

Minutes (unrestricted)

Meeting title: Senate

Date: Wednesday, 2 March 2011

Time: 2.15 pm

Location: Senate Room, George Thomas Building, Highfield campus

Present: The Vice-Chancellor (*in the Chair*), Pro Vice-Chancellor Fitt, Pro Vice-Chancellor Nelson, Dr J W Anderson, Dr A Barney, Dr S Beers, Dr S Bleeck, Dr M L Brown, Mr P Cook, Professor N Donnelly, Professor K Fox, Professor J G Frey, Professor P Gale, Dr M Garner, Dr I G Giles, Dr A M Gravell, Dr M Hammond, Dr B Harland, Professor B Harris, Dr R Harris, Dr N Harvey, Professor S Hawkins, Professor M Kaczmarek, Professor N Lee, Mr S Ling*, Dr G J Langley, Professor J Lumby, Professor D Macbeth, Dr T Maccarone, Professor B Margetts, Dr F Maringe, Professor J W McBride, Mr J McLoughlin*, Dr T Millar, Dr R A Mills, Professor T A Minshull, Dr R Nazzini, Dr A D Neill, Dr D Nicole, Dr J Parker, Professor J Petts, Dr A Pinnock, Professor C Pope, Professor G Poppy, Professor J Preston, Ms J Rafferty, Professor A Russell, Professor V Sassone, Professor J Simpson, Dr C Smith, Professor G Smith, Dr P Smith, Professor P Smith, Professor M Spearing, Dr V Spencer, Mr R Stansbridge, Ms L Stobseth-Brown, Professor G Taylor, Professor J A Vickers, Dr C Voll, Ms K Walker, Dr T Waters, Mr S Watson*, Dr M Weal, Dr J Wharton, Professor D Wilson, Dr D C Woods, Dr Y Xiong and Mr E Zaluska

By invitation Professor A E Hills (Director, National Oceanography Centre Southampton)

In attendance University Secretary and Ms C J Gamble

(* Member of Senate not present for the restricted items.)

Welcome

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

Presentation

Pro Vice-Chancellor Nelson gave a presentation on the preparations for the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercise, the periodic assessment of the range of research activities in the higher education sector, the results of which determined the level of quality-related funding participating institutions received from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the coordinating body for the exercise.

The presentation concentrated on the importance of the exercise for the University, how the exercise would be conducted nationally, the plans the University had drawn up to ensure that it was thoroughly prepared, and the timetable for the key stages over the period from early 2011 to December 2014.

Responding to a question about the submission of research that straddled two or more Units of Assessment, Professor Nelson said that decisions had not yet been taken about the detail of University's submission. Although the quality profiles had been agreed for all the Panels, it would be important to wait until the individual Panels had consulted on their assessment criteria and methods, all of which would take place during 2011, before working out which research outputs would be submitted to which Panels. The University would also have to decide on the most appropriate submission for the institution as a whole.

Professor Nelson wished to thank a number of colleagues for their involvement and endeavours to date, in particular all those who had put themselves forward, and had been selected, for membership of the Assessment

Panels which had been set up, the Associate Deans (Research), the Unit of Assessment champions across the University, and the staff in Corporate Planning, most notably Mr Staniczenko, the section Head who was working closely with him on the entire undertaking.

The Vice-Chancellor reiterated Professor Nelson's concluding comments, adding his personal thanks to all those who had been appointed to work with the REF panels.

[A copy of the presentation is available on the SUSSED group site for members.]

25 **Minutes**

The members approved the minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2010 for signing by the Vice-Chancellor.

26 **Matters arising**

26.1 **Senate membership in line with the new University structure** (Minute 6.2 (iv))

The Vice-Chancellor reminded members of the update that had been posted on the group site in December 2010 about the division of Faculties into 'large' and 'small' for the purpose of determining the number of representatives of academic staff in category g)¹ membership of Senate from 2011/12: the large Faculties would have 12 representatives while the small Faculties would have eight.

The Vice-Chancellor stated that this form of representation could be reviewed in the future once Senate had had experience of its effectiveness.

26.2 **Amendments to Statutes and Ordinances excluding Part 3** (Minute 8.1)

The Vice-Chancellor reported that Council, at its meeting on 26 January 2011, had approved the amendments to the Statutes and Ordinances which had been presented to Senate in November 2010. In accordance with the requirements laid out in the University's Charter, the changes to the Statutes had been submitted to the Privy Council and the University expected to receive approval for the revisions within the next two months. The necessary changes to the Ordinances had been made.

[Post-meeting note: The Privy Council's approval of the amendments to the Statutes was received on 4 March 2011.]

