University of Reading

Senate

18/01 A meeting of the Senate was held in Room G06, Chancellor's Building, on Wednesday 7 March 2018 at 2.15 pm.

Present:

The Vice-Chancellor

Professor Matthew Almond
Professor Maarten Ambaum
Dr Cindy Becker
Professor Dianne Berry
Professor John Board
Dr Nick Branch
Dr Sarah Brewer
Professor Gavin Brooks
Professor Laurie Butler
Dr David Carter
Professor Ben Cosh
Professor Richard Frazier
Dr Carol Fuller
Professor Clare Furneaux
Professor Roger Gibbard
Professor Paul Glaister
Professor Chris Harty
Dr Rob Jackson
Professor Uma Kambhampati
Professor Orla Kennedy
Professor Elizabeth McCrum
Professor Gail Marshall
Professor Steve Mithen
Professor Julian Park
Mr Enzo Raimo
Mrs Edith Rigby
Professor Jane Setter
Professor Simon Sherratt
Dr Katja Strohfeldt
Professor Catherine Tissot
Professor Robert Van de Noort
Professor Adrian Williams
Professor Parveen Yaqoob
Professor Dominik Zaum
The University Secretary

Students:
Leen Alnajjab
Charlotte O'Leary
Rose Lennon
Tristan Spencer
Ed White

Thomas Lee
Dimitra Louca
Harrison Ward
Kyle Smith

In attendance:
Ms Louise Sharman
Mr Keith Swanson (Minute 18/09)
Ms Wanda Tejada (Minute 18/04)

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed the Senate.

The Vice-Chancellor paid tribute to the following who had died since the last meeting of the Senate:

Mr Jim Brennan – Lecturer in Food Engineering from 1966, Senior Lecturer from 1978.

Dr Andrew Parker - member of the academic staff from 1972, Principal Research Fellow in 1984, Associate Director of the Postgraduate Research Institute for

Sedimentology (PRIS) in 1988, Head of PRIS in 1994, Senior Lecturer in 2001. He retired in 2016.

Mr Bryan Parkes – Course Tutor in the School of the Built Environment, Lecturer from 2010, he retired in 2015.

Mrs Betty Root, MBE – Sessional Lecturer in Education from 1970, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Arts and Humanities in Education and Director of the Reading and Language Information Centre. She retired in 1990, then devoted many years as a Senior Invigilator.

Mr Chris Wagstaff – Lecturer in the Department of Italian, senior Lecturer in 1993, Head of Department between 2008 and 2010, Associate Professor in 2013. He retired in 2014.

18/02 The Minutes (17/50 - 17/67) of the meeting held on 8 November 2017 were approved.

Items for Presentation and Discussion

18/03 Student Number Growth and the Student Experience (Item 4)

The Senate considered papers, prepared by Pro-Vice-Chancellors (Professors Brooks and Van de Noort), in respect of student number growth and the student experience. The RUSU Education Officer, in conjunction with Professor Julian Park, led a presentation highlighting key concerns in regard to the impact of student number growth, as follows:

Study Space – Whilst progress had been made through the development of the study space map, extended opening hours and study space in halls, there were opportunities for further developments in lobbies, building 'dead spaces' and RUSU Study 2. Consideration needed to be given to ensuring that high quality study space was available across the whole campus, which could mean repurposing space used for other activities. In respect of teaching space, it was suggested that further space could be unlocked through additional lecture theatre refurbishment and utilising School space and London Road more effectively. Flexible space was desirable in order change formats and layouts of rooms quickly and easily. Consideration would also need to be given to expanding other facilities such as the Sports Park, sports pitches, and IT facilities.

Accommodation – lack of availability of accommodation in both halls and the private sector was a significant concern for students. It was suggested that consideration should be given to accelerating Bridges 2 and the student hotel, working with local residents to find a solution. The University needed to keep in mind the type of accommodation that students would require in the future, not just now.

