

Minutes (unrestricted)

Meeting title: Senate

Date: Wednesday, 26 February 2014

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 Spearing, Dr S ul Alam, Professor Y Baatz, Ms M J Baker, Professor H Biggs, Dr G Brambilla, Dr F Cagampang, Ms G Cameron*, Dr M Carravetta, Professor P Charles, Mr E D'Souza, Ms J Davis, Dr S Demain, Dr J Gammon, Mr D Gilani*, Dr I Golosnoy, Mr D Gunns*, Ms T Harrison (*Registrar*), Professor S Hawkins, Mr A L Hill, Ms J Hjalmarsson, Dr C Holmes, Dr L Kraaijeveld, Dr B Lwaleed, Dr E Morris, Dr J Madsen, Mr D Mendoza-Wolfson*, Professor G Moon, Dr T Newman, Dr D Nicole, Dr C Petley, Dr R Polfreman, Dr K Poore, Professor C Pope, Ms L Richard, Dr A Roghanian, Professor V Sassone, Dr J Skidmore, Dr C Skylaris, Dr S Stevenage, Ms L Stobseth-Brown, Dr R Tare, Professor R Werner, Professor N White, Dr P White

By invitation Mr S Chisnall, Director of Strategy and Planning (for item 11), Ms J Donaldson, Director of Human Resources (for item 10), Dr V Korzeniowska, Assistant Director (Quality and Standards) in Student and Academic Administration (for item 9) and Dr K Partington, Assistant Director, Student Services (for item 16)
Mr L Abraham (as an observer)

In attendance Ms C J Gamble

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

Welcome

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Vice-Chancellor explained that Professor Petts, who had taken up the role of Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) at the start of the calendar year, would deliver her presentation on research matters to the next meeting of Senate on 18 June 2014.

28 Obituary

The Vice-Chancellor announced with regret the death of:

Professor Peter de Groot, formerly Head of Physics and Astronomy: 10 January 2014.

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

29 Minutes of meeting held on 6 November 2013

The members approved the minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2013 for signing by the Vice-Chancellor.

30 Matters arising

30.1 Academic Reward and Recognition project (Minute 6.1)

The Vice-Chancellor reported that the introduction of the title 'Associate Professor' had been postponed from 1 January 2014 until 1 October 2014 to allow time for the practical implementation. This had been announced via SUSSED on 4 December 2013.

An update on the project would be given under Agendum 10 by the Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

30.2 Senate question time (Minute 9)

The Vice-Chancellor reported that:

- the question on student recruitment and the Provost's reply had been posted on the group site on 20 December 2013; and
- the document 'Principles to guide international partnerships and engagement' had been circulated on 17 December 2013.

30.3 Senate Nominating Committee (Minute 15)

The Vice-Chancellor stated that only two members of Senate had put themselves forward to join a Nominating Committee since the last meeting. The item would be discussed under Agendum 12.

31 Statement of Primary Responsibilities and delegated and related matters

Received A report which listed a number of proposed, minor revisions to Senate's Statement of Primary Responsibilities and delegated and related matters for 2013/14, together with a copy of the Statement.

Resolved That the amendments to the Statement of Primary Responsibilities and delegated and related matters for 2013/14 be approved and the content of the document be noted.

32 Vice-Chancellor's report and University Executive Group (UEG) discussions

Received The Vice-Chancellor's report on recent activities, together with a summary of University Executive Group (UEG) discussions and an overview of the University's submission to the Research Excellence Framework, 2014.

The Vice-Chancellor drew attention to a number of the items in his report, including:

- The announcements in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement about new student places for 2014/15 and the removal of the cap on student numbers (SNC) from 2015/16. These developments would further change the dynamics of the sector.

In respect of 2014/15, those universities which had over-recruited in 2013/14 would have their student number cap increased by 3% and all universities would be given the flexibility to over-recruit on their SNC number by a further 6%. Based on this information, the University would be able to recruit up to 1256 students with 'A' level grades below the threshold level of ABB.
- The statement in the annual grant letter from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills to the Higher Education Funding Council for England that it should protect high cost subjects, including STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics).
- The number of applications from prospective Home/EU students for 2014/15 was 3% higher than at the same point in the previous year; total overseas undergraduate applications were lower while postgraduate applications for taught programmes from Home/EU students were higher than for 2013/14.
- The Vice-Chancellor highlighted an error in the update on major projects that was provided in his report: the section on the Halls of Residence should state that the new Chamberlain Hall

project had been resumed after the project had received approval from Council, and not Senate, as was stated in the report.

