Senate

12/70  A meeting of the Senate was held in The Nike Theatre, Agriculture Building, Earley Gate, on Wednesday 5 December 2012 at 2.15 pm.

Present:

The Vice-Chancellor
Dr J W Bell
Professor J C Bignell
Ms H O Bilton
Dr I M Bland
Professor J Board
Professor G Brooks
Dr L T Butler
Professor P J Byrne
Professor S N Chandler-Wilde
Dr B Cosh
Professor T A Downes
Professor J A Ellis
Professor R H Ellis
Professor J M Félix
Dr C L Fuller
Professor P R Ghandhi
Professor V A Gibson
Professor R.L. Gilchrist
Dr P Glaister
Professor A C Goodwyn
Professor S D Green
Dr P E Hatcher
Professor Y Kalyuzhnova
Dr O B Kennedy
Professor P Kruschwitz
Dr S Knox
Mr A M Macfadyen
Professor G Marston
Professor G P Meen
Professor S J Mithen
Mrs S E Mott
Dr I Mueller-Harvey
Professor C Newdick
Professor H M I Osborn
Mr T Pitman
Professor R A Rastall

Professor S A Reynolds
Ms R J Richards
Professor A Rugman
Dr V F Ruiz
Professor I C Rutherford
Professor F H M Le Saux
Dr D Savva
Dr R S Sherratt
Dr A C Smith
Professor P J Stratton-Lake
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 J Fletcher
Ms K Swift
Ms S. Davies
Mr N Cook
Ms C Jones

Faculty Representatives:
Ms J Coulton (AH&SS)
Ms J Pickering (AH&SS)
Mr T Hurrell (HBS)
Ms H Gough (S)

In attendance:
Dr R J Messer

(* in margin denotes that a copy of the document has been inserted in the Minute Book).
The Minutes (12/52-12/64) of the meeting held on 17 October 2012 were confirmed and signed.

Reports of Committees of Selection (Item 2(a))

The Senate received the following Reports of Committees of Selection:

* (i) Professorship of Film
* (ii) Professorship of Systems Engineering and Neuroscience
* (iii) Professorship of the Economics of Public Policy
* (iv) Professorship of English Literature (Modernism)
* (v) Professorship of Ocean and Earth Observation.

Elections (Item 2(b))

Election of twelve Professors to the Senate: The Senate received a report that, subsequent to its last meeting, one further nomination had been received, that of:

Professor J.D. Saddy.

Accordingly, the Vice-Chancellor, acting on behalf of the Senate, had agreed that Professor Saddy additionally be deemed elected to serve for the period to 31 July 2013. No vacancies now remained.

Report of the Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor reported that:

(a) the outcome of a recent review visit by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education – one of the very first to have been conducted under a significantly revised methodology - had confirmed achievement by the University of all the standards required of it. Examples of good practice had been identified and a modest number of recommendations for improvement would be addressed. Thanks were due to the many colleagues who had contributed to so pleasing a result;

(b) a paper prepared initially for the Strategy and Finance Committee but now made available to the Senate presented a clearer picture than hitherto of admissions in October 2012. Cost-saving measures had been applied to neutralising the shortfall in income of some £3m arising from under-recruitment of undergraduate students at AAB+ but it remained the case that the University had met, indeed marginally exceeded, its Student Control Number. The numbers of overseas students admitted to taught postgraduate programmes had fallen short of the enhanced target that had been set in-year but the immediate financial consequences of this, if any, were still to be fully understood;

(c) a mock exercise in preparation for the Research Excellence Framework 2014 had been completed and, on the basis of this, the University’s overall
submission strategy had been determined. The Vice-Chancellor set out this strategy in some detail to the Senate but stressed the commercial confidentiality of such information in a fiercely competitive environment. Thanks were due to all colleagues but in particular to Faculty and School Directors of Research and to Unit of Assessment Leads;

(d) planning permission had been granted for the campus of the University of Reading Malaysia and Professor Downes had recently returned from his first visit to the region since his designation as Provost and Chief Executive Officer. In active pursuit of its internationalisation agenda, it was natural that the University should from time to time explore similar opportunities and the Vice-Chancellor reported that an example of this had recently arisen in Chongqing, Western China: however, following careful consideration and thorough groundwork, he had counselled against pursuing the opportunity. There were, he felt, too many other matters – not least the imminent establishment of the University of Reading Malaysia and the unpredictable nature of the home student market – demanding the attention of senior colleagues and insufficient information, both financial and reputational, on the precise nature of this particular proposition. The Vice-Chancellor assured the Senate that the University maintained its ambitious outlook, both at home and overseas, and that, in furtherance of this, consultants had been engaged to provide it with appropriate assistance in the context of the developing University Strategy;

(e) seven institutions had recently left the 1994 Group of research-intensive universities and decisions as to the future of that Group and of Reading’s position within it were likely to be taken by the end of the year. Whatever those decisions might be, there remained scope for kindred universities to make common cause in the name of research-intensity and to collaborate one with another whenever appropriate opportunities to do so arose.

As the first year of his tenure drew to a close, the Vice-Chancellor took the opportunity to thank all colleagues for the warmth of the welcome that had been extended to him and made particular mention of the contributions made by his senior team.

12/75 Senior Management Board: 22 October and 12 November 2012 (Item 4)

* The Senate received a Report of the meetings of the Senior Management Board held on 22 October and 12 November 2012 and approved the recommendations contained therein.