Support – student number growth had increased pressure on a number of the

professional functions supporting students. There was also a concern that by accepting students with lower tariff grades, increased pressure was being placed on study advice and student wellbeing services; this was an issue that was being seen across the sector. It was suggested that consideration should be given to the type of university Reading wanted to be and what skill set staff would require in the future.

Member of the Senate were asked to comment on the issues raised, the following points were made:

- Different cohorts of students experienced different space pressures, for example study space was more of an issue for undergraduate students, and postgraduate students had more concerns over the types of accommodation available. These differing needs made prioritisation difficult.
- In planning student number growth, the University should plan infrastructure improvements in parallel.
- Decentralisation to local areas, groups, Schools could help rather than always thinking that a central solution was needed.
- The quality and size of the student intake impacted on staff time. Staff were under a number of pressures to deliver on teaching, research, administration, personal development, as well as support students. It was hoped that the proposals for changes to the Personal Tutor system and to the welfare team would bring about further improvements. It was possible that Teaching Fellows could be used to free up some time for staff.
- The timetable could be much improved to reduce bespoke timetables and to better utilise space.
- The University's campuses should be better integrated; including the University of Reading Malaysia.
- All lecture theatres, teaching spaces and IT facilities should have a minimum standard and feel similar across campus.
- Online provision could be improved
- There was a need to focus on the experience for current students.

The Senate thanked Mr White and Professor Park for leading the presentation and discussion.

18/04 REF 2021 (Item 5)

The Senate considered a paper, prepared by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Professor Mithen), in respect of the Research Excellence Framework 2021 (REF) which outlined a summary of preparations and consideration of major risks. Professor Maarten Ambaum and Professor Gail Marshal led the presentation. Observations were noted as follows:

- REF 2021 would provide a research quality assessment of the University in comparison to the sector. It would define the research standing of the University to 2026 and would determine the level of direct (QR) and indirect research income for at least six years, but possibly longer.
- There were implications for the University in relation to future research,

reputation, opportunities, funding, recruitment and retention of staff, recruitment of students, as well as the overall character of the University.
- The preparations for the REF occurred at a time when the University was having to sustain high quality teaching, enhance the student experience, increase student recruitment and seek efficiency measures.
- [Redacted, section 43]
- It had been confirmed that: the weight of the outputs (60%), impact (25%), and environment (15%); all staff with significant responsibility for research would be returned to the REF; rather than a collection of individual staff outputs Units would submit a portfolio of outputs generated by Unit; there was a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 5 outputs per member of staff in the Unit.
- A REF 2021 Planning Group had been established to oversee the University preparations; the University's submission would be structured through three broad stages running from 2018 to 2020.
- [Redacted, section 43]

Member of the Senate were asked to comment on the issues raised, the following points were made:

- Consideration needed to be given to contractual arrangements; T&R staff should meet the criteria for both elements. TI contracts should not be seen as 'refuges' for the research-inactive.
- There would be difficult performance discussions for staff not delivering research.
- There were questions in regard to the University's structures – themes went laterally, Units of Assessment went vertically.
- Given that teaching pressures were more immediate and time critical, there was a risk that preparations for the REF might not be given priority.
- The University should perhaps consider whether to have teaching-intensive and research-intensive departments.
- Teaching Fellows could be used in a more strategic way to free up time for research.
- Students valued the links between teaching and research.
- There was acceptance of the heterogeneity that already existed within the University; consideration instead should be given to how resource was best deployed.
- Selection of outputs would be a time consuming process; the process for selection would need to be fair and transparent.
- The drive to excellence across all areas placed enormous pressures on individual staff, and potentially caused division when staff were required to focus on one area.

The Board thanked Professor Ambaum and Professor Marshall for leading this item.