26.3 **Amendments to Part 3 of the Ordinances** (Minute 8.2)

The Vice-Chancellor stated that changes that had been required to Part 3 of the Ordinances (Dismissal, Discipline, Grievance Procedures and Related Matters) to reflect the new organizational structure had been approved by Council at its meeting in January 2011.

26.4 **Governance: Primary responsibilities, delegated powers and decision-making** (Minute 8.3)

The Vice-Chancellor was pleased to report that the documentation on the primary responsibilities, delegated powers and decision making had been approved by Council in January 2011. The details of the arrangements had been circulated to the Deans and Associate Deans, and the Faculty Operating Officers, among others, in early February.

As part of the new committee structure, the Faculties would establish:

- Programme Committees. Faculties could decide to set up either one Programme Committee for both taught and research programmes or two Programme Committees to deal with taught and research courses separately, whatever was more appropriate for the educational offer and internal structure of the Faculty.
- A Health and Safety Consultative Committee.
- An Ethics Committee. Each Faculty would normally be expected to have an Ethics Committee. However, with the agreement of the Chair of the University Ethics

¹ To be relettered e) from 2011/12 in the new membership of Senate in Ordinance 2.12.4, following Senate's discussions at the meeting in November 2010.

Committee, the Deans could decide to establish joint Ethics Committees across Faculties.

27 Vice-Chancellor's report and University Executive Group (UEG) decision log

Received The Vice-Chancellor's report, together with a list of decisions taken by UEG since the meeting of Senate in November 2010.

The Vice-Chancellor presented his report, highlighting the following items:

Reforms to higher education funding

Under the new system of funding, universities would be required to seek annual approval of their Access Agreements from the Office of Fair Access (OFFA) before they could publish their tuition fees. The Government's view had been clearly stated that a fee of £9k *per annum* could only be charged in exceptional circumstances. It was expected that every Access Agreement would include targets which the institution would set itself for improving recruiting and retaining students from under-represented backgrounds. Setting fees at or near the maximum level would be necessary in order to recoup the Government funding that would be withdrawn in many areas, and to provide resources to enable the institution to make the necessary enhancements to the quality of the student experience and to the various forms of student support, such as fee waivers. Discussions about the structure and funding of student support were well advanced.

Responding to a question about student numbers at the University, the Vice-Chancellor said that the agreed Strategy for the coming years was for growth in all areas of recruitment. In terms of demographic trends, the number of 18 to 20 year olds was forecast to fall in the UK for the next eight years or so according to research commissioned by HEFCE. The planned increase of undergraduates, postgraduates and international students would be carefully monitored each year, as part of the strategic planning process. Undoubtedly, the recruitment of home/EU students would not be typical during the next two to three years because of the forthcoming funding changes. Those changes would bring about a greater scrutiny of the quality of the student experience. The UK was renowned for the excellence of its higher education, and the University would be at the forefront of the sector in publicizing information about its programmes of study and research, and communicating its academic vitality. As part of this, the website – data.southampton.ac.uk – would be launched the following week.

He believed that the sector could do more to explain to the public the full consequences of the impending funding reforms. He indicated that the recruitment of international students should not be affected by the changes to the funding arrangements, but that there may be an adverse impact on recruitment caused by changes to the student visa system. It was also likely that EU students would reconsider studying in the UK given the increased costs they would have to face from 2012. The supplementary funding for STEM subjects in recognition of their higher teaching costs continued to be ringfenced by the Government.

Relatively little consideration had been given by the Government to the impact of its proposals on the demand for postgraduate programmes. The Vice-Chancellor had raised the matter with the Minister of State for Universities and Science, the Rt Hon David Willetts MP, and had written about his concerns in the press. At the University further work would need to be done to analyze the relationship between cost and income of postgraduate taught programmes. The consequences of reflecting the full cost of teaching such programmes would have to be considered closely.

A question was asked about the proposals for extending the teaching day, and how they might affect students. The Vice-Chancellor pointed out that changing the teaching timetable should not be confused with increasing an individual's academic workload. The aim of the proposals was to create greater flexibility in the use of the University's estate. Consultation with the student body would be a vital part of the process of bringing forward the final plans.

UK Border Agency (UKBA): Visas

The UKBA was considering a number of proposals in respect of visas which were of great concern to universities because, if introduced, it would change the way the sector recruited international students, and, more widely, it would affect the position of the sector overseas. The Vice-Chancellor outlined the lobbying of Government he had undertaken on behalf of the University, and collectively with other Vice-Chancellors through the Russell Group, and UUK.