- National Physical Laboratory. The Vice-Chancellor stated that he would present a update to Senate at its meeting in June 2014 on developments in relation to NPL. It was a potentially exciting engagement with an internationally well-regarded organization.
- Under the list of appointments of senior staff, the Vice-Chancellor announced that Dr Russell Bentley had been appointed as an Assistant Pro Vice-Chancellor from 1 February 2014 for a period of three years.

Noted The report, the summary of UEG discussions and the appendix on the University's submission to the Research Excellence Framework, 2014.

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

Received A report from the President of the Students' Union on the Union's recent activities.

Mr Gilani, the President of the Union, presented his report to Senate, drawing attention to:

- Developing the student facilities. The Students' Union had redrafted its Master Plan building brief, identifying key priorities for enhancement of the social space which including catering facilities, rehearsal and performance spaces for arts groups and work space for enterprise students, campaigners and volunteers.
- The agreement regarding the setting of fees for international students from 2015/16.
- A selection of the events listed under the heading 'Student success stories', in particular the efforts of Raise and Give (RAG) to collect over £20,000 for various charities, and the achievements of the Union's dance groups at a recent competition held at the University.
- Mr Gilani highlighted the preparations that were under way to elect the new sabbatical team.

Noted The report from the President of the Students' Union.

34 **Senate question time**

The Vice-Chancellor reported that he had not received any written questions. No questions were offered from the floor.

35 **Quality Assurance Agency's Higher Education Review: Update**

Received A presentation given by Dr Korzeniowska, Assistant Director (Quality and Standards) in Student and Academic Administration, on the Higher Education Review which would commence on 2 February 2015.

Dr Korzeniowska presented her overview under the following headings:

- Timeline. An extraordinary meeting of Senate would be arranged to be held in October 2014 to consider and approve the Self-Evaluation Document which would be presented in draft to Senate's next meeting.
- Priorities and risks.
- Preparations. The detailed mapping exercise of the University's Quality Monitoring Framework to the QAA's Quality Code had commenced last year. Priorities and actions had been identified. A writing group had been set up to prepare the first draft of the Self-Evaluation Document and its work would be examined by a critiquing group. Regular meetings were taking place with the Students' Union. Mock panels would meet in January 2015 to help with the final preparations for the Higher Education Review.

The Vice-Chancellor thanked Dr Korzeniowska for the presentation. He invited Senators to relay the headline statements made in the presentation to their colleagues and underlined the importance of Senate's role in quality assurance on behalf of the University, and its specific role in the development

and approval of the Self-Evaluation Document which would be submitted to the Quality Assurance Agency on 10 November 2014.

Noted The content of the presentation and the timetable for discussing the Self-Evaluation Document at Senate in June and October 2014.

36 Academic Reward and Recognition project

Received An update on the Academic Reward and Recognition project, presented by the Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

The Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor introduced the activities undertaken in the third phase of the project, the implementation phase. The University Executive Group had endorsed the Level 7 ERE pay proposals, the removal of the Level 6 Higher Responsibility Zone, and the extension of the title 'Professorial Fellow' to include the current 'Director of Education/Research/Enterprise', specifying the area of eminence in the title. He highlighted the details of the proposals:

Level 7 pay proposals

- A new level 7 pay scale with revised professorial bands, moving from four bands to three, the introduction of Personal Value Supplements, and revised criteria for progression which would be determined by performance relative to expectations. It had been acknowledged that the current performance measures were difficult to convert into appropriate pay progression. The proposals would be effective from April 2016 for the biennial professorial pay round.

Removal of Level 6 Higher Responsibility Zone (HRZ)

- The HRZ would be replaced with a Responsibility Allowance. The proposals were aimed at creating a clear break between the top of level 6 and the bottom of level 7. They were subject to consultation with representatives of the University and College Union. It was intended that a transitional period would be introduced.

Level 7 'Director of' title replacement

- The title 'Professorial Fellow' would be used to recognize an individual's eminence, specifying whether it was in the area of education, research or enterprise, in those cases where the criteria of a balanced academic profile were not applicable, for example, Professorial Fellow in Education.

