

SENATE

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SENATE held on
16 OCTOBER 2009**

- Present: Prof P Curran (Chair)
Mr C Allen; Ms A Allerston; Ms M Barron; Dr C Bond; Dr S Eccles;
Mrs K Everett; Dr J Hanson; Mr A James; Ms S Jeary; Dr P
Johnstone; Prof T Lange; Mr D Newell; Prof N Petford; Prof J Roach;
Dr K Vall; Prof J Vinney; Dr K Wilkes; Mr D Willey; Ms J Woodcock
- Observers: Prof D Buhalis; Prof P Cominos; Prof T Darvill; Prof B Gabrys; Prof B
Hough; Prof P Lewis; Prof T Sheppard; Prof R Vaughan; Prof A
Webster
- In attendance: Mr G Rayment (Committee Clerk)
Dr G Daborn; Mr C Matthews (for Dr G Thomas); Dr T Watson (for
Mr S Jukes).
- Apologies: Prof M Bennett; Mr S Bellamy; Prof S Deutsch; Prof S Ersser; Mr S
Jukes; Mr P Kneller; Prof D Osselton; Mr J Ricci; Prof B Richards; Mr
N Richardson; Mr M Riordan; Mr J Tarrant; Mrs J Taylor; Dr G
Thomas;

1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SENATE HELD ON 17 JUNE 2009

The Minutes were recommended as an accurate record.

1.1 Matters Arising

- 1.1.1 The Chair informed Senate that, having been shortlisted as finalists for the THE Awards for University of the Year and Research Project of the Year, the University had finished as runners-up. Although it was disappointing not to win the award it was a great achievement to be shortlisted and the VC thanked all those involved.
- 1.1.2 Minute 1.3, Links to NHS Trusts: On the previously discussed proposals regarding NHS University Trusts (Dr Thomas' paper at previous meeting), the DVC informed Senate that Dorset Health Care Trust was to be assessed by a panel in accordance with the agreed protocols. A recommendation would then be made to the Vice-Chancellor as to whether they would be granted NHS University Trust status. Poole and Bournemouth HealthCare Trusts had also shown an interest and may apply to become University Trusts in the future.
- 1.1.3 Minute 5.1, Pay Negotiations: The Chair updated the Senate on Pay Negotiations and informed Senate that the UCU had rejected the pay offer of 0.5%.
- 1.1.4 Minute 8.9, Plagiarism Software: The E-Learning Enhancement Group had established a sub-group to consider this issue. They were expected to report in December 2009. Senate members requested the group to consider making 'Turnitin' software available in addition to 'Safe Assign'.

1.2 University Bookshop

The PVC (E&PP) informed Senate that there had been some delays in completing

the refurbished accommodation for the new bookshop. However, Blackwells bookshop was now established on campus in temporary accommodation and would be moving to the space vacated by Waterstones in Poole House over the next 2 to 3 weeks.

1.3 Assessment Feedback Project Group – Final Report

Janet Hanson briefly presented this paper for the information of Senate, following the previous discussion of the interim report. All outstanding issues had been discussed by the Academic Standards Committee at their July meeting. The final report would now be disseminated to all schools and the Chair asked that this be done through the School Academic Boards.

JH

2 UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

2.1 Review of Performance in 2008/9

2.1.1 The DVC presented the Review of Performance for 2008/9 and summarised the risks highlighted on the BU2012 Performance Test. This included four 'red' risks, two of which related to Enterprise Income (Senate were familiar with this issue) and two related to energy costs. The KPIs were to be reviewed in line with the Revised Strategic Plan currently in development.

2.1.2 It was queried whether the target for *the number of HESA Widening Participation benchmark targets achieved* should be 'amber' rather than 'green', but the DVC explained that this reflected the fact that the University was 'where it planned to be' in terms of these targets. It was acknowledged, however, that achieving the planned trajectory over the next three years could be challenging. A Fair Access agreement had recently been finalised which would help to support these targets.

2.1.3. Senators discussed the gender targets included in the report (both rated 'amber'). It was noted that monitoring of these targets had improved although it was difficult to influence them. Further work to achieve these targets would be challenging.

2.1.4 On the targets relating to energy costs (both rated 'red') it was noted that much of the reason for this was the rapid rise in fuel prices which was outside the University's control. Melbury House and the EBC in particular were both powered largely by electricity and attracted high energy costs. In future, HEFCE may link funding to carbon emissions.

2.2 Revised Strategic Plan 2009/10 to 2013/14

The DVC introduced this paper and highlighted the priority areas which had been identified for the revised strategic plan. It was suggested that 'Estates' should be a priority area rather than just an 'area to maintain' given the desire to develop this and increase space per student ratios. The DVC explained that the Estates and ICT Strategy was in the process of being developed, however, improvements to estates potentially required a lot of capital – hence the strategic aim of maintaining the quality of estates rather than more active development. It was also suggested that 'Public media profile' might be replaced as a priority by 'Institutional Reputation' as the latter encompassed a wider range of activity.

