

Minutes (unrestricted)

Meeting title: Senate

Date: Wednesday, 27 February 2013

Time: 2.15 pm

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

Present: The Vice-Chancellor (*in the Chair*), Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Wheeler, Pro Vice-Chancellor Neill, Pro Vice-Chancellor Nelson, Pro Vice-Chancellor Spearing, Dr S ul-Alam, Ms M J Baker, Dr P di Bari, Dr A Barney, Mr A Bees*, Dr J Beswick, Professor H Biggs, Dr F Bishop, Dr J Blaydes, Dr G Brambilla, Dr M L Brown, Dr J Byrne, Dr F Cagampang, Ms C Court, Professor S Cox, Dr S Demain, Dr A M Drummond, Dr H Eres, Professor K Fox, Professor P Gale, Mr P Gibbs, Dr A M Gravell, Dr L Green, Professor Dame Wendy Hall, Professor S Hawkins, Mr G Hayward, Ms J Hjalmarsson, Dr N Jarrett, Dr G Kinchin, Dr L Kraaijeveld, Dr P Langdon, Dr W Lawrence, Professor T G Leighton, Dr R Lewis, Mr S Ling*, Dr B Lwaleed, Professor D P McGhee, Professor N J Madise, Dr J D Minney, Dr T Newman, Dr R Polfreman, Professor J Petts, Dr A Roghanian, Professor V Sassone, Dr W B Sloan, Professor P G R Smith, Dr A Steele, Ms L Stobseth-Brown, Ms N Trengove*, Dr J Tumblety, Professor J A Vickers, Dr L Wahlgren-Smith, Ms K Walker, Mr P Ward*, Mr S Watson*, Dr S Watt and Dr J Wright

In attendance The Chief Operating Officer and Ms C J Gamble

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

A presentation on the preparations for the Research Excellence Framework, given by Pro Vice-Chancellor Nelson

Pro Vice-Chancellor Nelson reminded Senators of the purpose of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and the timetable for the exercise, and outlined the status of the current preparations, presenting the information under the following headings:

- Quality assessment framework.
- Target quality profile.
- Benchmarking exercise.
- Impact case studies.
- Selection of staff for the REF and the timetable.
- REF Panel members amongst University academic staff.
- The importance of the exercise, reputationally and financially for the University.

Pro Vice-Chancellor Nelson thanked all those who had been involved in the preparations to date, in particular Professor Atkinson and Mr Staniczenko for all their efforts. Senators could keep up to date with the REF on the SharePoint site set up specifically to carry the latest information: <http://sharepoint.soton.ac.uk/sites/ref2014>.

[A copy of the presentation is available on the Senate group site.]

25 **Obituaries**

The Vice-Chancellor announced with regret the deaths of:

Nicola Cole, undergraduate, BSc Physiotherapy: 7 October 2012;
Yun Fan, undergraduate, BSc Mathematics;
Hannah Groves, undergraduate, BA French: 22 October 2012;
Rosie van Raalte, undergraduate, BN Child Nursing: 12 January 2013;
James Atherton, MPhil/PhD postgraduate student: 14 January 2013; and
Dr Hansjurgen Schuppe, Imaging Facilities Manager, Biological Sciences: 15 February 2013

He asked members of Senate to stand for a minute's silence as a mark of respect.

26 **Minutes of meeting held on 7 November 2012**

The Vice-Chancellor drew attention to two minor additions to the unrestricted minutes which had been made since they had been circulated:

Under Minute 9, in the second sentence of the fourth paragraph an 'a' had been inserted before 'position'; and under Minute 12.1, in the Resolution the words 'be noted' had been added at the end of the sentence.

The members approved the revised minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2012 for signing by the Vice-Chancellor.

27 **Matters arising**

27.1 **Senate Nominating Committee**

Report on recent selection process (Minute 14.1 (i))

The Vice-Chancellor reported that no further suggestions had been received from Senators about how future Nominating Committees might encourage members of Senate to apply for selection.