The Vice-Chancellor thanked all those who had been involved in the work of the project. The proposals offered a more transparent and equitable system of recognition and reward, building in a clearer alignment between achievement and progression.

In discussion, a number of points and observations were made:

- In the new table of performance measures, the majority of academic staff would be expected to fall in box 3 (expectations fully met). The higher the grading of an individual, the greater the expectation of achievement, for example, in Band C – the highest band – there were no allotted increments for fully meeting the expectations of the role. (The majority of the professoriate would fall in Bands A and B while the small number of Zone 4 professors would be placed in Band C.) In drawing up the proposals, the working group had focused on incorporating progression opportunities for those in Band A and B as a reward for exceptional performance.
- The importance of the process of the personal performance and development review to appraise individuals was underlined. The Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor stated that a clear exposition was required to establish across the disciplines the criteria for fulfilling and exceeding expectations listed in the performance table. Those carrying out appraisals would need to work with their Head of academic unit to establish appropriate levels of expected performance. Further support and training in this area would be provided.
- The Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor welcomed a suggestion to introduce a report to Senate on the process; this would provide an opportunity to consider the benchmark distribution outlined in the report and strengthen the transparency of the process. The Vice-Chancellor supported the proposal for such a report and added that the process was backed already by a

periodic report to the Council on the outcome of the professorial promotions round from the Senior Salaries Committee which was scrutinized annually.

Resolved That the Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor arrange for an annual report to be presented to Senate on the Level 7 pay progression process at the appropriate point in the academic year and that the information should include a break down according to gender.

Noted The content of the presentation from the Provost and Vice-Chancellor.

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

37 **Update on the University Strategy**

Received A presentation given by the Director of Strategy and Planning on the University Strategy.

Mr Chisnall presented an update on the University Strategy which described the work going on across the University to develop the Strategy. He drew attention to:

- The support for the headline mission, vision and value statements.
- The internal communications approach to raise awareness and the focused communication within Faculties and Professional Services.
- The development of the areas of distinction: protecting and enhancing further world-class research activities; building on interdisciplinary research and offering students unique opportunities to engage in interdisciplinary learning; developing further the flexibility of curriculum choice; and building on the leadership in enterprise to optimize the positive and beneficial impact of the University's activities on the wider world.
- The pace of the University's globalisation plans would be accelerated. The Business School would be instrumental in achieving an increase in the number of international students studying at the University. Expansion of the activities at the Malaysia campus was also planned. International collaborations and partnerships in research and education would be promoted and supported.
- The University's economy would be strengthened by increasing Home/EU undergraduate numbers, attracting the most able of students. Opportunities for acquisitions that were considered to be compatible with the Strategy would be explored. The efficiency of the academic and support services would be examined with a view to improving operational effectiveness.
- The milestones for 2020 included a global student population of 30,000 and the completion of various major investments in the estate such as the Boldrewood campus, the planned Cancer Immunology Building, the Business School and new facilities for learning, teaching and social activities.
- The Strategy Vision would be presented to Council at its meeting on 19 March 2014, followed by the Strategy Plan in July 2014.

During the discussion of the Strategy Vision, a number of questions and comments were offered:

- In respect of possible acquisitions, would merging with another higher education institution be feasible? The Vice-Chancellor observed that due regard would have to be given in the first instance as to whether any potential merger was compatible with the Strategy. He favoured an open-minded approach to looking at whatever opportunities might present themselves then analysing and judging each case on its merits.
- In response to a question about the plans for developing the Business School, the Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor stated that the refurbishment of existing accommodation should provide a sufficient number of seminar rooms and offices by October 2014. The Vice-Chancellor suggested that the subject of large lecture theatres be discussed separately outside the meeting because these were detailed Estate matters.

- Regarding the plans for the development of learning, teaching and social facilities, the Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor said that, initially, the University Executive Group would look at the detail of the proposals and consider how they related to the current provision of facilities in the Library and the Students' Union. The issue of social space for staff would be considered in parallel.

The VC concluded the discussion, thanking members for their views. He reminded Senators of the SharePoint site set up to hold information on the development of the Strategy which also provided links to a frequently asked questions document where additional questions could be posted (<https://groupsite.soton.ac.uk/Administration/University-Strategy/Pages/Home.aspx>).

Noted The presentation on the University Strategy.

