

SENATE

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SENATE held on
10 NOVEMBER 2010**

- Present: Prof J Vinney (**Chair**)
Mr C Allen; Ms A Allerston; Ms M Barron; Prof M Bennett; Dr C Bond; Dr S Eccles; Mrs K Everett; Mr A James; Ms S Jeary; Ms J Jenkin (**Secretary**); Mr S Jukes; Mr P Kneller; Mr D Newell; Prof J Roach; Mr J Tarrant; Prof G Thomas; Dr K Vall; Mr D Willey; Dr K Wilkes; Ms J Woodcock.
- Observers: Prof P Cominos; Prof S Ersser; Prof B Gabrys.
- In attendance: Mr J Cooke (for Mr Horner); Ms N Kett (Policy & Committees Manager); Ms S Nairn; Mr G Rayment (Committee Clerk).
- Apologies: Mr J Andrews; Prof D Buhalis; Prof T Darvill; Prof S Deutsch; Mr T Horner; Ms Ko Leech; Prof P Lewis; Prof D Osselton; Prof B Richards; Prof T Sheppard; Prof R Vaughan; Prof A Webster.

1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SENATE HELD ON 9 JUNE 2010

The Minutes were approved as an accurate record. The Chair informed Senate that the confirmed non-confidential minutes would be published on the Portal.

1.1 Matters Arising

- 1.1.1 Minute 1.2.2 Dr Wilkes reported on this item as the Interim Chair of the Academic Standards Committee (ASC). The Committee was undertaking a review of the use of research students for teaching and the initial findings suggested that this may not be as common as anticipated. ASC would receive a final report at its meeting in December. **KW**
- 1.1.2 Minute 1.2.3: The Education Enhancement Committee was considering the issue of peer observation among teaching staff and would report back to Senate in due course. **GT**

2 EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS

- 2.1 The Chair provided a brief overview on key Government developments affecting the sector. The 'Browne Review' of higher education (HE) funding had been published on 12 October followed by the Government's response on 3 November. The 'Browne Review' included the recommendation that there be no cap on student fees, although the Government response had since indicated that this would not be the case. Rather the cap was expected to be raised to £9,000 and any fees charged in excess of £6,000 would attract a levy in the form of a mandatory contribution to a scholarship fund. The review had also proposed a relaxation of the rules applicable to student numbers although the Government response had been less clear on how this might be implemented.
- 2.2 Linked to the recommendations of the 'Browne Review' (although not officially) were the outcomes from the recent Comprehensive Spending Review which suggested large cuts would be made to teaching funding, possibly as much as 80%. It was expected that the highest cost courses would continue to receive funding. It was also anticipated

that proposals would be made to rationalise some of the public bodies working within the HE sector. The proposals would be subject to further discussion via the usual Parliamentary process.

- 2.3 Members noted that the proposals indicated a shift towards a 'free market' environment for HE and the University would need to define the added value it could provide and aim to have a distinctive market position. This strategic planning should include an emphasis on student experience in order to meet the requirements to be more customer focused. Senate noted the developments.

3. COMMITTEE MATTERS

3.1 Articles of Government and Senate Standing Orders

The Chair presented these documents to Senate as a matter of good practice to remind all members of the role and function of Senate, the main purpose being to advise the Vice-Chancellor. Senate noted the documents.

3.2 Committee Guidance

Ms Kett introduced the Guidance for Committee Members document. This was an abridged version of the full guidance document for Chairs, Secretaries and Clerks (available via the Portal, I: Drive and myBU). The document had been produced following a recommendation arising from the last review of the Senate Standing Orders and had been disseminated via a series of Continuing Professional Development sessions with relevant staff. Members were asked to note in particular the sections concerning legislation regarding the publication of information.

