

Senate

17/50 A meeting of the Senate was held in Room G06, Chancellor's Building, on Wednesday 8 November 2017 at 2.15 pm.

Present:

The Vice-Chancellor

Dr Cindy Becker
Dr Laura Bennett
Professor Dianne Berry
Professor Helen Bilton
Dr Ian Bland
Professor John Board
Dr Sarah Brewer
Professor Gavin Brooks
Dr David Carter
Dr Ann Chippindale
Dr John Creighton
Professor Clare Furneaux
Professor Roger Gibbard
Professor Ginny Gibson
Professor Roberta Gilchrist
Professor Paul Glaister
Professor Chris Harty
Dr Rebecca Harris
Dr Paul Hatcher
Professor Uma Kambhampati
Professor Orla Kennedy
Professor Eric Kindel
Professor Elizabeth McCrum
Professor Annalisa Marzano
Dr Emma Mayhew
Professor Steve Mithen
Dr Matthew Nicholls

Professor Julian Park
Professor Karla Pollmann
Mr Enzo Raimo
Professor Jane Setter
Professor Simon Sherratt
Dr Katja Strohfeldt
Professor Sue Walker
Professor Adrian Williams
Professor Parveen Yaqoob
The University Secretary

Students:

Leen Alnajjab
Charlotte O'Leary
Tristan Spencer
Ed White

Thomas Lee
Dimitra Louca
Harrison Ward
Kyle Smith

In attendance:

Ms Sam Foley
Ms Louise Sharman
Chee Wei Lim

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed the new RUSU Full-Time Officers and Student Representatives to the Senate, as well as new Heads of School and Senate representatives. The Vice-Chancellor also welcomed the President of the University of Reading Malaysia Students' Association who was visiting the University.

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

Dr Roy Snaydon – Assistant Lecturer in Agricultural Botany from August 1960,

Reader from 1977, Head of the Department of agriculture and Botany from 1982 to 1987. He retired in 1991.

Father Terrence Burke – Roman Catholic Chaplain from 1997 to 2006.

Emeritus Professor Christie Davies –Lecturer in Sociology in 1972, Senior Lecturer in 1975, Reader in 1981, Professor in 1984. Head of the Department of Sociology 1982, 1986 and 1990. He retired in 2002.

Professor Geoffrey Maynard – Reader in Economics in 1965, Professor in 1967, academic staff representative on Council 1971 to 1973.

Sir John Marsh – Assistant Agricultural Economist in 1956, Reader in 1971, Professor in 1984. Head of the Department from 1985 to 1988, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture and Food from 1986 to 1989.

Dr Bruce Nicholson – Lecturer in the Department of Physiology and Biochemistry. He retired in 1993.

Mr Roger Tayler – Assistant Lecturer in Agriculture in 1956, lecturer in 1958, Senior Tutor in 1968, Senior Lecturer in 1970. Director of Schools and Colleges Liaison from 1990. He retired in 1994.

17/51 The Minutes (17/20-17/46) of the meeting held on 29 June 2017 were approved.

17/52 Membership of the Senate 2017/18 (item 4)

The Senate received a list of its membership for the session 2017/18.

Items for Presentation and Discussion

17/53 Post Project Report on Academic Structures

It had been agreed by the Council in January 2017 that post project reviews would be undertaken on the University's major strategic initiatives 12-18 months after a project ends or at such point where benefits started to accrue. The first review to be completed was in regard to the changes of academic structure undertaken in 2015-16. The Senate received a copy of the review including the key findings. Professor Karla Pollmann and Professor Simon Sherratt led the discussion in regard to this item.

Professor Sherratt and Professor Pollmann had concluded from the report that an increasingly dynamic environment had necessitated academic restructuring in order to create a more dynamic and transparent decision making process, and that this seemed by and large to have been achieved. The Senate were asked to look forward and identify opportunities and actions for the future.

One of the key findings of the report was that research, and teaching and learning

(T&L) had been impacted differently with T&L still dealing with the fallout of a combination of changes taking place at the same time, including gaps in staffing. This could have been averted if a more coordinated approach to identify and manage the combined changes of both PAS and Academic Structures had been undertaken. Colleagues were asked for their views as to whether changes had been; comments were raised as follows:

- From a School Director of Teaching and Learning (SDTL) point of view the new academic structures had now bedded down. PAS, however, had generated a number of silos and there was a fragmentation of knowledge across the institution. This possibly was exacerbated by the loss of the Faculty structure.
- There was a lack of ownership in the new structure and a lack of understanding around where to go for different matters.
- One key item identified in the report was that PAS operated in a silo and Academic Structures operated in a silo. In the future the University needed to learn from this in managing changes.
- The simplification of the academic structures didn't adequately address the complex needs of the University's T&L arrangements.
- The loss of the Joint Faculties Office along with the huge staff changeover as part of PAS led to a significant loss in institutional knowledge that will take a while to rebuild.
- SDTLs were pleased to have clusters under Teaching and Learning Deans; it was important to recognise the importance of colleagues being able to support each other.
- Research and T&L are both core to the University and are inextricably integrated. The University needs more mechanisms to ensure integration. This did not mean recreating 'Deans' but perhaps more opportunities for Heads of School to meet.

