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Senate

Open Minutes

Date of meeting: **Wednesday, 05 December 2018**

Duration of meeting: **2.00pm to 4.30pm**

Location: **G5.05 High Wycombe Campus**

Attendance

Name	Faculty / Directorate	Category of membership
Nick Braisby	Vice-Chancellor's Office	Ex-officio (Chair)
Miriam Moir	Academic Registry	Secretary
Sean Mackney	Vice-Chancellor's Office	Ex-officio
Julie McLeod	Vice-Chancellor's Office	Ex-officio
Ellie Smith	Academic Registry	Ex-officio
Julie Irwin	Student Success	Ex-officio
Sri-Kartini Leet	Art, Design & Performance	Ex-officio
Kevin Maher	Business, Law & Computing	Ex-officio
Lynn Viatge	Health Care and Social Work	Ex-officio
Paul Morgan	Human and Social Sciences	Ex-officio
Florin Ioras	Research	Ex-officio
Cass Davenport	Aviation & Security	Elected
Lauren Vincent	Art, Design and Performance	Elected
Rob Penhaligon	Media & Creative Industries	Elected
Lee Curtis	Health Care and Social Work	Elected
Dearbhla Gallagher	Human and Social Sciences	Elected
Helen Ayo-Ajayi	Nursing and Allied Health	Elected
Richard Jones	Education Committee representative	Nominated
John Mariampillai	Partnerships Board representative	Nominated
Lauren O'Shea	Students' Union President	Student Member
Georgia Nosal	Student's Union Vice-President	Student Member

Apologies

Name	School/Directorate	Category of membership
Karen Buckwell-Nutt	Nursing and Allied Health	Ex-officio
Stephen Partridge	Media & Creative Industries	Ex-officio
Phil Wood	Aviation & Security	Ex-officio
Margaret Greenfields	Research & Enterprise Committee representative	Nominated
John Hathaway	Business, Law & Computing	Elected

Welcome / Apologies for absence

18.132 The Chair welcomed members to the Senate meeting and introduced the new member Julie McLeod as Acting PVC Education. Apologies for absence were received.

Minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2018

18.133 The open minutes of the Senate meeting held on 26 September 2018 were approved as an accurate record.

Status of actions from the 26 September 2018 meeting

18.134 It was noted that all actions arising from the meeting held on 26 September 2018 had been completed. A further update to the action regarding student mental health was given, and Senate noted that a number of actions were being taken to improve the identification of students at risk and to provide additional support. Further activities would centre on the "Time to Talk" day on 7 February 2019.

Chair's Actions taken since the previous meeting

18.135 Senate endorsed the Chair's Actions taken since the last meeting as noted on the summary sheet provided.

Senate Business

18.136 It was noted that since the last Senate meeting, Florin Ioras had been elected as one of the two Senate representatives on University Council, joining Phil Wood. Senate also noted that Paul Morgan had been nominated as the Senate representative on the Honorary Awards Committee.

Annual Monitoring

18.137 The Minutes of the joint Senate/Council meeting held on 19 November 2018 to discuss Annual Monitoring for 2017-18 were approved as an accurate record of the discussion.

18.138 **Student Achievement Annual Summary Report (SEN18.24)**: It was noted that this had formed one of the documents underpinning the discussions and debate at the joint meeting with Council held in November. Senate's attention was particularly drawn to the conclusions and actions in the Report, and noted the following:

- The rate of withdrawal was falling, but remained high at Level 4: poorly performing programmes have been identified and actions put in place to improve retention. Senate was reminded that retention issues were at their peak around

Christmas, and Schools were asked to ensure plans were in place to address issues with students who requested withdrawal in December and January.

- Progression between levels had improved overall: some programmes have increased their progression rate, but others need to make improvements. Schools have been tasked with identifying programmes where progression is low and to establish the reasons.
- Partner performance is mixed, and overall has a negative impact on University statistics, and the failure rate at two Partners in particular was high for the second year running: issues in the report have been brought to the attention of the University Partnerships Board, and the report had been circulated to all Partnership Tutors. It was noted that Partner students achieve better results when enrolling at FY or Level 4 rather than directly at Level 6, and this had been noted for future planning and recruitment. Senate also noted that the University's proportion of "good honours" was reduced from 69% to 61% when Partner statistics were included. However, Senate was cautioned against actions which could result in grade inflation rather than grade improvement, particularly in the light of the recently-published Consultation document on Degree Classifications.
- BME students continue to achieve less than white students: Schools were encouraged to identify the reasons behind the statistics for their programmes.
- Data had highlighted the positive impact of central support services on student achievement

18.139 Recommendations to Senate in the Education Committee Report on the outcome of Annual Monitoring 2017-18 (SEN18.25): Senate noted that there were seven recommendations put forward by Education Committee following its review of Annual Monitoring for 2017-18, and which fall into three categories:

- Dissemination of good practice identified in the School Annual Monitoring meetings, particularly around collaborative working between the Schools and Marketing (resulting in increased recruitment), specific initiatives around the Module Evaluation process (resulting in improved participation rates), and the use of "pre-SAMMs" to promote and improve understanding of the data.
- Student achievement improvement activities around "good honours" (using personal tutors to encourage 2.2 profiles) and BAME achievement overall (using data to identify reasons for current achievement rate and identify actions to improve it).
- Improvement of quality and standards at Partners, by identifying areas of concern and addressing through partnership Tutors, and also reviewing the Annual Monitoring process for Partners to promote understanding and discussion of the data.