4. ELECTRONIC SENATE MEETINGS

- 4.1 Ms Kett presented this paper which set out proposals for alternative ways of dealing with routine Senate business, thus allowing more time for deliberation and debate in the meetings themselves. It was proposed that routine business be handled online using the 'confluence' system. Documents would be posted to the site for members' consideration and comment three weeks prior to the date of the 'live' meeting. Comments received would be reported to the Chair and where necessary any items requiring further debate would be placed on the agenda for the live meeting. Senate would receive a full report of the outcomes from the online Senate discussion.

- 4.2 It was agreed to trial the electronic Senate system for the next meeting in March 2011. All members would be offered training in how to use the confluence system. Ms Kett agreed to seek legal advice on any Freedom of Information implications arising from the posting of comments online.

NK

5. 2009-10 STRATEGIC REVIEW - SUMMARY

- 5.1. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) presented this paper which summarised the final outcomes from the ten strategic reviews arising from the Revised Strategic Plan. All reviews had been concluded apart from the review of the University's Regional Role and Profile which had been suspended pending the outcomes of developments affecting local and regional government and the Multi-Area Agreement. Senate would continue to receive reports on relevant actions arising from the recommendations of the various reviews. It was noted that the Strategic Plan would probably need to be revisited in broader terms as a result of recent Government developments.
- 5.2 Members discussed various issues relating to the Estates Strategy. These included the adequacy of Library facilities (it was noted that the Sir Michael Cobham Library is currently undergoing refurbishment which would lead to improvements for both

undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) students) and the development of the Lansdowne campus. It was suggested that estate developments should be subject to robust research and careful cost/benefit analysis.

6. ENHANCING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE AT BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY (BU)

6.1 Student Experience Strategy Programme Sponsors, Prof Roach and Ms Jenkin, opened the debate by giving a short presentation on progress to date on the development and implementation of the strategy to enhance the student experience (2010-2014). A Student Experience Working Group (SEWG) was formed to develop the strategy based on the vision for 2014 as defined by the SEWG. Implementation would be based around three themes: student voice; student journey and student communities and Groups had been formed to take forward these different aspects. The draft strategy had been endorsed by the University Leadership Team in June 2010 and Student Experience Champions had been appointed. A programme management structure had been defined and reported to the Change Management Board. Specific actions to deliver the Strategy included:

- Online access to employment and placement services;
- Extended induction and improved student communications;
- Rewarding extra-curricular achievements
- Enhancing student space at the Sir Michael Cobham Library;
- Student friendly timetables;
- Online assignment submission and assessment;
- Use of new online learning and teaching technologies;
- Feedback tools to measure student satisfaction.

6.2 Research had been undertaken to gather information on the current student experience at BU, including the use of a 'mystery shopper' student who was able to provide qualitative information on their experience. Data had also been gathered through surveys of PG students. Positive feedback had been received on placements and teaching staff. Areas for improvement included accommodation issues, timetabling, lecture protocols, induction and contact time. It was recognised that the data gathering had been limited to current students and that further research on the needs and expectations of future students would also be required. Senate was invited to give their views on the strategy and how to identify and tackle the big issues affecting student experience.

6.3 Senate received a video presentation from the Students' Union BU in which students gave their comments on the issues which they felt needed to be addressed to improve their experience at the University. In summary, these were:

- The need for adequate and appropriate contact time;
- Better lecture spaces with appropriate seating and facilities for all students;
- The need for teaching staff to have good communication skills;
- The retention of good teaching staff and achievement of a good balance between academic qualifications and teaching skills;
- Good Library facilities with adequate supplies of course materials;
- An efficient online timetable system;
- Environmental factors such as better air conditioning/heating systems and more economical use of these facilities;
- Deadlines for assignments can be short and sometimes coincide, putting additional pressure on the students.
- Any changes to courses should be carefully planned so that they do not disadvantage the student (for example, when courses are discontinued)
- Develop a single student engagement centre, bringing together all the sources of information and facilities for students into one place;
- Consider changes to fully utilise the estate available to students, in particular by bringing together the Students' Union and Sports BU facilities in Poole House.