18/05 Report of the Vice-Chancellor (Item 6)

The Vice-Chancellor addressed the Senate, referring in particular to:

a) Staffing matters – Senate congratulated Professor Parveen Yaqoob and Professor Dominik Zaum who had been appointed as Pro-Vice-Chancellors for Research and Innovation with effect from 1 August 2018, and Professor Susan Breau and Professor Julian Park who had be reappointed as Head of the School of Law and Head of the School of Agriculture, Policy and Development respectively. The Senate also congratulated Professor Rajneesh Narula (Henley Business School) who had received an OBE and Professor Helen Roy (Visiting Professor) an MBE.

b) Review of Tertiary Education Funding – Four headline priorities had been published for the review: choice and competition across a joined-up post 18 education and training sector; a system that was accessible to all; delivering the skills needed; value for money for graduates and tax payers. It was clear that the review would not reintroduce a cap on student numbers. However, there was a commitment to review student maintenance, flexible learning and public understanding of student finance.

c) Brexit – In December 2017 the UK and EU reached an agreement on phase 1 of the Brexit negotiations. These outcomes were helpful as they appeared to secure the post-exit rights of EU university staff working in universities, and continued UK participation in existing EU programmes until end-dates in 2020. At this stage it was unclear when issues such as participation in Framework Programme 9 and the successor to Erasmus + would be discussed. A further priority was for the Department of Education to confirm the fee status and loan eligibility of EU students starting a course in 2019/20.

d) HEPI/Kaplan report on the benefits of international students – A recent study undertaken by London Economics for the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) and Kaplan showed that the benefits of international students were ten times greater than the costs and were worth £310 per UK resident.

e) The Office for Students (OfS) and United Kingdom Research and Innovation (UKRI) - These two bodies, created as a result of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017, were now operating in 'shadow' form. Together, they would effectively take over the functions of the Higher Education Council for England (HEFCE) which would be abolished at the end of March 2018. With the bodies not due to take up their responsibilities formally until 1 April 2018, the University's immediate priority in relation to OfS was to gain first-stage recognition as a university that could sit on the Register of Approved Providers. Much of the information required for registration was already in existence. However, some elements were new.

f) Industrial Strategy - The Industrial Strategy was published late last year and, as anticipated, it presented some important opportunities for universities. The publication of the Industrial Strategy coincided with an announcement that UK Research and Innovation budgets would deliver a real-terms increase of 20% between 2015-16 and 2019-20. This included increased support for quality-related research through Research England and increased funding for Innovate UK for grants to carry out innovation investment pilots. In addition, the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) would increase and reach a total of £250m a year by 2020-21. Further opportunities included £300m which would be allocated over the next three years to allow collaboration and the flow of people between industry

and academia – ranging from Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs), PhD programmes, awards to support rising stars and the top talent from the UK and overseas.

g) Higher education research in facts and figures - In February 2018, Universities UK published '*Higher education research in facts and figures*' which provided an overview of the quality of research, impact, international collaboration, students and staff, and finance at UK universities.

h) [Redacted, section 43]

i) Capital Projects - *Library:* The works were progressing well with cladding complete to three sides and interior work progressing well. The café steelwork was complete with roofing. Asbestos finds continued to be costly and slowing overall progress. Landscaping around the Library would now accord with the new campus-wide design code and would require a planning amendment in due course. Programme review indicated completion in Q3 2019, according to plan. *Health and Life Sciences:* Contract negotiations with Balfour Beatty were complete, and the contracts had been signed. The contractors would come on site on 5 March 2018 and completion is due in the fourth quarter of 2019, after the start of the 2019/20 academic year. *St Patrick's Hall:* The proposal for a new St Patrick's Hall of Residence developed by the University and UPP was rejected by Reading Borough Council's (RBC) Planning Committee, despite having been recommended by RBC's planning officers. The University was currently assessing its options, which might include appealing the decision of the Planning Committee, resubmission of a proposal with fewer student rooms or developing alternative plans to address the existing shortage of student accommodation on and around the main campuses.

