

Minutes

Meeting title: Senate

Date: Wednesday 23 November 2016

Time: 2.15 pm

Location: The Senate Room, George Thomas Building, Highfield Campus

Present: The President and Vice-Chancellor – Professor Sir Christopher Snowden (*Chair of Senate*)
Vice President (Research and Enterprise) - Professor M Spearing

Ms C Barton, Dr J Bello, Ms I Bird*, Dr L Brown, Dr K Bull, Professor I Cameron, Dr M Chapman, Professor T Choudhry, Dr J Cleal, Dr A Cullis, Dr J Craig-Norton, Dr A Darlington, Mr S Dedman*, Dr K Deinhardt, Dr B Dimitrov, Mr J Dovey, Professor S Ennis, Professor C Evans, Dr N Gibbins, Professor M Gobbi, Dr L Grange, Mr E Grater*, Dr S Hayward, Dr J Hjalmarsson, Dr C Holmes, Mr A Hovden*, Professor C Howls, Professor N Hounsell, Dr C Jackson, Mrs J Kelly, Mr A Kenny*, Professor P Lagoudakis, Professor T Leighton, Dr B Lwaleed, Professor D McGhee, Ms K Matthews, Professor C May, Dr C Metcalf, Professor R Mills, Dr R Mitra, Dr M Morrison, Professor M Niranjana, Dr D Nicole, Ms L Onaran, Mr M Parry, Ms N Passmore, Dr V Perisic, Dr J Pilgrim, Dr E Plum, Dr F Poletti, Professor C Pope, Dr J Price, Dr R Rauxloh, Dr C Rivas, Professor T Roose, Dr S Roth, Ms J Savidge, Professor M Scott, Professor D Simpson, Dr E Swindle, Ms N Stecker-Doxat, Dr D Ugboma, Ms A Wilde and Professor T Wiseman.

* Members of Senate not present for the discussion of items on the restricted agenda.

By invitation Ms S Dixon, Academic Quality and Standards Advisor (*for minute 8 only*)
Mr A Cast, HR Business Partner (*for minute 11 only*)
Mr A Melhuish, Athena Swan Advisor (*for minute 11 only*)

In attendance Mr L Abraham, Clerk to the University Council and Senate

Welcome

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular the new members of Senate who were attending their first meeting.

1 Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of Senate, held on 22 June 2016, be confirmed as a correct record and signed.

2 Actions and Matters Arising

Senate was pleased to note that the review of the Charter, Statutes and Ordinances, which also contained a review of Senate's own membership and terms of reference, was continuing well and would be presented to Senate for comment and endorsement in February 2017.

3 Senate Annual Review of Primary Responsibilities, Standing Orders and Membership

Senate considered a report by the Clerk to the University Council and Senate, which set out Senate's primary responsibilities, standing orders and most up to date membership for review and comment.

RESOLVED that the primary responsibilities, standing orders and membership be noted.

4 **President & Vice-Chancellor's Report**

Senate received an update report from the President & Vice Chancellor.

The President & Vice Chancellor highlighted the following:

- Recent central government changes;
- The Education Bill;
- The Teaching Excellence Framework;
- Student Fees; and
- Implications of Brexit.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

5 **President of the Students' Union's report**

Senate received an update report from the Students' Union.

Senate noted the key issues that were highlighted in the report; the Academic Representation Review, ongoing discussions regarding student fees, timetabling and campus space.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

6 **Senate Question Time**

Prior to the meeting, the President & Vice Chancellor had received three questions which were given a verbal response as follows:

- (i) *Q: The long term University plan is, as I understand it, to improve our current finances so that we might secure lower interest rates, so that we can borrow large sums and invest (notably to build).*
I am concerned that whenever I bid for funds (notably on behalf of NAMRIP), we cannot compete with institutions who offer matching funds on the order of millions from their universities – Imperial raised £20M from alumni for AMR, and whilst NAMRIP is a part of Southampton's £15M NIHR BRC win, Cambridge (£114M) and Oxford (£114M) dwarf our wins for AMR. Like many areas of the University, in NAMRIP we cannot promise matching funds from our University, and understandably the sponsors favour those institutions that can. If we have the intention of borrowing hundreds of millions in order to build, can we not lay our plans out now, and perhaps even draw up spade-ready projects, so that we can use these costed promises in our bids to show the sponsors that Southampton bids also come with the promise of matching funding? If we are going to borrow hundreds of millions anyway, why not make the most of that now by promising it as future match funding in order to assist current bids?

A: The improvement in the University Finances is required whether or not we borrow funds to support the University. The plans for the future would in due course generate sufficient surplus to allow the type of approach to matched funding that you describe. The University will be seeking to leverage funding that is raised against external bids. We have done this successfully in the past and indeed during the past 18 months.

- (ii) *Q: An article appeared in today's Times, which relates to the President's all-staff meeting in The Cube. If I heard him correctly, he said that the University has been "red-flagged" for "academic support" and that this would likely result in a "bronze" in the second round of the TEF. He added that it was the Government's intention that "bronze" institutions would not be allocated any visas for overseas students, but that this was being fought by VCs. Hence today's article.*

So:

1. What is our position in regard to "academic support"? Does it follow directly from NSS results, or are there other inputs?