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

38 Senate members on Council

Received A report on the appointment of Senate members to Council, dated 20 February 2014, presented by the Vice-Chancellor.

The Vice-Chancellor encouraged Senators to volunteer to join the Nominating Committee to consider expressions of interest from members of Senate to serve on the Council from 1 August 2014. At least one member should join the two individuals who had already indicated that they would be willing to form a Nominating Committee (Dr Gobbi and Dr Gravell). The Vice-Chancellor stated that he would prefer to have four individuals on the Committee and hoped two more Senators would put themselves forward. The Nominating Committee's recommendations would be presented to Senate for endorsement at its meeting on 18 June 2014.

- Resolved**
- (i) That Senators inform the Vice-Chancellor whether they would like to join the Nominating Committee by 12 March 2014 at the latest, and if no volunteers stepped forward, the Vice-Chancellor would seek Senate's agreement to nominate (a) Senator(s) to join the group.
 - (ii) That a call for nominations from Senators to serve on the governing body be circulated on behalf of the Registrar by mid-March, seeking expressions of interest by the beginning of May 2014.

Noted The timetable for reporting Nominating Committee's recommendations to Senate at its meeting on 18 June 2014.

39 Academic Quality and Standards Committee

Received A covering report which highlighted the items brought forward by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee for endorsement by Senate, and listed others of particular interest, dated 21 February 2014, prepared on behalf of the Chair of the Committee, Pro Vice-Chancellor Neill.

Before presenting the individual reports, Pro Vice-Chancellor Neill summarized the items of business that the Committee had considered over the last three months. The majority of them were part of the review of the University's Quality Monitoring and Enhancement framework, itemized in the covering report.

39.1 Report from the meeting held on 20 November 2013

Received A report from the meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee, held on 20 November 2013, presented by the Chair of the Committee, Pro Vice-Chancellor Neill.

Noted The discussions, and decisions, recorded in the report from the meeting of the Academic Standards Committee.

39.2 Report from the meeting held on 11 December 2013

Received A report from the meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee, held on 11 December 2013, presented by Pro Vice-Chancellor Neill.

Pro Vice-Chancellor Neil drew attention to Item 4 which concerned minor revisions to Ordinance 7 (Admission, Examinations and Awards). They had been brought forward to reflect changes in terminology and adjustments to some of the processes in respect of external examiners and Board of Examinations. They were presented to Senate for endorsement in line with the requirements of Article 19 of the University's Charter.

Resolved (i) That the amendments to Ordinance 7, set out in the Appendix to Agendum 14.2, be endorsed and submitted to Council for approval at its meeting on 19 March 2014.

Noted The discussions, and decisions, recorded in the report from the meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee.

39.3 **Report from the meeting held on 29 January 2014**

Received A report from the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee, held on 29 January 2014, presented by Pro Vice-Chancellor Neill.

In response to an observation about the low number of complaints received by Office of the Independent Adjudicator (Appendix to Item 3) about the University compared with institutions in the same band, the Registrar was pleased to state that since the revision of the procedures in place to handle student complaints and appeals, the University had been cited as an exemplar in the sector.

Noted The discussions, and decisions, recorded in the report from the meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee.

40 **Student discipline: Annual report**

Received The annual report on Student Discipline for the academic year 2012/13, presented by Pro Vice-Chancellor Spearing.

Pro Vice-Chancellor Spearing drew attention to the main headlines in the report which provided an overview of the breaches of the University's Discipline Regulations, together with the accompanying statistics. He outlined the plans to bring forward revisions to the Student Discipline regulations; the intention was to present them to Senate in June 2014 through the Academic Quality and Standards Committee.

Noted The content of the annual report on Student Discipline, in particular, the statement that the total number of cases at both Faculty and University level had fallen by 33% from 2011/12 to 2012/13, and the timetable for presenting amendments to the Student Discipline Regulations.

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

The Vice-Chancellor reported that, on the recommendation of the Dean of the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, he had approved the termination of an external examiner's contract on 16 December 2013. The external examiner in question had failed to carry out the requirements of the role. The decision had been taken in accordance with the policy and procedures in respect of the appointment, role and responsibilities of external examiners for taught programmes.

43 **Date of next meeting**

The Vice-Chancellor confirmed the date of the next scheduled meeting of Senate: 18 June 2014. A drinks reception would be held in the Senate Room immediately after the meeting.

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