- 6.4 Senate members welcomed the video presentation and were invited to give their views on this and the development of the student experience strategy. In summary, the key points were:
- Staff and students should be considered in tandem in order to improve the student experience and all staff should engage in 'academic citizenship'.
 - The ability of lecturers to get to know students well was often restricted due to cohort sizes.
 - The University would need to define its market position, for example by focusing on employability. Would changes to funding arrangements affect the demand for particular courses?
 - We need to have a good understanding of students' expectations in order to improve the quality of their experience.
 - We need communication strategies that meet students preferences, for example short message service (SMS) messaging, 'your voice' tab in myBU, the Student Experience Forum (currently being piloted in the School of Health and Social Care).
 - There is a need to clearly communicate our rationale for collecting data on the student experience.
 - There are specific issues for communicating with PG students. For example most are in full-time employment (so competing priorities) and tend not to use their BU accounts. Also we need to look at ways of enhancing the experience for part-time students and PhD supervision (for example pooling resources to provide group supervision, dealing with generic issues).
 - We need a more consistent protocol for lecture start and finish times, and a consistent policy for dealing with lateness.
 - The lack of note-taking facilities in Bournemouth House lecture theatres has been a long-standing issue which has yet to be resolved. A process should be defined for following-up such unresolved issues.
 - All staff should be encouraged to engage with the student experience strategy. It should not be viewed as simply a management-led initiative.
 - More consideration could be given to improved team working among teaching staff, for example to provide cover for absences. Such teams could include PhD expertise but also include non-doctoral teaching staff.
 - The IT strategy needs to provide the infrastructure to allow mobile technologies to be fully exploited.
 - The quality of teaching was enhanced by the inclusion of research experienced staff and staff with current professional experience.
- 6.5 Members broadly agreed that many of the points raised focused on operational details or 'hygiene factors' and that these were equally important to the quality of programmes in terms of the student experience. The Chair thanked members for their contributions to the debate and agreed that the points raised would be disseminated to the relevant working groups for consideration.

JJ

7. MATTERS RAISED BY MEMBERS

7.1 Issues raised by the Business School

The Chair responded to questions raised by staff in the Business School. He confirmed that the planned investment in new academic staff was on-track and appointments would be going ahead. In respect of the 'Newton Report's' recommendations, he confirmed that the University would continue to adhere to the strategy of Professorial appointments to Heads of Departments. He recognised that it was appropriate to have diversity of structures as indicated in the outcomes of the 'Riordan Review'. On the issue of the University's financial health, the Chair stated that there was absolutely no truth in the rumour that the University had been identified by the Higher Education Funding Council for England as being in a critical financial position.

7.2 *Online Assessments*

A process of online assessment was currently being piloted in two Schools. Questions raised concerning this process would be addressed as part of the review of the outcomes of those pilots.

8. MINUTES OF STANDING COMMITTEES

8.1 NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

17 September 2010

The minutes were noted. Senate agreed the use of Chair's action to approve the final recommendations from the review of the process for nominations for honorary awards.

8.2 RESEARCH & ENTERPRISE COMMITTEE

12 May 2010

8.3

28 October 2010

The minutes were noted.

8.4 RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

23 June 2010

The minutes were noted.

8.5 ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEE

8.5.1 21 July 2010

8.5.2 13 September 2010

8.5.3 19 October 2010

The minutes were noted.

8.6 EDUCATION ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

5 October 2010

The minutes were noted.

SCHOOL ACADEMIC BOARDS

The minutes of the following meetings were noted:

8.7 The School of Applied Sciences

19 May 2010

19 June 2010

21 July 2010

29 September 201

8.8 The Business School

27 October 2010

8.9 Design, Engineering & Computing

20 October 2010

8.10 Health & Social Care
4 November 2010

8.11 Media School
7 July 2010
27 October 2010

8.12 School of Tourism
5 May 2010
6 October 2010

Senate noted paper SEN/1011/24 setting out a response to concerns raised regarding the provision of IT support services through the Library.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 There was no other business.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 16 March 2011, 2.15pm Boardroom.

Committee Clerk
November 2010

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