Senate

12/01  A meeting of the Senate was held in The Nike Theatre, Agriculture Building, Earley Gate, on Wednesday 14 March 2012 at 2.15 pm.

Present:

Dr M J Almond
Professor R K Auchmuty
Dr J W Bell
Professor D C Berry
Professor J C Bignell
Professor J Board
Dr L T Butler
Professor S N Chandler-Wilde
Professor R W Chapman
Dr B Cosh
Dr J D Creighton
Professor T A Downes
Professor C J H Duggan
Professor J A Ellis
Professor R H Ellis
Dr M D E Fellowes
Mrs J A Ghandhi
Professor V A Gibson
Professor A Ghobadian
Professor M J Gooding
Professor A C Goodwyn
Professor S D Green
Dr P E Hatcher
Professor C J Hilson
Dr O B Kennedy
Dr M-M Kleinhans
Dr S Knox
Professor P Kruschwitz
Mr A M Macfadyen
Professor G Marston
Dr R McBain
Professor G P Meen
Dr P M Miskell
Professor S J Mithen
Professor H M Osborn

The Vice-Chancellor

Professor J R Park
Mr T Pitman
Professor R A Rastall
Ms R J Richards
Dr V F Ruiz
Professor I C Rutherford
Professor J D Saddy
Dr D Savva
Dr R S Sherrat
Professor P J Stratton-Lake
Professor C M S Sutcliffe
Dr A Thies
Dr A P Tonkyn
Professor G H Tucker
Professor S F Walker
Professor A C Williams
Professor C M Williams
Dr P E Woodman

The University Secretary

Students:

Mr M Chimbombi
Mr B Haines
Mr A Hartley
Mr K Hobley
Ms S Johnson
Mr J Kirkpatrick
Mr A Slater

In attendance:

Mr S P R Horan
Dr R J Messer
Mr C Robbins
The Vice-Chancellor paid tribute to the following who had died since the last meeting of the Senate:

Dr David Grimes who had been appointed to the University in 1990 and had been Reader in African Meteorology at the time of his death.

Dr Peter Harris who had been appointed to the University in 1962 and had retired as Lecturer in Soil Microbiology in 1998.

Emeritus Professor Harry Nursten who had been appointed Professor of Food Science in 1976 and had retired in 1992.

The Senate stood in memory of these former colleagues.

12/02 The Minutes (11/80-11/94) of the meeting held on 7 December 2011 were confirmed and signed.

12/03 New Year Honours

The Senate received a report that the following appointments had been made in the New Year Honours List:

Knight Bachelor – Sir John Armitt, Chairman of the Olympic Delivery Authority and an honorary graduate of this University (HonDSc, 2008), for services to engineering and construction.

OBE – Professor Dianne Berry, Professor of Psychology, for services to scientific research.

In the presence of Professor Berry, the Senate responded with acclamation.

12/04 Reports of Committees of Selection (Item 2(b))

The Senate received the following Reports of Committees of Selection:

* (i) Charlie Waller Professorship and Directorship of the Charlie Waller Institute

* (ii) Readership in Education

* (iii) Client Directorship (Executive Education) in the Henley Business School

* (iv) Professorship of Sustainable Systems.
12/05 Report of the Vice-Chancellor

(a) The Vice-Chancellor reported that he had appointed Professor M.E. Hodson to be Acting Head of the School of Human and Environmental Sciences for the period from 13 February to 22 April 2012.

(b) In the course of an inaugural address to the Senate (copy inserted in Minute Book), the Vice-Chancellor spoke of his pleasure at taking up appointment and described the schedule he had been following in order to familiarise himself with the work – and the workings – of the University. Characterising the mood he had encountered as broadly optimistic, the Vice-Chancellor referred to three major themes, those of strengthening research, of enhancing teaching and learning and of developing the University's international profile. A planned increase in overseas student numbers from 2,000 to 3,000 by 2015, allied to a shift in the prioritisation of resource from physical infrastructure to the core academic purpose of the University, bore promise of supporting and sustaining all three of these themes and lay at the heart of a strategic ambition for excellence with which all members of the University would be expected to engage. In a harsh financial climate difficult decisions inevitably lay ahead but, given a preparedness to adapt and to respond with agility and imagination to evolving circumstances, the University could face the future with confidence.