18/06 Office for Students (OfS) (Item 7)

The Senate received a paper, prepared by the University Secretary on the Office for Students (OfS). It was noted that all providers of Higher Education in England were required to register initially this year. Universities such as Reading, which start receiving applications for 2019-20 from this September, were required to register by 23 April 2018. Successful registration was required in order to be allowed to continue to offer education. There were further steps to full registration which had to be met by August 2019, and a report would be made to a future meeting of Senate and of Council on those.

Institutions were currently working under the draft registration requirements which were published in December. The final version of the registration requirements were published on 28 February 2018.

There were two types of initial registration conditions for existing providers. One type was where the OfS would draw on information already in the public domain or already submitted to HEFCE or HESA. This covers the conditions which relate to quality and standards, and the condition which relates to financial viability and resources. The University was not expecting any difficulty in meeting these conditions, and indeed had a positive Quality Assurance Agency Institutional

Review and positive annual responses from HEFCE on these matters. The second type of condition was where the University had to submit something new as part of the initial registration process, as follows:

- A condition which required submission of an Access and Participation Plan. Whilst the title was new, the University was used of course to submitting an annual Access Plan, overseen by Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor Brooks), each one of which had been approved by OFFA. It was expected that the requirements of the Access and Participation Plan would not be significantly different. Institutions had been promised more detail on the requirements of the Access and Participation Plan, but these have not yet been forthcoming.
- A conditions which required the University to have in place adequate and effective management and governance arrangements in order to provide the courses on offer, and to adhere to governing documents which must themselves be consistent with public interest principles. These principles included a requirement for the governing body to assure itself of value for money for students and taxpayers.
- A condition which required the University to demonstrate due regard to consumer law in developing policies and procedures governing contractual and other relationships with students. The University had done a lot of work in this area in recent years, having due regard to CMA guidance.
- A condition which required universities to have in place a student protection plan which sets out what actions would be taken to minimise any impact on the students' continuation of study should the provider discontinue the course, subject, discipline or exit the market completely. While the University has not had a formal plan in place, it has a consistent set of behaviours which it has adopted in the event of discontinuing course, subject or discipline.

18/07 Report of the University Executive Board (Item 8)

The Senate received a Report of the meetings of the University Executive Board held on 6, 13, 16, 20 and 27 November, 4 December 2017, 29 January, 5, 19 and 26 February 2018.

18/08 Report of the University Board for Teaching and Learning (Item 9 a)

The Senate received the Report of the meetings of the University Board for Teaching and Learning (UBTL) held on 31 October 2017, 4 December 2017, 10 January 2018, 29 January 2018 and 19 February 2018.

It was noted that UBTL received regular reports from a number of its Sub-Committees and other bodies, listed below. The Board's termly report to Senate included any matters raised by these groups and considered further by UBTL.

- University Programmes Board (UPB)
- Sub-Committee on the Delivery and Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (DELT)

- Sub-Committee on Student Experience and Employability (SCoSEE)
- School Boards for Teaching and Learning
- Teaching and Learning Strategy Board (TLSB)
- Committee on Postgraduate Research Studies
- TEF Steering Group
- UoRM.

It was noted that since UBTL's last report a number of policies had been introduced/revised, including:

- Guidance note on teaching during the working week
- Policy on Inclusive Practice in Teaching and Learning
- Online submission Protocols
- Policy on providing feedback to students on their performance
- Procedures for considering appeals of results
- Policy on and procedures relating to student academic engagement and fitness to study
- Student Academic Representation
- Code of Practice on Research Students
- Procedure for appeals against termination of registration resulting from non-submission of a thesis by the Maximum Registration Date
- Student Complaints Procedure