A second point raised in the report was in regard to balancing University-wide decisions against decisions made for the benefit of individual Schools in the new model of autonomy and financial accountability. Comments were made as follows:

- Recent discussions in regard to PGR students and the contribution to the centre had shown that School operated very different models and benefitted in different ways, and that as such often a University-wide approach was not always ideal.
- Many Schools were keen to increase student numbers in order to improve their finances. However, this might not be feasible given the amount of space available in the University. Whose decision was it whether Schools could grow or needed to reach their financial targets in a different way?
- Teaching on shared modules was less attractive and this was further creating silos.

The Senate were asked for their thoughts on the Leadership Group and whether it was acting as a proxy for the Faculty structure.

- Heads of School find the Heads of School forum very helpful. It is an informal group and perhaps needs a formal mechanism in order to raise issues further up.
- It would be useful for Heads of School to meet collectively with Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor Van de Noort) and with UEB, possibly with an away day.
- Staff will attend the Leadership Group if they think it is worthwhile.
- The Leadership Group is too big for open conversation to happen; a solution might be to split the meeting into two with Heads of School, Teaching and Learning Deans, Research Deans, and Heads of Function meeting separately to discuss items relevant to each group, and then later coming together for a joint meeting.
- Consideration was being given elsewhere to the format of Leadership Group meetings.
- There was a lack of clarity around the purpose of the Leadership Group and how it fitted within the University's governance structure and key decision making committees

The Vice-Chancellor thanked the Senate for the discussion. The post project report on academic structures would now be submitted to the Council; comments raised by the Senate would be taken into account before a management response was made.

The Senate noted that further post project reviews would be submitted for its consideration in the future.

17/54 The Teaching and Learning Strategy (Item 6)

The Senate noted that the current Teaching and Learning Strategy 2013-18 was coming to the end of its current timeframe and the Teaching and Learning Strategy Board (TLSB) had embarked on a project to develop its next iteration. In developing a draft T&L Strategy TLSB had considered: the progress made against all four pillars of the current strategy; the need to align the strategy with University, Research, and Global Engagement strategies and the TEL vision; ongoing commitments to the Curriculum Framework and student learning experience and development; significant external policy developments. Given these factors it had been determined that a T&L strategy renewal (2018-2021) as opposed to a complete redesign was the appropriate approach at this stage. The Strategy was currently being consulted upon through a number of fora.

The Senate made the following comments:

- Senators welcomed the single page document format and its clarity and concision. There was also support for not completely redesigning the strategy and making significant changes at the current time.
- Given significant external changes (tuition fees, OfS, TEF subject level) it was suggested that the strategy needed to be able to flex accordingly.
- The document should overlap with the University's Strategy to 2026.

- T&L rooted in research was very much welcomed.
- The University might wish to think about how the simplified aims in the strategy would operate in practice.
- There was a view that most activities could be allocated against categories in the existing strategy and that in some ways it was clearer. The update document appeared wordier.
- Whilst innovation was welcomed there was a concern that existing traditional methods, that worked perfectly well, could be lost; innovation did not always have to mean new technology.
- The phrase ‘new type of learner’ could be replaced by ‘different pathways’
- It would be desirable to have a more explicit thread of working in partnership between the University and students. Effective communication and partnership was implied throughout but should be more explicitly recognised.
- Defining what T&L means at the University would be helpful in communicating the strategy, particularly to students.
- A broader Student Experience strategy would be welcomed, including more recognition of co-curricular and extra-curricular activity, as well as outward mobility as an enabler. These were an integral part of the student learning experience outside of the classroom. Participation in these activities helps to strengthen students’ employability but also their personal skills and attributes.
- The T&L strategy and the Student Experience should not operate in silos, instead they should be part of one continuum.
- It was a measure of success that sufficient progress had been made in regard to the staff elements in the strategy, and as such that it did not need to be included in the update.
- The enablers in the document needed to be in place first before the goals could be achieved.
- Does the document as set out help to lead, manage and deliver T&L priorities? Would Schools go in their own directions? Is it deliverable? By way of an example 50% of students have a bespoke timetable, operationally can the University deliver what it set out in the document.
- By 2021 this strategy should be fully embedded as business as usual
- Consideration would need to be given to how success and progress were measured.