ACTION: Heads of Schools, Personal Tutors, Marketing/Admissions, Partnership Tutors/ Academic Registry

18.140 Members were asked to comment on the SAMM meetings. It was generally considered that the SAMMs had worked well, especially where teams had seen the data in advance of the discussion as there was a wide range of information for the teams to utilise. The SAMM meetings then could focus on actions.

18.141 It was considered useful to have representatives from across the University at the meetings, but there had been difficulties in finding dates when all were available during September and October. Heads of Schools were reminded that the Annual Monitoring Policy stipulated that several SAMMs should be held during the academic year, so that the data could be considered at the most relevant time, rather than in one meeting, and that they had responsibility for ensuring these meetings took place. It was noted that the meetings were reliant on the availability of data.

ACTION: Heads of Schools/Planning

18.142 Senate endorsed the Recommendations as appropriate, and noted that progress on actions would be reviewed by Senate during the academic year.

Acting Vice-Chancellor's Report

18.143 The report focused on a number of external factors which will impact on the University.

18.144 Brexit: it was noted that there was great uncertainty about the Brexit outcome, particularly over whether the Prime Minister's deal would gain sufficient votes from MPs, or whether the UK would exit with no deal in place.

18.145 The Auger review of post 18 funding was ongoing, with suggestions that there may be a review of the fee cap with a view to reducing the fees set. This would result in reduced funding for the sector, and the government was being lobbied regarding covering this potential gap.

18.146 The Consultation Document on Degree Classifications has recently been published, addressing concerns over the number of First class honours being awarded (26% across the sector) which has given rise to arguments of grade inflation and the downgrading of the value of degrees. As the proportion of "good honours" awarded is a metric in TEF, Universities are facing contradictory messages.

18.147 The House of Commons Select Committee considering degrees as value for money has concluded that accessibility needs to be improved, partly through the expansion of degree apprenticeships.

18.148 The Office for Students reports that it is to take a firmer stance on senior management remuneration. It is also encouraging the sector to explore more flexible types of learning such as two-year degrees and work-based learning.

18.149 UCAS has reported that the number of unconditional offers has risen to one-third of applications. Both the Government and Schools have warned that this is not in the best interests of students.

18.150 An IFS report has concluded that many men would have higher salaries if they did not go to university, the opposite outcome for women. This reflects the situation at Bucks.

18.151 In light of all the above points it was suggested that the University was facing a tough environment, but was well placed to take advantage of some of the areas being raised nationally, particularly around widening participation, the expansion of degree apprenticeships and more flexible ways of learning.

18.152 Senate discussed the issues raised and made the following points:

- A no deal Brexit would impact on recruitment of the substantial number of students from Ireland, especially in nursing
- The apprenticeship model is a clear indication of the future of HE, providing access from FE. Flexibility on the provision of apprenticeships will be key.

- A sector-wide response to the issue of conditional/unconditional offers was needed, as universities would be reluctant to change their own practice if competitors did not follow suit.
- While two-year degrees might appeal to students in terms of completing earlier and reducing debt, there was concern over whether Bucks students would achieve their awards within such an intensive programme. Most students work over the holidays to enable themselves to attend university, and this opportunity would be removed through the two-year option. Some subjects need three years to enable students to flourish, particularly in creative courses, and this could impact on the number of good honours being awarded.

Preparations for REF 2021 (SEN18.26)

- 18.153 A paper had been provided, giving Senate an update on preparations for REF2021. Attention was drawn to the fact that the REF was no longer a selective exercise, but that all staff with significant responsibility for research must be submitted.
- 18.154 It was reported that nine potential Units of Assessment had been identified, and outputs from six of these had been submitted for external review. It was likely that the number would be reduced to three or four following feedback received from the external reviewers. Reviewers were still required for the education and nursing areas.
- 18.155 A draft Code of Practice regarding selection of staff was being reviewed by the REF steering group and the Research & Enterprise Committee. All staff for inclusion will be identified by November 2019.
- 18.156 Two Impact Case studies would be required for each Unit of Assessment. Some of these will be new, while others will build on cases submitted to REF2014. It was noted that the Impact Case Studies would be useful publicity material for the University to encourage recruitment and to promote international collaboration.
- 18.157 It was noted that 15% of the weighting for REF2021 was for research environment. This had been raised at the joint Senate-Council meeting where ways to improve the research culture had been discussed. The Research & Enterprise Committee was aware of the issue, and was addressing in a number of ways including encouraging co-working with students.