2. What actions are we taking to repair the position?

3. *What impact is it likely to have on us, and what contingency plans are being made?*

A: Academic support is a key area of student satisfaction and includes Personal Academic Tutoring, support or individual modules and most importantly engagement by academic staff with students. During the previous year we know that student satisfaction was affected by the availability of study space and steps have been taken to address this situation. Key elements, which need our continued attention, include Feedback and Assessment and ensuring that all of our Teaching is of the highest standard. These areas all contribute significantly to the NSS outturn. We must encourage all of our colleagues to take the results of the National Student Survey seriously and help to improve our scores. The University is raising the awareness of the NSS issues and a number of initiatives such as the Student Representative Forum have been launched as well as the appointment of an Executive Director of Student Experience.

- (iii) *Q: With regard to the Emeritus Professor list, I am a little concerned that in such a long list of Emeritus Professors, spanning so much time, there is not a single woman. I'd like this to be suitably noted and addressed, please.*

A: As you will be aware, nominations for Emeritus Professor come from the Faculties. It is the case that in the last few months the retiring Professors have been male. Over the past three years there were 9 nominations approved for female Professors for Emeritus Chairs. I will be monitoring this to ensure that future nominations accurately reflect the full diversity of retiring Professors and, if necessary, I will bring this matter to the attention of those who make the nominations.

7 Delivering the 10 Year Plan

Senate received a report by the President and Vice Chancellor, which provided an update on the progress of the 10 Year Plan, which would deliver the strategy of "Simply Better".

The President and Vice Chancellor encouraged Senate to peruse all of the 10 Year Plan information that was available and to communicate it widely.

In response to a question, the President and Vice Chancellor stated that the recent introduction of a more robust approach to approving critical University vacancies ensures that all appointments align with achieving our strategy. It does not mean that the University has stopped recruiting staff, but rather that it is one of several measures being implemented to begin the process of ensuring financial sustainability. Senate noted that the 'freeze' was not absolute and that cases for recruitment could be made and would be considered on an individual basis. In response to a comment that the university community strived to produce excellent results sometimes against the backdrop of challenging systems and culture, the President and Vice Chancellor reminded Senate that it was a collective responsibility to bring about improvements and working together was the best solution.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

8 Annual Report on the Operation of the University Quality Monitoring and Enhancement Framework

Senate received a report by the Vice President (Education) which summarised the work of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC) in the Academic Year 2015-2016 with regard to the operation and reporting of quality and standards processes.

The University Quality Assurance System, which encompassed the University Regulations and the Quality Monitoring and Enhancement Framework, enabled continuous improvement of the student academic experience and student outcomes. This was evidenced with numerous examples of good practice that fully involved students and included embedded external peer or professional review.

The Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC) confirmed that the University's quality and standards processes were meeting their stated purposes, were operating within their stated cycle of activity, and that there were appropriate plans for future development.

The AQSC was confident that the standard of all degrees awarded by the University had been appropriately set and maintained.

Senate was of the view that the University Council could have confidence in the operation of the University's quality and standards processes, as overseen by the ASQC on behalf of the Senate.

RESOLVED that the Annual Report be endorsed and forwarded to Council for full and final endorsement.

9 **Doctoral College Board**

Senate considered a report by the Director of the Doctoral College, which provided an update on the work of the Doctoral College.

It was commented that the provisions for special considerations had changed and was presenting issues. In the absence of the Director at Senate, it was agreed that this issue be fully reported back at the next meeting of Senate. **ACTION: Director of the Doctoral College**

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

10 **Chair's Action**

RESOLVED that the decision taken by the Chair of Senate regarding amendments and additions to Section V of the University Calendar be noted.

11 **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Progress and Objectives for 2016/17**

Senate received a report from the Athena Swan Advisor and Deputy Director of HR which set out recommended equality objectives for 2016/17 and provided an update on progress against the 2015/16 objectives.

Senate noted some of the key activities that had taken place over the last 12 months including the establishment of Faculty Inclusion Committees which were now operating well and the efforts to fully integrate equality and diversity values into the 10 Year Plan. It was further noted that the report would be considered by Council where approval would be sought for the recommendations.

In response to a query, it was agreed that an analysis of the University female Professor cohort would be undertaken to help inform diversity progress and underpin future work. **ACTION: Athena Swan Advisor**

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

12 **Nominating Committee 2016/17**

Senate noted that those wishing to be appointed to the Nominating Committee for 2016/17 should express their interest to the Clerk to the University Council and Senate by 2 December 2016. The President and Vice Chancellor then sought agreement from Senate on the following points:

- agree that the President and Vice Chancellor take Chair's action to approve the composition of the Committee once nominations were closed.
- Agree that the President and Vice Chancellor invite all of those who volunteered, to form the Committee and to circulate a call for expressions of interest to Senate members to serve on Council.

The Nominating Cttee will meet around Feb/March and recommend to Senate in June.

RESOLVED accordingly.

13 **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of Senate was confirmed as being held on Wednesday 22 February 2017.

Senate then moved to the restricted items on the agenda and the Student representatives left the meeting.

14 **Restricted Human Resources Matters**

Senate considered a restricted report, which contained a proposed list of Emeritus Professors for endorsement.

RESOLVED that the proposed list be endorsed and submitted to Council for approval.

15 **Honorary Degree Recommendations**

Senate considered a restricted report, which contained a proposed list of Honorary Degree recipients for endorsement.

RESOLVED that the proposed list be endorsed and submitted to Council for approval.

The meeting concluded at 3.30pm