Selection of Senate Nominating Committee members for 2012/13 (Minute 14.2)

The Vice-Chancellor stated that three individuals had indicated that they would be willing to join the Senate Nominating Committee for the year: Dr Mary Gobbi, Health Sciences, Professor Nyovani Madise, Associate Dean (Research and Enterprise) in the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, and Professor Andrea Russell, Chemistry. He thanked them for putting themselves forward. He would only call on them to form a Committee in the event that a vacancy arose in the Class 3 membership of Council (Members appointed by Senate).

Noted The appointment of Dr Gobbi, Professor Madise and Professor Russell to the Senate Nominating Committee for the current academic year.

27.2 **Annual report from Senate to Council** (Minute 16)

The Vice-Chancellor relayed the decision taken by Council at its meeting on 21 November 2012 that it no longer needed to receive an annual report from Senate because the current periodic reports were sufficient to keep it informed of the work of the principal academic body.

28 **Statement of Senate's Primary Responsibilities and delegated and related matters: proposed revision in respect of embargoed theses**

Received A report, prepared on behalf of the Academic Registrar, dated 30 January 2013, which sought Senate's approval for an addition to section 3.1.3 of Senate's Statement of Primary Responsibilities and delegated and related matters.

The Academic Registrar explained why the changes were proposed: it would streamline the current arrangements under which Senate received reports from Faculties on embargoed PhD theses. The authority to restrict access to a doctoral thesis would be delegated to the Faculty Programme Committee or equivalent Faculty committee for research programmes. The list of delegated matters (section 3.1.3)

would be revised to include it. The committee involved would report its decisions to the Library, where appropriate records would be kept; the Library would inform the Researcher Development and Graduate Centre Advisory Group annually. The Higher Regulations would be revised accordingly and submitted to the University Programme Committee and Senate in due course for approval.

- Resolved**
- (i) That the proposal that the requirement to report restricted theses be removed from the Higher Degree Regulations, listed under section 1 of the report, be approved.
 - (ii) That the amendment, set out in the report, to the Statement of Senate's Primary Responsibilities and delegated and related matters be approved.
- Noted** The undertaking by the Academic Registrar to arrange for the Higher Degree Regulations to be revised in accordance with the proposals and submitted to the University Programme Committee and Senate in due course.

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

- Received** The Vice-Chancellor's report on recent activities, together with a list of actions and decisions taken after consultation with UEG since the meeting of Senate in November 2012.

The Vice-Chancellor highlighted a number of the items in his report, including:

- The decisions reached by University Executive Group at its away days in January 2013 about the University's strategy. The ambition to be recognized as a global top-50 university required continued growth in the University economy, delivered by internationally competitive research, distinctive education and leadership in enterprise, and remained the foundation of the Strategy. It was highly likely that the activities of the University would become more dispersed across key locations around the world while some would be delivered through virtual platforms. A set of ideas had emerged during the away day discussions which would be developed initially by the senior leadership group, and within Faculties and Professional Services. The key academic issues arising would be presented to Senate in due course.
- One of the initiatives that had been discussed was the rapidly developing phenomenon of massive open online courses, known as MOOCs. The University was a founder partner in *Futurelearn* which would carry programmes of study from 12 universities. It was expected that the first of the University's programmes would be ready from the start of the next academic session.
- The University had agreed with the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) that it would not comment publicly on the recent Institutional Review until such time as the QAA report had been published. The Vice-Chancellor reiterated the comments that had been made to Senate at an earlier stage in the process in November 2012 about the institution's quality assurance framework. He added that the QAA's procedures were being followed scrupulously.
- On the subject of the staff survey, carried out in late 2012, the Vice-Chancellor was pleased to report that the results conveyed a number of positive messages. It had also identified areas where improvements could be made. Senior staff would discuss the results within Faculties and Professional Services in order to obtain further and more nuanced feedback on the results. UEG would consider how best to respond to the priority issues which emerged from this process, and would report back to the University community in the coming months.
- The University had been delighted to hear that a number of current and former staff and alumni had been named in the Queen's New Year's Honours List; these included: Professor David Payne, Director of the Optoelectronics Research Centre, had been knighted for his pioneering research in fibre optics; Ms Pat Usher, the former Director of Student and Academic Administration, had been awarded an MBE for services to higher education; and Professor Richard Holdaway, an alumnus and former member of Council, had been awarded a CBE for his leadership in space science and technology development in the UK.
- The University had been one of twelve institutions to have been bestowed a Regius Professorship recently by the Queen. In the University's case, the professorship marked its excellence in the field of computer science. The prestigious chair would be advertised internally