Council Effectiveness Review

The Review Group, set up to carry out the periodic review of the effectiveness of the University's Council, had provided its report and recommendations to the governing body at its meeting in January 2011. There were two recommendations of particular interest to Senate: the proposal to reduce the size of Council and the invitation to Senate to produce an annual report on its work, in particular in the area of education and the student experience. The first recommendation had yet to be considered in detail by the Council but it was likely that its constituent classes would be reduced, where possible. Class 3 (Members appointed by the Senate) currently stood at six members. The Vice-Chancellor referred to Agendum 5 which discussed this matter further.

Appointment of the Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor drew attention to the timetable for the appointment of Sir John Parker's successor as the Chancellor of the University. A question was raised about the level of student involvement in the appointment process. This was taken on notice and would be answered by the University Secretary after the meeting.

[Post-meeting note: In the University's constitution, the Court is the body which appoints the Chancellor. The procedure starts with the Nominations Committee, a committee of Council, which considers possible candidates. It brings forward a recommendation to Council for consideration, after Senate has been consulted. Council duly considers the recommendation, and if it is content to endorse it, proposes it to the Court for approval. Representatives of the Students' Union are involved at the consultation phase, through membership of Senate, at the point of recommendation, through membership of Council, and at the appointing stage at Court, where student representatives are members, in addition to the Union's President.]

Noted The Vice-Chancellor's report and UEG's decisions.

28 **Academic structures**

Received A report, prepared by the University Secretary, on the proposed academic structures within each Faculty from 1 August 2011 which Senators were invited to endorse for submission to Council for approval on 23 March 2011.

In presenting the report, the Vice-Chancellor stated that in a very small number of cases discussions were continuing about particular titles. The recommendations of the report were drawn up to allow him to take Chair's action in respect of those outstanding matters once the further consultations had been completed.

It was observed that the report did not list the Institute for Life Sciences, yet in the UEG decision log (D010), Agendum 3, it was stated that this research cluster would have the same (sub-brand) status as an academic unit. Conversely, the Southampton Statistical Sciences Research Institute, also a cross-disciplinary research grouping, was listed in the report as an academic unit. The Vice-Chancellor said that the anomaly would be rectified before the information was presented to Council in March 2011.

- Resolved**
- (i) That the existing Schools and Research Centres be discontinued from 31 July 2011, provided that arrangements be made to ensure that Schools' and Research Centres' responsibilities relating to the September 2011 supplementary examinations, and any academic appeals arising from them, continue to be carried out in line with regulations in force in 2010-11.
 - (ii) That academic units and research centres be instituted and assigned to each Faculty as set out above, subject to the rectification of the anomaly concerning the Institute of Life Sciences and the Southampton Statistical Sciences Research Institute, and that such units become the primary internal academic structures within Faculties from 1 August 2011.
 - (iii) That, on behalf of Senate, the Vice-Chancellor take Chair's action, if necessary, to make any required minor variations regarding the precise titles to be given to academic units, based on further consultations, and that these be submitted to Council, as appropriate.

- (iv) That amendments to Ordinances 2.2 – 2.9 to reflect the new academic structures, which would include any minor variations agreed as above, be brought forward for consultation with the Senate in June 2011, for submission to Council in July 2011.

Noted The undertaking by the University Secretary to arrange for a proposal relating to the arrangements for Master's Examinations Boards and appeals to be presented to Senate in June 2011, alongside the proposed revisions to the University's quality assurance procedures.

29 **Membership of Council under Class 3: Members appointed by the Senate**

Received A report, prepared by the University Secretary, on the membership of Council under Class 3 (Members appointed by the Senate) in the light of the recommendations of the recently held review of Council effectiveness.

The Vice-Chancellor drew attention to the recommendation brought forward by the Council Review Group that the membership of Council should be reduced overall, and that the arrangements to achieve this should be phased in over a number of years. The detailed proposals on the composition of the governing body and the timetable for introducing the changes would be considered by Council later in the academic session, together with the required revisions to the Statutes which would be presented first to Senate. In the meantime, Senate was invited to seek members to fill two of the four vacancies in Class 3.

The University Secretary explained that the members in this Class were drawn from the academic community. Student members on Council were appointed in Class 5.

- Resolved**
- (i) That Senate should fill two of the four vacancies on Council in Class 3 (Members appointed by the Senate), and that the vacancies be filled until 31 July 2011 in the first instance.
 - (ii) That if the person(s) appointed should subsequently be re-elected to Senate from August 2011, or become *ex-officio* members, the Nominating Committee be asked to consider recommending to Senate an extension of such appointments to Council to cover the period the person(s) would serve as a member of Senate, up to a maximum period of three years.
 - (iii) That the Nominating Committee should have the option to reconvene and seek additional nominations. However, should the person(s) appointed cease to be members of Senate in 2011-12, the Committee would need to reconvene.
 - (iv) That, subject to their consent, Dr Anderson, Professor Hart, Professor Kaczmarek and Professor Russell should be asked to be members of the Nominating Committee for the remainder of the academic year.