In regard to items for approval, the Senate approved:

a) in reference to item 2, Student experience, the future remit of UBTL and other committees, Senate approve proposed amendments to the name of UBTL, its terms of reference, amendments to the Sub-Committee on Student Experience and Employability, and the terms of reference of the Teaching and Learning Strategy Board (TLSB). Henceforth UBTL would be named the University Board for Teaching, Learning and Student Experience (UBTLSE) and consequently Schools Boards for Teaching and Learning and Student Experience (SBTLSE).
b) the recommendations arising out of the Personal Tutor System Project (item 3).
c) internal and external examiners for 2017/18 (item 4: Examiner Nominations).
d) the renewed Teaching and Learning Strategy (item 5: Teaching and Learning Strategy)

Member of the Senate sought assurance that appropriate time be set aside within UBTLSE to cover business, and that both the academic and non-academic student experience be given sufficient consideration.

18/09 Report of the University Board for Teaching and Learning – Teaching, learning and assessment in the context of industrial action (Item 9b)

The Senate considered a paper on 'Teaching, learning and assessment in the context of industrial action' relating to provisions in response to the industrial action.

It was noted that the current industrial action by the University and College Union might put at risk the University's ability to fulfil its obligations to students and to apply its normal procedures in respect of assessment.

The Senate considered a series of recommendations which sought to mitigate the risk, to minimise disruption to students' learning, and to ensure that the rigour of the University's assessment processes and the standard of its awards were maintained. Sections 2-7 and 12-13 of the paper outlined mitigating actions in respect of loss of teaching and issues relating to coursework, in-class tests, module marks, resits, and research degrees, and were approved by the University Board for Teaching and Learning (UBTL) at its meeting on 19 February 2018. These actions relate to the management of teaching, learning and assessment, and, where they related to assessment, were consistent with actions taken from time to time to address issues in individual student cases. Sections 8-11 made provision for variation in the University's classification procedures for undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes, progression procedures, and the quoracy of Examiners' meetings in the event that the University's academic provision was significantly disrupted by matters outwith the University's control. Given that these provisions related to the University's fundamental awarding, classification and progression processes, they required approval by the Senate. UBTL had given careful consideration to these provisions and the draft amendments to the Assessment Handbook, and commended them to Senate for approval.

The Senate approved the following recommendations:

a) Provisions for the publication of 'minimum' classifications on the basis of marks available and for delaying confirmation of the final classification until a full set of marks was available. These provisions would apply if the University was confident that a full set of marks would be available within a reasonably short period following the meetings of the University Awarding Board. Under these provisions, awards and classification would fully comply with the University's normal rules. This approach was adopted successfully during the AUT assessment boycott in 2006.

b) Draft amendments to relevant sections of the Assessment Handbook, which made provision for the variation of the normal awarding and classification rules in the event that the University's academic provision was significantly disrupted by matters outwith its control. These provisions would apply if there was no realistic prospect of a full set of marks being available within a reasonable period following the University Awarding Board. The provisions have a wider applicability than the current industrial action (for example, natural disaster, fire, and civil unrest).

c) Provisions which would allow students to progress to the next Part of their programme in the event that a full set of their marks was not available, provided that they had not evidently failed.

d) Provision for the variation of the quorum for Examiners' meetings.

In addition, the Senate authorised the Vice-Chancellor, as Chair of the Senate, to act on its behalf in approving the activation of these provisions in relevant circumstances.

Provisions in relation to the loss of teaching and issues relating to coursework, in-class tests, module marks, resits, and research degrees, approved by UBTL at its meeting on 19 February 2018, were in the process of being implemented, where necessary. Draft amendments to the sections of the Assessment Handbook would be effective immediately on their approval by the Senate. It was noted, however, that the draft amendments made provision for the variation of the awarding and classification, but that a further decision of the Senate (or the Vice-Chancellor on its behalf) would be required to activate these provisions in the relevant circumstances. In the event that the Senate (or the Vice-Chancellor on its behalf) activated these provisions, they would take immediate effect.

The Senate recorded its thanks to Mr Swanson for his work on this matter.