In response to a question from the Vice-President (Welfare and Representation) of the Students’ Union, the Vice-Chancellor confirmed the intention that some 30% of the income deriving from additional overseas students would be channelled directly to Schools and Directorates to meet the additional teaching and support costs that would be incurred. Referring to the planned investment in fifty new academic posts, Dr Hatcher asked whether savings accruing from the Reshaping Project were to be used to defray an element of the cost. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor explained that the savings achieved by the Reshaping Project had, in the event, fallen £2m short of target, the very sum that had been earmarked for re-investment. In response to a question from Professor Kruschwitz, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor Williams) explained that the six areas identified for academic investment had been chosen carefully with a view to retaining excellence and enhancing reputation. A very considerable number of the University’s departments and disciplines came within the compass of the six areas.

12/06 Reports of the Strategy and Finance Committee and of the Senior Management Board

* (a) The Senate received a Report from the meetings of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 27 January and 5 March 2012 in particular regard to the Academic Investment Project.
Dr Hatcher expressed the hope that support for staff currently in post would not be diminished in direct consequence of the Project and Dr Savva reminded the Senate of the need to allow newly appointed staff time to settle into their roles.

* (b) The Senate received a Report of the meetings of the Senior Management Board held on 5 and 19 December 2011, 16 and 31 January and 13 and 27 February 2012 and approved the recommendations contained therein.

In regard to item 2 (Three-Year Planning Implementation Group), Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor Williams) highlighted those areas to which it was hoped the Group would bring a more focused and integrated approach. In response to a question from Dr Tonkyn, Professor Williams confirmed that it was the intention of the Group to enter into dialogue with Schools preparatory to setting targets for numbers of overseas students.

12/07 Report of the University Board for Teaching and Learning (Item 5(a))

* The Senate approved the Report of the meetings of the University Board for Teaching and Learning held on 18 January, 9 February and 1 March 2012 and agreed to recommend to the Council:

(a) alterations to Ordinance XLV (University Board for Teaching and Learning) to include the Vice-Provost (Academic) of the University of Reading Malaysia in membership of the Board and to accord the right of attendance at its meetings to the Head of the Student Employment, Experience and careers Centre (SEECC);

(b) a new Ordinance (Degree of Professional Doctorate awarded jointly with other institutions) to provide for the award of Professional Doctorates jointly with other institutions; and

(c) alterations to Ordinance LX (Degree of Professional Doctorate) to formalise the provision of a Professional Doctorate in Agriculture and Food (DAGriFood) as part of the University’s suite of Professional Doctorates; to replace references to “the Director of Student Services” with “the relevant University Officer”; and to require that a candidate henceforth submit two hard bound copies and one electronic copy of their thesis.

12/08 Report of the University Board for Research and Innovation (Item 5(b))

* The Senate approved the Report of the meeting of the University Board for Research and Innovation held on 23 February 2012.

Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor Williams) was pleased to report that the University had entered listings of the top twenty UK institutions in terms of the number of
grants awarded to lead applicants and, in this context, noted the pleasing performance of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Science. In response to an observation that unfettered access to open access publications was being inhibited by limited Wi-fi access on campus, the Director of Student and Academic Services confirmed that the University was aware of the issue and was exploring the possibilities for improvement.

12/09  Report of the Management Board of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Science (Item 5(c))

* The Senate approved the Report of the meetings of the Management Board of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Science held on 25 January and 23 February 2012.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor noted the reservations of the Board on points of detail in relation to proposed changes to academic titles and agreed to relay its views to the Steering Group for the Promoting Excellence Project.