and externally. The appropriate arrangements would be made as soon as issues of protocol had been clarified.

- The Vice-Chancellor drew attention to an item which would be reported later on the agenda under Chair's action: the appointment of Pro Vice-Chancellor Neill as Chair of the University Programme Committee. He thanked the former Chair, Professor Curry, for the diligence and leadership she had brought to the role.

Noted The Vice-Chancellor's report and the decisions taken after consultation with the University Executive Group.

30 **Report from the President of the Students' Union**

Received A report from the President of the Students' Union on the Union's recent activities, dated February 2013.

Mr Ling, the President of the Union, reported on the following items:

Committee and Student Group Reviews

The changes to the committee structure within the Students' Union that had been agreed during the review would be introduced during the current term before the hand-over to the new sabbatical team who would be in post from July 2013. The Union's activities would be grouped in zones with the associated student societies and clubs, each zone being led by a sabbatical officer.

Elections

The elections for all the major positions in the Union would take place over two weeks. The results would be announced on 1 March 2013 by live broadcast. It was the Union's most ambitious television project of the year. Mr Ling invited Senators to visit susu.tv on the night.

A member of Senate relayed comments that he had received from postgraduates in the Faculty of Medicine about feeling excluded from the recent electioneering because they were not based at the Highfield campus, where canvassing had been focused. Mr Ling responded that candidates were encouraged to visit all University sites, but the main campus, inevitably, tended to draw most of the activity. However, as an additional means of communication, an email distribution list was used to keep all students informed of what happening during the elections.

Working with the University

Work was continuing on proposals in respect of the student support package and the Access Agreement; a sites review had been conducted to assess the quality of the student experience at the various campuses; and a teaching awards competition had been introduced whose purpose was to raise the profile of good teaching. Students would be invited to vote for academic staff in the following five categories: Outstanding Lecturer; Teaching and Learning Lifetime Achievement; Innovative Teaching; Best Feedback; and Contribution to Academic Support.

Recovery college

The Union was working on a partnership with a local recovery college, an initiative which aimed to support people with mental health issues. The college would teach students the skills they might need to manage their illness, alongside their academic studies. The partnership arrangement would allow the recovery college students to affiliate to the Union and thus be able to participate in a range of activities offered by the Union. The college would offer expertise and support to the Union for its work on mental health.

National Union of Students' referendum

The majority of students had voted last term to remain unaffiliated to the National Union of Students. The large number of students voting in the referendum demonstrated the level of engagement among the students with current issues.

The Vice-Chancellor thanked both the President and the Vice-President (Academic Affairs) for their written and oral reports over the year. They had set a high standard for the incoming sabbaticals to meet.

Noted

The report from the President of the Students' Union.

31 **Senate question time**

Received A report from the Vice-Chancellor, giving the details of a response to a number of questions which had been asked during the last Senate question time session, and an answer to one question that had been submitted for Senate's February 2013 meeting.

The Vice-Chancellor introduced the question which was set out in the paper on staff on fixed-term contracts. He observed that it was a matter that might have been more appropriately referred to the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) for discussion. Adding to the statements in his written response, the Vice-Chancellor said that the majority of staff on such contracts were in that position because the funding for their particular area of work was time limited. It would make no sense to appoint staff on continuing contracts without the financial capacity to pay them. From personal experience, he knew that staff within the University worked hard to retain talented colleagues, wherever possible. Those who had to leave at the end of a fixed-term contract were helped and supported, wherever feasible, with their future careers. It was a matter that would continue to be addressed through the formal route of JNC discussions.