18/10 Report of the University Board for Research and Innovation (Item 10)

The Senate received and noted the report of the University Board for Research and Innovation held on 20 February 2018.

18/11 Report of the Global Engagement Strategy Board (Item 11)

The Senate received and noted the report of the Global Engagement Strategy Board held on 9 February 2018.

18/12 Admissions Update (Item 12)

The Senate received and noted an update on admissions as follows.

Undergraduate taught programmes:

- To date the University has received [redacted, section 43] Home/EU applications, an [redacted, section 43] on [redacted, section 43] this point last year and [redacted, section 43] overseas applications, a [redacted, section 43] application [redacted, section 43] on this point in 2017. Looking specifically at applications from the EU, [redacted, section 43] applications have been received so far representing an [redacted, section 43].
- Overall, at an institutional level, the [redacted, section 43] application total equated to a [redacted, section 43] as compared to February 2017.
- UCAS applications were currently [redacted, section 43].
- [Redacted, section 43]
- [redacted, section 43]
- The University had received [redacted, section 43] replies to undergraduate

offers. Of the replies received to date [redacted, section 43] have placed Reading as their firm choice and [redacted, section 43] as an insurance choice.

Postgraduate taught (full-time) programmes:

- [redacted, section 43]
- Of these, [redacted, section 43] Home/EU applications had been received this cycle as compared to [redacted, section 43] at the same point last year, a [redacted, section 43]. Overseas applications received to date totalled [redacted, section 43], as compared to [redacted, section 43] at the same point last year, a [redacted, section 43]
- The Admissions team had assessed and issued decisions on [redacted, section 43] of the applications received to date.

Postgraduate Research:

- Application volumes for PGR programmes for the 2018 cycle entry points total [redacted, section 43], which equates to an [redacted, section 43] as compared to this point last year.
- Of these, [redacted, section 43] Home/EU applications had been received this cycle as compared to [redacted, section 43] at the same point last year, a [redacted, section 43]. Overseas applications received to date total [redacted, section 43], as compared to [redacted, section 3] at the same point last year, [redacted, section 43].
- There had been a [redacted, section 43] in the volume of offers made but firm acceptances are showing [redacted, section 43] compared to this point last year.
- Decisions had been issued to [redacted, section 43] of the postgraduate research applications for 2018 entry received to date.

18/13 Report of the Student Appeals Committee (Item 14)

The Senate received the Report of the meeting of the Student Appeals Committee held on 2 November and 5 December 2017 and noted the outcomes of the Committee's decisions.

18/14 Report of the Joint Standing Committee of Council and Senate on Honorary Degrees (Item 15)

The Senate, for its part, approved the Report of the meeting of the Joint Standing Committee of Council and Senate on Honorary Degrees.

18/15 Retirement of Professors (Item 16 a)

The Senate approved under the provisions of Ordinance B7 the title of Professor Emeritus/Emerita be conferred upon the following with effect from the date indicated:

Professor Tony Downes (30.4.18)
Professor Graeme Stephens (31.3.18)

The Senate recorded its thanks to Professor Downes who was retiring at the end of April and wished him well in the future.

18/16 Other Retirements (Item 16 b)

The Senate approved that that the following be accorded the title of Honorary Fellow for a period of five years with effect from the date indicated:

Mr L. Woodley (20.11.17)
Dr S. Lee (29.12.17)
Mrs M. Maybank (31.12.17)
Mr J. Mitchell (8.1.18)
Dr S. Downing (21.11.2017)

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Student representatives withdrew from the remainder of the meeting

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RESERVED BUSINESS

18/17 The reserved minutes (17/68-17/69) of the meeting held on 8 November 2017 were approved.

18/18 Report of the Senate Standing Committee on Examination Results (Item 19 a)

[Redacted, section 40].

18/19 Reports of Examiners for Higher Degrees by thesis (Item 19 b)

The Senate approved recommendations for the award or otherwise of Higher Degrees.