In regard to item 2 (The Offices of Deputy Vice-Chancellor and of Pro-Vice-Chancellor), the Vice-Chancellor explained that the proposal advanced by the Council enabled, but did not require, the appointment of a Deputy Vice-Chancellor and of Pro-Vice-Chancellors from beyond the University.

12/76 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 10 July, 20 September, 17 October, 5 November and 22 November 2012 and agreed to recommend to the Council:
(a) alterations to Ordinance III (Degrees Diplomas and Certificates) and to Ordinance LIV (Degrees of Integrated Master) to provide for the introduction of a degree of Master of Science (Integrated) (MSci); and

(b) alterations to Ordinance XVII (Conduct and Discipline Student Academic Engagement and Fitness to Study Academic Misconduct and Performance in Examinations and Fitness to Practise) to provide for the introduction of explicit student academic engagement and fitness to study procedures for postgraduate research students.

Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor Brooks) drew particular attention to the publication of the Student Charter and, in response to questions, explained the intent that lay behind proposals to spread teaching throughout the working week and to create readily accessible study space for students that would be available round-the-clock. Meanwhile, an unannounced inspection visit by the UK Border Agency in connection with the University’s Tier 4 (General) Licence remained in prospect.

The Vice-Chancellor urged all those members of the Senate having a view on the Board’s proposals in regard to the structure of the academic year to respond individually to the current consultation exercise in advance of the consideration of those proposals, or refinements thereof, by the Senate as a body during 2013.

12/77 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 21 November 2012.

Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor Williams) explained that income from research grants and contracts had held steady over the past three years and success rates had been maintained despite increasing competition. Particular success in recent months had been achieved by the Schools of Agriculture, Policy and Development and of Mathematical and Physical Sciences, and within parts of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Science. The University must now do all within its power to influence the policies of the Research Councils and to improve the number of citations achieved by its staff since these were of increasing importance as indicators of performance.

In response to a question, Professor Williams suggested that Dr Mueller-Harvey seek clarification from Dr Helsby, Planning Support Manager, as to the relevance or otherwise of the Science and Technology Facilities Council to the University’s research agenda.

12/78 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 18 October and 14 November 2012.
12/79 Report of the Management Board of the Faculty of Life Sciences (Item 5(d))

* The Senate approved the Report of a meeting of the Management Board of the Faculty of Life Sciences held on 26 September 2012 and a meeting of the Board held jointly with the Management Board of the Faculty of Science on 14 November 2012.

The Dean noted that a positive meeting had since been held between Health and Safety Services and the relevant Schools within his Faculty, as a result of which respective roles and responsibilities had been clarified.

12/80 Report of the Management Board of the Faculty of Science (Item 5(e))

* The Senate approved the Report of a meeting of the Management Board of the Faculty of Science held on 11 October 2012 and a meeting of the Board held jointly with the Management Board of the Faculty of Life Sciences on 14 November 2012.

12/81 Report of the Management Board of the Henley Business School (Item 5(f))


12/82 Report of the Research Ethics Committee for 2011-12 (Item 5(g))

* The Senate received, and for its part approved, the Report of the Research Ethics Committee for 2011-12.

12/83 Charter, Statutes, Ordinances and Regulations for Conduct (Item 6(a))

* The Senate received a report that, at its meeting on 23 November 2012, the Council had resolved that:

(a) to provide for the possibility of appointing a Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Pro-Vice-Chancellors from beyond the University rather than, as at present, from wholly within, amendments to Statute VII (The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Pro-Vice-Chancellors) be approved for communication to the Senate and the Standing Committee of Convocation subject to any changes that the Privy Council might require;

(b) to provide for replacing the title of Faculty Director of Teaching and Learning with that of Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning) amendments to Statute XVI (The Senate) be approved for communication to the Senate and the Standing Committee of Convocation subject to any changes that the Privy Council might require; and amendments to Ordinances XII (Management Boards of the Faculties), XVII (Conduct and Discipline Student Academic Engagement and Fitness to Study Academic Misconduct and Performance in Examinations and Fitness to Practise) and XLV (University Board for Teaching and Learning) and to Regulations for Conduct (12), (31) and (37) be approved, subject to any views that the Senate might have in the matter;
(c) to provide for replacing the titles of Reader and Senior Lecturer with that of Associate Professor, amendments to Article III (Powers) of the Charter and to Statutes I (Preliminary), XV (Powers of the Council), XVII (Powers of the Senate), XX (The Deans of the Faculties), XXIX (Ordinances), XXX (University Examinations) and XXXIII (Academic Staff) be approved for communication to the Senate and the Standing Committee of Convocation subject to any changes that the Privy Council might require; and amendments to Ordinances XI (Election and Appointment to Professorships or Readerships or Senior Lecturerships), XII (Management Boards of the Faculties) and XXIII (Conferment of the Personal Title of Professor or Reader or Senior Lecturer be approved, subject to any views that the Senate might have in the matter;

(d) to remove reference to a statutory retirement age, amendments to Statute XXXII (Removal and Retirement of Officers and Members) be approved for communication to the Senate and the Standing Committee of Convocation subject to any changes that the Privy Council might require;

(e) to reflect changes in the titles of certain senior administrative officers, amendments to Statute XVI (The Senate) be approved for communication to the Senate and the Standing Committee of Convocation subject to any changes that the Privy Council might require; and amendments to Ordinances XII (Management Boards of the Faculties), XLV (University Board for Teaching and Learning) and XLVI (University Board for Research and Innovation) be approved, subject to any views that the Senate might have in the matter.

The Senate noted the proposals and had no comment to make.

Student representatives withdrew from the remainder of the meeting