2.3 Update on new lecture theatre

The PVC(E&PP) said that work would commence on the new Kimmeridge House development in January 2010 and it would be ready for use in January 2011. The building would have a high specification in terms of environmental sustainability as the University had greater control of these aspects of the project (unlike some other buildings which were leased).

2.4 Executive Business School

The DVC said that the EBC had officially opened on 24th September 2009 and staff and students were now using the building. The DVC, therefore, had completed his role as project leader and any future issues regarding the EBC would fall within the remit of the Dean of the Business School. Prof Lange added that positive feedback had been received from the launch events and no issues of student dissatisfaction had been reported. Student numbers fell slightly below plan, particularly for part-time students, but this was possibly the result of the current economic climate. It was agreed that the Executive Business School need no longer be a standing item on Senate agendas and Prof Lange thanked all those involved for the progress made to date.

2.5 Strategic Review of Academic Coherence

Of the three Working Groups formed following the 'Newton report', The DoHR's Group had made most progress and had circulated its recommendations for comment. The PVC(E&PP)'s Group was meeting regularly to look at Business and Management issues including Research & Enterprise performance and staff qualifications. The PVC(R&E)'s Group was focusing largely on STEM subjects, particularly Applied Science, and both were aiming to report in December.

3. REVIEW OF SENATE STANDING ORDERS

3.1 The PVC(E&PP) introduced this paper which set out the results of a 'light touch' review of the Senate Standing Orders which had been mainly updated to take account of changes such as the Professional Services Review. The Terms of Reference for Partnership Boards had been amended more extensively with the aim of giving them more power to drive change. A longer term review of the document would take place next year.

3.2 It was noted that the membership for School Research & Enterprise Committees should include all Professors as well as Associate Professors. Also, the membership of the Student Experience Committee should be amended to include people who had more day-to-day contact with students. This might take the form of one member per School (Nominated by the Dean). The document was recommended subject to these changes.

Clerk

4. BU RESEARCH ETHICS CODE OF PRACTICE

4.1. Dr Johnstone introduced this document which had been in preparation for over a year and had been through many iterations. Corrina Dickson was thanked for her work in pulling together the document and it was commended to the Senate for approval.

4.2 The Senate welcomed the document but expressed concern about the section on Data Storage (page 13). It was felt that these requirements could prove overly burdensome for some projects and form a barrier to achievement of the University's Enterprise targets. Dr Johnstone explained that this section had to match insurance requirements. The document was agreed and a further meeting will take place to discuss the practical aspects of implementing the Data Storage Requirements.

5. 2009/10 STUDENT NUMBERS

5.1 The Chair explained that efforts had been made to control student numbers following the cap imposed by HEFCE. The University had 'over-recruited' having planned to increase numbers by 400 places on 2008/9, although these offers had been made prior to the introduction of the cap on numbers. As a result the

University has exceeded its maximum limit by between 100 and 200 Undergraduate student places. For Postgraduate students, numbers of Home/EU students had increased, while International student recruitment had fallen slightly.

- 5.2 It was noted that the current situation created challenges for Partner Institution recruitment, as they could no longer rely on the clearing process to fill courses. It was proposed to review this year, with stronger management of PI's academic portfolios and cohort sizes, and a greater focus on Foundation Courses. Specifically, it was proposed that a minimum number of 15 students per unit should be a requirement to ensure a high quality higher education learning experience and that this should be reflected in course validation requirements. It was also proposed that the main focus of any future PI courses should be at FD level, and only very exceptionally at degree level and none at masters level. The PVC(E&PP) would be meeting with all Principals of PIs to consider strengthening provision and establishing ongoing 'health check' arrangements. Senate welcomed this review.

6. PROFESSIONAL SERVICES REVIEW

- 6.1 Phase 1 of the review had now been completed with 24 Units merging into 5 Units and new Directors taking up post. Phase 2 of the review was proceeding and a consultation document setting out the proposed structural changes for SAS had been issued on 16th October. An Estates & ICT Strategy was being developed prior to the introduction of any structural changes. Other Directorates were at earlier stages of the review process. In addition a number of cross-University projects were considering areas such as recruitment and admissions, management information and one-stop shops.

7. CONFERMENT OF RESEARCH AWARDS

Senate noted this conferment.

8. EMERITUS PROFESSORS

The Chair informed Senate that a number of proposals to appoint Emeritus Professors may be made over the coming year. These would be dealt with by the Academic Boards who would make recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor for approval. Senate would receive notification of the appointments for information.