In response to the Vice-Chancellor's invitation to ask questions in respect of the two previous items (Agenda 5 and 6), Professor Vickers queried the wording of a sentence in one of the decisions listed in the VC's report: D083 on the financial planning resource model for 2013/14 stated that, 'A review of these principles and a *full discussion of the future shape of the University* will take place following the January away day.' Professor Vickers asked whether the Vice-Chancellor could expand on how the consultation would take place.

The Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, who was closely involved in the business planning round, explained that alongside the planning round for next year, the various strands of the strategy, agreed at the January away day, were being developed. Once that process had been completed, the University Executive Group would discuss the outcomes at its next away day in June 2013.

The Vice-Chancellor reminded Senators that the volatile external environment was one of the factors that drove the University to keep its portfolio of activities under review. The programmes of study on offer had to remain attractive to students while academic excellence in those programmes was part of the foundation on which an institution's reputation was built. The future shape of the University also referred to the way the institution was organized. The outline of the discussions at the UEG away day in his report (Agendum 5) explained some of the thinking on the future structure of the institution. All of this had to be kept under consideration.

Responding to a query from Mr Watson whether the statement in the Vice-Chancellor's report (point 3) about doing 'fewer things but [doing] them better' referred to course closures, the Vice-Chancellor reiterated his earlier point that courses had to continue to attract students. If students did not enrol/register on modules or courses it would not be feasible to run them. However, in a process of rationalization, it should not be overlooked that this opened up the prospect of new programmes being offered.

Noted The answers given during Senate question time.

32 **Monitoring of attendance**

Received An oral report from the Academic Registrar on the monitoring of attendance.

The Academic Registrar outlined the approach being taken by the University to monitor the attendance of overseas students who required Tier 4 visas to study in the UK. The University held 'Highly Trusted Sponsor' (HTS) status. The UK Border Agency (UKBA) had the right to audit the compliance of each HTS institution at any point during the year. The University was utilizing an attendance monitoring system based on a combination of physical and computer-linked checks, including attendance at enrolment and examinations for the former, and logging in to use IT systems on campus, or being recorded as entering the Library, for the latter. The Academic Registrar reported that there were recent indications from the UKBA that institutions were expected to take a proportionate approach to attendance monitoring, and that the UKBA would in the near future provide higher education institutions with case studies of attendance monitoring that would inform the institutional approach to this area of compliance, and support preparation for a UKBA audit visit. It was also hoped that, in the longer term, the outcomes of the current project would provide the Faculties with information to enable them more effectively to

support *all* students (ie Home/EU and Overseas students) who were experiencing difficulties with their academic studies.

Noted The Academic Registrar's update on the monitoring of students' attendance.

33 Workforce planning without a retirement age

Received A discussion paper, dated 17 February 2013, entitled 'Workforce planning without a retirement age', drawn up by the Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Director of Human Resources

The Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor introduced the paper which discussed how a changing demography should be considered as part of the institution's workforce planning arrangements in view of relatively recent legislation and policies that had removed the default retirement age and increased the state pension age, among other things. Senate was invited to consider three particular questions:

- How a healthy movement/turnover of academic staff would support the University in achieving its strategic ambitions?
- If the Oxford and Cambridge method of adopting an 'employer justified' retirement age, explained in the paper, would work at Southampton? and
- If not, what mechanism(s) could the University consider to progress and refresh the workforce?

The Provost said that Human Resources was currently consolidating a range of information for staff who were moving towards the end of their careers to help them consider the options available to them. The Academic Reward and Recognition Project would also support individuals with planning their future career path. He invited Senators to consider what mechanisms would ensure a dynamic workforce which retained the wisdom and experience of older members of staff.