30 **Academic reward and recognition project: update**

Received A progress report on the Academic Reward and Recognition Project from the Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, dated 23 February 2011.

In the absence of the Provost, the Vice-Chancellor summarized the contents of the report. The aim of the Project was to design a system that helped the University to recruit, develop, retain and reward high-performing academic staff and to recognize fully the range of roles staff might perform during the course of their careers. An Academic Reference Group had been established to be used as a sounding-board by the Steering Group.

In discussion, a number of points were raised, including the following:

- The Steering Group had not proposed that the system of awarding increments should cease. It was looking at a variety of ways that could be introduced to manage rewards within a simple, equitable and transparent framework.
- As part of its work, the Steering Group would look at the cost of running reward systems.

- Regarding the recognition of collective academic performance, the Vice-Chancellor commented that the majority of academic work was done by groups or teams. An individual's contribution could be either eclipsed or enhanced by the team. The intention was to find ways to recognize a team member's role while acknowledging the elements of collective achievement. Promotion Panels looked for participation and collaboration in team work when considering individual cases. In respect of retention, the system should be clear and transparent to respond to an individual who received a job offer from another institution.
- Responding to a general point about policies and systems driving certain behaviours, some of which might have unintended consequences for the institution, the Vice-Chancellor said that greater attention needed to be paid to the cost and margins involved in carrying out academic activities.

The Vice-Chancellor thanked members of Senate for their comments and invited them to forward any further thoughts and ideas on the subject to the Provost or the Steering Group. Alternatively, they could send them to him directly.

Noted The content of the report, in particular that it was anticipated that proposals would be brought to Senate at its meeting on 15 June 2011 for discussion.

31 **Meeting of Senate: Vice-Chancellor's Question Time**

Received A proposal from the Vice-Chancellor to introduce a 'Question Time' at meetings of Senate.

The members of Senate welcomed the proposal. It was suggested that the question-and-answer session should be allocated a certain amount time so that it did not take up a disproportionate amount of Senate's business. The Vice-Chancellor agreed that an appropriate amount of time would be devoted to the session at each meeting of Senate.

Resolved That the Vice-Chancellor's proposal be endorsed, and a Question Time be introduced with effect from the June 2011 meeting of the Senate, for a trial period of one year, subject to review towards the end of the 2011/12 academic session.

32 **Academic Quality and Standards Committee**

Received A report of the meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee held on 2 February 2011, presented by its Chair, Professor Cameron.

Professor Cameron underlined that all of the items in report were for information only. In the light of the new committee structure, introduced in parallel to the setting up of Faculties and the redesigned Professional Services, the group was standing down. It had met for the last time in February 2011 and would hand over its responsibilities to the University Programme Committee, and the associated Faculty Programme Committees.

The Vice-Chancellor thanked the Chair and the members of the Committee for their admirable work over the years.

Noted The report from the Academic Quality and Standards Committee.

33 **Military Education Committee**

Received A report of the Annual General Meeting of the Military Education Committee held on 20 January 2011.

Noted The report from the Military Education Committee.

34 **Dates of terms for non-standard courses**

Received A list of the term dates of the non-standard courses by Faculty, School and programme of study.

The Vice-Chancellor explained that, after a thorough search of the archives, there appeared to be no apparent reason for Senate to note the term dates for what were called 'non-standard courses'. The information was not part of the required agenda items of Senate, drawn from its Powers, set out in the

Ordinances, and its Primary Responsibilities. He proposed that, as the information was not formally required, the term dates no longer be presented annually to Senate. Nevertheless, the Department of Student and Academic Administration would continue to compile the information and circulate it across the University. The members of Senate endorsed the proposal.

Resolved That the list of the term dates of the non-standard courses should not be presented annually to Senate.

35 **Vice-Chancellor's action(s) as Chair of Senate**

The Vice-Chancellor reported that there were no matters he had taken action on as Chair of Senate since the last meeting.

36 **Election of student sabbatical officers**

The Vice-President (Academic Affairs) of the Students' Union drew attention to the annual election of sabbatical officers which was currently taking place. He wished to thank the academic staff and the members of Professional Services for their help in conveying the key messages about the election to the students.

37 **Valediction**

On behalf of Senate, the Vice-Chancellor wished Pro Vice-Chancellor Fitt well at Oxford Brookes University in his new role as Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research). He thanked Professor Fitt for his extraordinary contributions to the work and life of the University over the years, particularly in his current post as Pro Vice-Chancellor (Internationalization) but also as a former Head of the School of Mathematics.

38 **Date of the next meeting**

The Vice-Chancellor reminded members that the next meeting of Senate was scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 15 June 2011 at 2.15 pm.

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