17/55 Report of the Vice-Chancellor (Item 7)

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

- a) The Review of Funding in Higher Education recently announced.
- b) An economic impact analysis of the work of the University which would be conducted by Oxford Economics.
- c) Student finance – The earnings threshold for repaying student loans would increase from £21,000 to £25,000 with the upper threshold rising to £45,000. Interest rates had been lowered for graduates earning less than £45,000, interest of more than RPI would only apply when a graduate starts earning

over £25,000. Maximum tuition fees for full-time courses would remain at £9,250 in 2018-19; this would impact University finances and would need to be factored into planning.

- d) Brexit – The Prime Minister’s Florence speech put forward a call for a post-Brexit ‘implementation period’ of around two years after March 2019, during which time freedom of movement would still be in place. It was also announced that during the transition period the UK would honour commitments made during the period of EU membership; such a scenario might include access to and participation in Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+.
- e) The Office for Students (OfS) and United Kingdom Research and Innovation (UKRI) – A consultation had now opened on the new OfS-led Regulatory Framework. All universities would have to apply to be a new Register of Providers; for the University this would be in the ‘Approved (Fee Cap)’ category. Registration materials would need to be submitted no later than 30 April 2018 and would draw heavily on pre-existing information. The mandatory and risk-based conditions of registration would include those around quality and standards, student protection and value for money, access and participation, and financial sustainability. There would also be a set of governance conditions including those relating to electoral registration duty, the role of governing bodies, academic freedom, the Prevent duty, and remuneration. Universities would, in effect, have to cross a threshold to be registered; after initial registration, they would not be subject to annual review unless, on the basis of data or other concerns there was a reason for intervention.
- f) Access Agreement 2018-19 – The University’s Access Agreement for 2018-19 had now been finalised and approved by the Office for Fair Access. With no changes being announced in the fee cap, institutions are not expected to make changes to their approved 2018-19 Access Agreement.

Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor Brooks) addressed the Senate on a number of teaching and learning related matters, as follows:

- g) Teaching Excellence Framework – the University had received a Silver award in the 2017 TEF2 exercise; the award was valid for three years. The next iteration TEF3 was now open for new providers and existing providers who received a provisional award or an award that was lower than expected. Alongside TEF 3 HEFCE was now running a pilot for subject-Level TEF. The University Executive Board had agreed that the University should not enter into TEF3 or first year of subject-level pilots. For TEF3 and subject-level TEF metrics would be similar to those used for TEF2 (student satisfaction, non-continuation, and employment measures) except that NSS metrics would now be worth 50% of the weighting in TEF2 and DeLHE would be replaced by new Student Outcomes Data including salary income.
- h) Degree Grade Inflation – at the UUK conference in September 2017 the sector was challenged to manage long-term and short-term trends in grade inflation; it was suggested that there had been an average three-fold increase in the percentage of firsts awarded since the mid-1990s. In the last five years HESA figures showed the proportion of students gaining Firsts had increased more

than 40% with almost a quarter of students now securing a First and almost three-quarters a 2:1. The OfS would analyse and routinely publish annual data on degrees awarded at different classifications.

- i) UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment – the Quality Code established by the QAA in 2012 had become the definitive reference point for managing and protecting standards and quality in the sector. The Higher Education Research Act 2017 had established a co-regulatory model for academic standards in England including individual institutions, UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment, and the OfS. A consultation had now been issued on the Quality Code with a new code to be implemented by May 2019.

17/56 Update on the Medical School (Item 8)

The Senate received an oral update from Professor Mithen in respect of the Medical School. It was noted that the University Executive Board had taken the decision not to submit a bid for a medical school as part of the recent call for places.

The University remained fully committed to developing a Medical School in the future. Work would continue to build the project so that when the next call was announced the University was in a better position to bid.

The Health Strategy Group was continuing to meet and was working on a roadmap setting out actions that would need to be taken by the University and its partners.

17/57 Report of the University Executive Board (Item 9)

The Senate received a Report of the meetings of the University Executive Board held on 26 June, 10 July, 14 and 21 August, 4, 12, 18, 25 September, 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30 October 2017.

In particular the Senate noted that a Group had been established which had resolved a number of residual matters in relation to the Personal Titles process for 2017-18. All Schools had been briefed on the changes to the process.

In regard to the £1m post allocated to the Students' Union it was noted that proposals were being considered for further integration with London Road.

17/58 Report of the University Board for Teaching and Learning (Item 10)

The Senate received the Report of the meetings of the University Board for Teaching and Learning held between 11 July to 11 October 2017.

In regard to items for approval, the Senate approved:

- 1) The University's Annual Learning and Teaching Report for transmission to the Council

- 2) A draft amendment to Ordinance C4, I Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates, excluding Higher Doctorates' to reflect the removal of the Frameworks for Classification and Progression with effect from 1 January 2018.