In discussion, the following points were made:

- With the lifting of the retirement age and current age discrimination legislation, it was not possible to compel staff to retire at a particular age. As part of the regular Personal Performance and Development Review meetings, it should be possible to hold a broader conversation with individuals about their plans for the future, including retirement. Certainly, information should be readily available about the range of possibilities that were open to staff, such as the tapering of retirement, depending on whether it could be accommodated within an academic unit. For some, seeing the appointment of a younger member of staff or early career researcher to whom they could pass on their wisdom might help put retirement in a positive light, and would help promote inter-generational fairness by maintaining opportunities for career progression for the younger generation.
- The relationship between academic staff and their line managers might be adversely affected without the introduction of a defined retirement age because at some point it might be necessary to use performance management if an individual was no longer able to work at the required level.
- Line managers could consider starting the discussion with individuals on retirement planning at an earlier stage, around the late forties, and provide the type of information that would be needed for this purpose which could include financial advice. Staff should be able to leave at a time of their choosing and with dignity.
- Incentives should be offered to encourage people to retire at a 'predictable' age, for example, email for life, and membership of University clubs and societies. Particularly incentives that would enable an individual to remain linked to the institution, or contributing to its vitality as community in some way, would be desirable.

The Vice-Chancellor thanked Senators for their views. He would arrange to bring back some positive and practical options for further consideration.

Noted The discussion paper and the undertaking by the Vice-Chancellor to arrange for the presentation of possible options in respect of retirement age and workforce planning as soon as possible.

34 **Changes to names of academic groupings, creation of a new Institute and amendments to Ordinances (Part 2)**

Received A report prepared by the Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Pro Vice-Chancellor Nelson on the setting up of a new Institute and proposed name changes for one of the Faculties and one of the academic units within a Faculty, together with a number of minor revisions consequent upon these changes that would be required to the University's Ordinances (Part 2, Organisation and government).

The Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor drew attention to the setting up of the Zepler Institute, a new grouping that would be based in the Faculty of Physical and Applied Sciences. It would bring together six research groups, all currently part of the Faculty: Quantum Light and Matter, Nano-electronics, Electronics and Electrical Engineering, Photonic Systems, Circuits and Sensors, Fibres and Lasers, and Nanophotonics. The Zepler family had agreed that the University could use their name for this purpose.

Turning to the proposals in respect of the Faculty of Physical and Applied Sciences and the academic unit Mathematics, the Provost stated that in January 2013 all the Faculties had been invited to consider whether they wished to bring forward changes to the names of their current academic groupings, and, if they did, to present the reasons for doing so. The creation of a new Institute and the name changes to the Faculty of Physical and Applied Sciences and Mathematics had been endorsed in February by the University Executive Group.

The Vice-Chancellor explained that a number of minor revisions to the University's Ordinances were required as a result of introducing these changes. In particular:

- The list of Faculties under Ordinance 2.1(3) should be amended to replace 'Physical and Applied Sciences' with 'Physical Sciences and Engineering'.
- The title of the Faculty in Ordinance 2.8 should be revised to read 'Physical Sciences and Engineering'.
- The list of academic units in the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences in Ordinance 2.9 should be amended, removing 'Mathematics' and inserting 'Mathematical Sciences'.
- An amendment was required to the section that covered the elections to membership of the Senate (Ordinance 2.12.6). The reference in subsection (3) to the Faculty of Physical and Applied Sciences should be replaced with 'Physical Sciences and Engineering'.

The Vice-Chancellor invited the members of Senate to endorse the recommendations presented in the report on the name changes to the academic groupings and the setting up of the Zepler Institute, and to endorse the amendments to the Ordinances. Senate was content to endorse all the recommendations. The documents would be presented to Council for approval at its forthcoming meeting on 15 March 2013.

- Resolved**
- (i) That the recommendations to create a new Institute to be named the 'Zepler Institute', to change the name of the Faculty of Physical and Applied Sciences to the 'Faculty of Physical Sciences and Engineering', and to change the name of Mathematics to 'Mathematical Sciences' be endorsed, and submitted to Council for approval on 15 March 2013 to come into effect immediately.
 - (ii) That the amendments to Ordinances 2.1 (3), 2.8, 2.9 and 2.12.6 (3), as set out in the Annex to the report, be endorsed, and presented for approval by Council on 15 March 2013 to come into effect immediately.