12/10  Report of the Management Board of the Faculty of Life Sciences (Item 5(d))

* The Senate approved the Report of the meetings of the Management Board of the Faculty of Life Sciences held separately on 14 December 2011 and 19 January 2012 and of a meeting of the Board held jointly with the Management Board of the Faculty of Science on 22 February 2012.

12/11  Report of the Management Board of the Faculty of Science (Item 5(e))

* The Senate approved the Report of the meetings of the Management Board of the Faculty of Science held separately on 13 December 2011 and 17 January 2012 and of a meeting of the Board held jointly with the Management Board of the Faculty of Life Sciences on 22 February 2012.

The Dean of the Faculty of Science gave an assurance that the distribution of any additional budgetary allocation for library materials would take due account of student demand.

12/12  Report of the Management Board of the Henley Business School (Item 5(f))


12/13  Report of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Committee (Item 5(g))

* The Senate received the Report of the meeting of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Committee held on 5 March 2012 and agreed to recommend to the Council that Professor C.M. Williams be re-appointed as Pro-Vice-Chancellor for the period from 1 August 2012 to 31 July 2016.
The Vice-Chancellor expressed his personal thanks to Professor Williams for her continuing support.

12/14 Report on behalf of the Standing Disciplinary Committee on disciplinary sanctions imposed in the Autumn Term 2011 (Item 5(h))

* The Senate received a Report on behalf of the Standing Disciplinary Committee of disciplinary sanctions imposed in the Autumn Term 2011.

12/15 NUS National Day of Action (Item 6(a))

The Senate was reminded that an NUS National Day of Action was taking place and the President of the Students’ Union made a statement to the meeting (copy inserted in Minute Book). Mr Hobley explained the symbolism of the various installations and artefacts relating to escalating student debt that members of the Senate would have encountered on their way to the meeting and spoke in opposition to what he termed hidden course costs which had been introduced into an artificially engineered and inappropriate market without proper public or parliamentary debate.

On the motion of the President of the Students’ Union, seconded by the Vice-President (Academic Affairs) of the Students’ Union, the Senate voted unanimously to be enjoined with the Students’ Union in “making a public statement to the effect that these reforms to higher education were not being properly scrutinised and that students and universities deserved the right to have this debated in the open”.

12/16 Transparency Review: Staff Time Allocation Survey (Item 6(b))

* The Senate received a paper from Dr Tonkyn, elected representative of the School of Literature and Languages in regard to the Staff Time Allocation Survey element of the Transparency Review.

Introducing his paper, Dr Tonkyn questioned the value and validity of the exercise on a number of grounds and asked that the Vice-Chancellor act in concert with others to bring it to an end. As Chairman of the University’s Costing and Pricing Review Group, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor found himself broadly in sympathy with the thrust of Dr Tonkyn’s argument but noted the various uses to which the material emanating from the survey was put by HEFCE and counselled against campaigning for its wholesale abolition before having a sensible alternative in mind. The Vice-Chancellor thanked Dr Tonkyn for his paper and undertook to remain alert to any opportunity for drawing attention to the shortcomings of the present arrangement.

12/17 Equality & Diversity Code of Practice for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014 (Item 6(c))

The Senate agreed to recommend to the Council approval of an Equality & Diversity Code of Practice for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014.
Committees and other bodies (Item 6(c))

The Senate received a report that, in variation of Minute 11/69, the Acting Vice-Chancellor had agreed on its behalf that Professor D C Berry serve as Chair of the Standing Committee on Academic Misconduct, Ordinance XVII notwithstanding, for the remainder of Session 2011-12; and that Professor R H Ellis serve as Chair of the Residences Management Committee, Ordinance XVI notwithstanding, for such time as that Committee continued in existence.

--------------------------------------------------------------------------------

*Student representatives withdrew from the remainder of the meeting*

--------------------------------------------------------------------------------