17/59 Report of the University Board for Research and Innovation (Item 11)

The Senate noted that the University Board for Research and Innovation had not yet met in the term.

Professor Mithen gave an oral update to the Senate it was noted that:

- During September 2017 the funding bodies announced initial outcomes from consultation on REF 2021, building on the Stern Review in 2016. Broadly the framework would be aligned with the previous exercise but with some notable changes including the increase in the weighting for Impact from 20% to 25% of the assessment. There remained some significant decisions to be announced this term, including staff eligibility and the numbers of outputs and impact case studies to be submitted, and the approach to portability of research outputs.
- A formal REF Committee would be established reporting to UBRI, starting in January 2018.
- A call had now been issued for nominations for REF panel membership.
- The Government was set to consult on a new Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) to compare how effective universities were at business engagement and knowledge exchange. This was likely to include licensing, intellectual property, spin offs, start-ups, consultancy, and social enterprises. The Committee on Innovation and Knowledge Exchange remit was to ensure that the University realised the potential impact of its research through commercial, innovation and knowledge activities and would reflect further on the proposed KEF.

17/60 Report of the Global Engagement Strategy Board (Item 12)

The Senate noted that there was no formal report on this occasion.

REDCATED SEC 43

17/61 Review of student recruitment outturn for 2017 entry to taught programmes (Item 13)

The Senate received and noted a comparative review of year on year performance in student recruitment outturn in 2016 and 2017 across the University's UK campuses for undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision.

In regard to undergraduate programmes the Senate noted that:

- At the deadline for autumn enrolments at the end of teaching week 3, the University had enrolled 4551 new Undergraduate students REDACTED SEC 43

- In 2017, the University grew recruitment through Clearing and Adjustment
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In regard to postgraduate programmes the Senate noted that:

- At the deadline for autumn enrolments at the end of teaching week 3, the University had enrolled 2112 Postgraduate Taught (PGT) Full Time students
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17/62 Report of the Senate Standing Committee on Examination Results (Item 14)

The Senate received the Report of the meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Examination Results and noted the outcomes of the Committee's decisions.

17/63 Report of the Student Appeals Committee (Item 15)

The Senate received the Report of the meeting of the Student Appeals Committee held on 25 July 2017 and noted the outcomes of the Committee's decisions.

17/64 Other items (Item 16)

The Senate noted that the Vice-Chancellor had approved, on behalf of the Senate, the Policy on and procedures relating to extenuating circumstances taking effect from Autumn Term 2017.

The Senate approved the following appointments to committees and other bodies:

Personal Titles:

To reappoint Professor Matthew Almond and Professor Sue Walker to the University Personal Titles Committee for the academic session 2017/18.

Joint Standing Committee of the Council and the Senate on Honorary Degrees:

To appoint Professor John Board to the Joint Standing Committee of the Senate and the Council on Honorary Degrees to serve until 31 July 2020.

Arts Committee:

To reappoint Professor Robinson to the Arts Committee to serve until 31 July 2020.

To reappoint Professor Miskell to the Arts Committee to serve until 31 July 2020.

To reappoint Dr Garfield to the Arts Committee to serve until 31 July 2020.

Standing Committee on Examination Results:

To appoint Dr Louise Hague to the Standing Committee on Examination Results to serve until 31 July 2020.

To appoint Dr Mike Fry to the Standing Committee on Examination Results to serve until 31 July 2020.

To appoint Dr Andrew Bicknell to the Standing Committee on Examination Results to serve until 31 July 2020.

To appoint Dr Tim Lees to the Standing Committee on Examination Results to serve until 31 July 2020.

To appoint Dr Julie Cooper to the Standing Committee on Examination Results to serve until 31 July 2020.

Joint University/UCU Committee:

To appoint Dr Carol Fuller to the Joint University/UCU Committee to serve until 31 July 2020.

17/65 Retirement of Professors (Item 16 c)

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 Irene Mueller-Harvey (31.7.17)

Professor Françoise Le Saux (31.7.17)

Professor Grenville Astill (30.9.17)

Professor Ginny Gibson (31.12.17)

17/66 Other Retirements (Item 16 d)

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:

Mrs G. Longmuir (31.7.17)

Mrs C. Wardale (31.8.17)

Dr David Jukes (30.9.17)

17/67 Any other business

The Senate recorded its thanks to Professor Ginny Gibson for all her contributions to Senate and the wider University and wished her well in the future.

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Student representatives withdrew from the remainder of the meeting
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RESERVED BUSINESS

17/68 The reserved minutes (17/47-17/49) of the meeting held on 29 June 2017 were approved.

17/69 Reports of Examiners for Higher Degrees by thesis (Item 19)

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