35 **University Programme Committee**

35.1 **Report from the meeting held on 18 December 2012**

Received A report from the meeting of the University Programme Committee, held on 18 December 2012, presented by the new Chair of the Committee, Pro Vice-Chancellor Neill.

Pro Vice-Chancellor Neill drew attention to a number of the items in the report: the process for scrutinizing external examiners' reports and the future arrangements for the Committee whose

composition had been revised, placing the chairmanship with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and the Student Experience). The latter item had been reported as part of the Vice-Chancellor's report (Agendum 5) but was formally a matter of Chair's Action (Agendum 16).

Resolved The discussions, and decisions, recorded in the report from the meeting of the University Programme Committee.

35.2 Oral report from the meeting held on 11 February 2013

Received A presentation from Pro Vice-Chancellor Neill on the progress that had been made in respect of the review of the Quality Monitoring and Enhancement Framework.

[The table which was presented is available on the group site under Agendum 13.2.]

Pro Vice-Chancellor Neill gave an overview of the work that had been or was in the process of being undertaken in the following areas:

- The annual Learning and Teaching Review and Action Plan process. It was being redesigned to focus on annual programme and module review. The current document repository would be replaced. Faculty and UPC Risk Registers and Action Plans would be introduced to inform the annual reporting cycle.
- The revised procedures for reviewing and responding to external examiners' reports were more robust and made clear where particular responsibilities lay.
- The programme approval and review process was under development. The intended date for its introduction was the start of the 2013/14 academic session.
- The examination process and Examinations Boards were under review. It was expected that the proposed revised process would be presented for discussion, and approval, before the end of the current academic year.
- Work had begun on the Quality Handbook to separate the sections on policies from the advisory or good practice material. Pro Vice-Chancellor Neill invited Senators to forward any suggestions they might have about a new title for the handbook.

Pro Vice-Chancellor Neill stated that the detail of the work would be communicated in due course to the Faculties through the Associate Deans for Education. Turning to the name of the Committee, he reported that there had been some discussion about returning to using 'Academic Quality and Standards Committee'. He invited Senators to let him know what they thought about this change. Proposals regarding the name would be brought back to Senate.

Resolved That Senators forward their views on the proposed name for the University Programme Committee and any suggestions on a new name for the Quality Handbook.

Noted The update from Pro Vice-Chancellor Neill on the QME framework.

36 Student discipline: Annual Report

Received The Annual Report on student discipline, dated 15 January 2013, drawn up by Dr Partington, Assistant Director, Student Services and Pro Vice-Chancellor Spearing.

Presenting the report, Pro Vice-Chancellor Spearing drew attention to the summary of remarks which prefaced the statistical information. The breaches of discipline were confined to a tiny minority of the student population: under 2 per cent of students had had to face the disciplinary processes. The majority of that small group had contravened the Halls of Residence Regulations. Serious breaches of discipline were very rare (0.17% of the total student population).

A review of the Regulations and Procedures would be undertaken later in the year to consider emerging issues, such as harassment by electronic means, different types of anti-social behaviour, and the introduction of anger management counselling and community service as an alternative option to imposing fines.

In response to questions about plagiarism and, in particular, individuals offering to sit examinations for students or write pieces of assessed work on their behalf, the Vice-Chancellor recognized Senate's concerns about these important matters and suggested that the broader issues of academic integrity be discussed at a future meeting of Senate.

Noted The Annual Report on student discipline and the suggestion that the subject of academic integrity be discussed at Senate at a later date.

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

The Vice-Chancellor reported that he had taken Chair's action to appoint a new Chair to the University Programme Committee, following its meeting on 18 December 2012 when it had been agreed that its composition should be revised to allow the PVC with the education portfolio to chair future meetings of the group. He had already announced this under his Vice-Chancellor's report.

38 **Date of next meeting**

The Vice-Chancellor confirmed the date of the next scheduled meeting of Senate: 19 June 2013.

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