9. MATTERS RAISED BY ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

The paper set out ten issues raised by elected representatives, and these were discussed in turn as follows:

1. *Concerns regarding the education value offered in the third term.*

Response:

This issue would be referred to the Academic Standards Committee.

PVC(E&PP)

2. *Possible introduction of more 'non-vocational' subjects.*

Response:

The Chair explained that it is key part of the University's strategy to become more academically led, but also to achieve a balance of academic and professional subjects. Currently the University had approximately 1,100 students per subject which was twice the average within the Sector and it made sense to spread the risk by introducing additional subjects. It was planned to link new academic

subjects to existing professional courses, for example English and Journalism.

3. *Does the University have a target number for student/staff contact hours per week?*

Response:

No, although it was recognised that some students and parents attempted to compare HEIs on this basis. A recent HEFCE report had concluded that contact time was not linked to quality.

4. *Is the policy of engaging only staff with PhDs damaging our ability to deliver industry valued media production courses?*

Response:

The University is working towards 50% of academic staff with Doctorates by 2012 and there are no plans to alter this target. There are three possible types of appointment at Lecturer/Grade 7 level: with a doctorate and established, without a doctorate and temporary until a doctorate is obtained and professional (i.e. as a Practice Fellow), either established or temporary.

5. *Inconsistencies in the expectations of Visiting Professors, Visiting Research Fellows and Visiting Research Associates.*

Response:

These appointments are not salaried and are approved by the Vice-Chancellor via the Academic Boards. Duties are for Academic Boards to consider and these will vary by individual.

6. *To what extent is BU in line with the sector when it comes to 'reasonable adjustment' regarding ALN students?*

Response:

The University is in line with the Sector in terms of reasonable adjustments made for ALN students and has the 9th highest number of such students in the UK. Cases where extensive adjustments were required were quite rare although it was noted that two such cases this year had both occurred in the Business School, which may have given a misleading impression of their impact. It was also noted that the University had to give due consideration to the need to avoid breaching legal requirements.

7. *Concerns regarding the proposed reduction of PDA visits to placement students from 2 to 1, in spite of the School's views.*

Response:

It is not the intention to reduce PDA visits from 2 to 1. Students will definitely receive one PDA visit with a second if needed.

8. *Progression from Level C to Level I*

Response:

The PVC(E&PP) explained that it is not the University's policy to allow students to 'trail' failed units across the duration of their courses. However, it was agreed to refer this matter to the Academic Standards Committee for further consideration.

PVC(E&PP)

9. *Complaints received that the new Executive Business Centre does not lend itself to research paper writing.*

Response:

In the first instance staff should take this matter up with their line managers and

consider options such as home working or using space elsewhere on the University's estate. In the longer term, the Director of Estates and ICT is leading a Working Group which is considering the issue of space requirements for all staff.

10. Can consideration be given to issues of accessibility and usability of IT systems (e.g. myBU) with a view to developing good practice guidelines.

Response:

An accessibility policy is being developed which will address many of these issues. It was noted that the content management system needs to be updated. Also, that the timely publication of academic content has been problematic. BURO was welcomed for allowing staff to update their own content.

10. MINUTES – RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

25 June 2009

10.1 The minutes were noted.

11. MINUTES – RESEARCH & ENTERPRISE COMMITTEE

19 June 2009

11.1 The minutes were noted.

12. MINUTES – CONSTITUTION & PROCEDURES COMMITTEE

24 September 2009

12.1 The extract of the minutes was noted.

13. MINUTES – EXTRACT FROM THE ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEE

22 July 2009

9 September 2009

13.1 The minutes were noted.

14. MINUTES – INTERNATIONALISATION STRATEGY GROUP

29 September 2009

14.1 The minutes were not yet available – defer to next meeting.

15. MINUTES – EDUCATION ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

8 October 2009

15.1 The minutes were noted.

16. MINUTES – SCHOOL ACADEMIC BOARDS

The minutes of the following meetings were noted:

16.1 **Business School**

25 September 2009

16.2 **Conservation Sciences**

3 June 2009
16 September 2009

16.3 Design, Engineering & Computing
14 October 2009

Minutes not yet available – defer to next meeting.

16.4 Media School
14 October 2009

16.5 Services Management
8 October 2009

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

16.1 ESRC

The PVC(R&E) informed the Senate that the University was applying to become a doctoral training centre which would enable it to provide the training component of Research Council PhDs.

16.2 Thanks

The Chair thanked Noel Richardson (in his absence) for his work for the Senate over many years. Noel would continue to work in his new post of Clerk to the Board, but would no longer act as Secretary to Senate.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Wednesday, 10 March 2009.

Geoffrey Rayment
Committee Clerk
October 2009

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Approved as a true and accurate record:

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Prof P Curran (Chair)

Date:.....