TEF Framework Update (SEN18.27)

- 18.158 An update on the transition from provider to subject level TEF was given.
- 18.159 Two subject level pilots will bby summer of 2019. Applications for subject level TEF is expected to open in early 2020 with outcomes published in spring 2021. Provider-level awards will at that point be replaced by awards made through the subject level TEF exercise.
- 18.160 Bucks' programmes fall into 12 subject areas: applications will include both subject and provider level information.
- 18.161 Changes to the TEF metrics were also noted, with the NSS becoming increasingly important with the inclusion of "learning resources" and "student voice" NSS outcomes.
- 18.162 A TEF working group has been established to identify and implement plans to improve the key metrics and subject-related activities that will inform the submission document. It will also take responsibility for drafting the submissions during 2019.

Bucks Academic Framework Update (SEN18.33)

18.163 It was reported that two phases had now taken place, and that the completion rate was at 81%, just short of the aim of 90%. Of these 78% fully met the expectations. A minimum of 10% of the forms would be used in a calibration exercise to ensure equivalence of assessment.

18.164 The next steps included preliminary work for Heads and Associate Heads in terms of moving to Professor/Associate Professor, and a review of the Framework on completion of the PDR cycle. It was also noted that consideration should be given to recognise and reward those attaining the expectations.

QAA Quality Code Update

18.165 Senate members were informed that the Advice and Guidance sections to the updated Quality Code had been published at the end of November. The Code sets out expectations for standards and quality, core practices and advice and guidance.

18.166 Academic Registry is undertaking a mapping of the University's regulations and policies against the Code, and will report back to Senate on this in March.

Code of Good Research Practice (SEN18.28)

18.167 The Code of Good Research Practice from 2011 had been updated and presented to Senate. The document had been amended in line with current guidance from the UK Research Integrity Office. The draft had been scrutinised by the Research Ethics Panel and by Research and Enterprise Committee, and was now recommended to Senate for approval.

18.168 Senate approved the formal document to come into immediate effect

Research Ethics Policy (SEN18.28)

18.169 The Research Ethics Policy from 2009 had been re-written to include additional guidance and definitions, and updated sector guidance regarding security-sensitive data and data protection. The draft had been scrutinised by the Research Ethics Panel and by Research and Enterprise Committee, and was now recommended to Senate for approval.

18.170 Senate asked that paragraph 71 be revisited and re-worded for clarification of meaning. Following that amendment being undertaken, the document was agreed to be taken by Chair's Action.

ACTION: Florin Ioras/Secretary/Chair

Academic Assessment Regulations (SEN18.30)

18.171 Following presentation to Senate in September, a number of proposals regarding amendments to the Academic Assessment Regulations were taken back for consideration by Education Committee on 7 November 2018. Education Committee considered the proposed changes to reassessment and compensation rules as set out in the paper provided to Senate, and agreed that they would be of benefit to students and that they should be recommended to Senate.

18.172 With one correction to Table 11, Senate approved the formal document to come into immediate effect.

External Examiner Approval Panel Report (SEN18.31)

18.173 Senate received the update from the External Examiner Approval Panel and endorsed the decisions made in each instance.

Validation: recommendation of awards for approval (SEN18.32)

18.174 At the September Senate meeting there had been a number of courses which had gone to Validation in late July and August with conditions still outstanding and requiring Validation Chair's sign off. The report presented to Senate gave details of the dates when the conditions had been met and where the programmes had been approved for delivery by Senate Chair's Action.

18.175 The report also noted recommendations to Senate of courses presented to Approval Panels and programmes franchised to partners since 27 September 2018.

18.176 Senate endorsed the recommendations made in the report.

Report from Education Committee 10 October 2018 (Minutes)

18.177 The Minutes from the meeting held on 10 October 2018 had been circulated. The business of the Committee included:

- NSS
- Assessment and Grading Criteria

Report from Education Committee 7 November 2018 (Minutes)

18.178 The Minutes from the meeting held on 7 November 2018 had been circulated. The business of the Committee focused on Annual Monitoring.

Report from Research & Enterprise Committee 30 October 2018 (Minutes)

18.179 The Minutes from the meeting held on 30 October 2018 had been circulated. The business of the Committee included:

- Research Degrees Annual Report
- PRES 2018 results
- Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) to be introduced in 2019

Report from Academic Planning Committee 18 October 2018 (Minutes)

18.180 The Minutes from the meeting held on 18 October 2018 had been circulated. It was noted that there had been a discussion over the volume of new business which was placing a burden on University resources. APC was therefore undertaking a degree of prioritisation for new business.

18.181 Senate was reminded that the Minutes of this meeting were confidential and business sensitive.

Date of next meeting

18.182 The next meeting is on Wednesday 13 March 2019 at 2.00pm.