas had been strengthened while the tense had changed to maintain the notion of a living document. There were particular changes around (1) alignment to the research and scholarship strategy (also being proposed to Senate, below) and (2) the introduction of a notion of coaching – supporting learning – which demonstrated a good fit with the University's transformational education agenda. The amended document had been considered and recommended by the Learning and Teaching Committee.

The strategy was approved.

14.29 Research and Scholarship Strategy – Final draft
(Paper SEN14.21)

The Pro Vice Chancellor Learning and Teaching introduced the new strategy which replaced previous versions. It had undergone wide consultation across the University (including Senate's previous meeting minute 14.06 and Paper SEN14.04) and had been recommended for approval by the University Research Committee. It was noted that the strategy focuses on achieving Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAP) while aligning to the learning and teaching strategy. It also includes a provisional action plan.

There was one amendment to the strategy as presented: Goal 4 should read: *"To build our reputation as a provider of first choice in the areas in which we chose to specialise through research-informed curricula which stimulate and inspire our students"*.

Senate discussed whether Goal 2 excluded research communities not explicitly aligned to a REF (Research Excellence Framework) Unit of Assessment. It was noted that there was a need to focus research submissions and thus resource allocation and REF areas would be flagged so researchers could frame their research interests accordingly. There would also be an underlying area of pedagogic research in the REF which could form a connection between areas of research strength and the need for breadth. The wording of goal 2 was agreed.

The strategy was approved, subject to inclusion of the updated wording of goal 4 as outlined above.

14.30 Retention Strategy – Final Draft
(Paper SEN14.22)

The Director of Student Services introduced the strategy which replaced the previous version. It was noted that the paper had been widely consulted upon across the University and had been recommended by the Student Experience Committee and by the Students' Union.

An amendment to the 'Effective signposting' bullet point was agreed to make explicit reference to the Students' Union.

Subject to this amendment, the strategy was approved.

14.31 Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled Students Policy
(Paper SEN14.23)

The Pro Vice Chancellor introduced the policy which had undergone a broad consultation process and was recommended by the Learning and Teaching Committee, the Equality and Diversity Committee and both Faculty QECs. The policy replaces the current Guidelines for Marking the Work of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties and the Special Examination Arrangements for Students with Disabilities.

The policy was approved.

14.32 Terms of Reference – University Committees – Amendments
(Paper SEN14.24)

The Secretary introduced the revised version of the *University Committees: Constitution and Terms of Reference (Deliberative)* document. This document had been previously approved by Senate but minor amendments were proposed to individual Terms of Reference following consideration and recommendation by those Committees

In particular, these included: changes to the University Research Committee following the abolition of Academic Planning Committee; changes to the membership of the Learning and Teaching Committee in its inaugural year; further embedding of the Learning and Teaching Directorate across the committee structure; minor amendments to terms of reference of Faculty Quality Enhancement Committees; and renaming of the Widening Participation Steering Group to the Student Access and Success Steering Group.

The revised document was approved.

14.33 Personal Tutoring Policy
(Paper SEN14.25)

The Director of Student Services introduced the policy which replaced the previous version. The policy had been consulted upon across the University and a record had been attached to the paper.

It was noted that a recent minor amendment had been made to sections 3a to read "organisation" rather than "arrangements" and 5h to use the student handbook as a "guide" rather than "primary source of information".

Work was carrying on within the Task & Finish Group to monitor and recommend ongoing work. It was requested that this group should be reformulated as a Personal Tutor Forum.

In relation to a question relating to students enrolled on courses at the University's Slough location, it was noted that the Course Leader would normally in this instance act as a student's personal tutor.

Senate agreed the amendments noted and approved the policy. Senate also agreed the recommendation to form the Personal Tutor Forum.

14.34 External Examiner Update
(Papers SEN14.26 and SEN14.26A-R inclusive)

The Secretary introduced the paper. In respect of nominations, it was noted that one External Examiner, David Warnock-Smith (SEN14.26E) had two existing concurrent external examiner appointments not normally permitted under the UK Quality Code. The Faculty had looked at the current appointments and neither were full appointments consisting of moderation of the dissertation only. On this basis, Senate accepted the nomination.

Accordingly, Senate approved the 7 nominations, 7 extensions to remit and 4 extensions to term as outlined in the report.

Senate also considered the coverage of external examiners across courses also noted in the paper. It was noted that there were still outstanding appointments to be filled for September 2014. Faculty representatives gave assurances that nominations for the majority of vacancies had been identified and paperwork would be forwarded for Chair's Action in due course.

14.35 Validation: Recommendation of awards for approval
(Paper SEN14.27)

Senate received the report on validation events undertaken since the previous meeting. It was noted that, further to the report, revised paperwork had now been received for four further courses following conditions being set (FS1SOM9, BD3PRA1, BD3PRS1 and BD1SDN1). Documentation was awaiting confirmation by the Chair. It was further noted that the six courses to require representation on 6 June 2014 had subsequently been approved with conditions. Senate formally endorsed the outcomes recommended as indicated.

It was noted that one course, BV1GPA1 BA (Hons) Graphic Arts, had exceeded the deadline for conditions and this was being followed up by the Approval and Review team.

Senate approved for delivery both those courses as identified in the report where there were no conditions set on validation and courses where conditions had been completed and subsequently approved by the Chair. Courses where conditions had yet to be approved would be considered under Chair's Action.

Senate asked for a report to be completed giving the numbers of students recruited to new courses starting in September 2014. It was also agreed that future iterations of the Validation Report would differentiate new validations from courses undergoing revalidation.

Action: AQD

The Director of Academic Quality noted the number of courses listed in the report and thanked both the Approval Team in AQD and the University for staffing the validation panels. It was noted that there were still ten events outstanding to be undertaken by the end of the academic year.

14.36 Quality & Enhancement Committee Report (14-May-2014)
The Executive Summary was received.

14.37 Student Experience Committee Report (13-May-2014)
The Executive Summary was received.

14.38 University Research Committee Report (23-May-2014)
The Executive Summary was received.

14.39 Equality & Diversity Committee Report (16-Apr-2014)

The Executive Summary was received.

14.40 Learning & Teaching Committee Report (7-May-2014)

The Executive Summary was received.

14.41 Retiring and re-elected members

It was noted that this was the final meeting of Senate for Naomi Franco (outgoing Students' Union President) and Derek Godfrey (retiring Deputy Vice Chancellor). Senate thanked both members for their contribution to the Committee's work during their terms of office.

It was noted that Jake Kaner had been elected to replace Lynette Murphy as representative for the School of Design, Craft and Visual Arts. Linsey Taylor and Richard Jones had both recently been re-elected as representatives for their respective Schools. The election for the representative for the School of Advanced and Continuing Practice was ongoing and would be announced in due course. Elected representatives would attend the next meeting of Senate.

14.42 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of Senate would be on Wednesday 17 December 2014 at 1.30pm in G5.05, High Wycombe.

X

Professor Ruth Farwell
Chair of Senate