

Senate

17/01 A meeting of the Senate was held in The Nike Theatre, Agriculture Building, Earley Gate, on Wednesday 8 March 2017 at 2.15 pm.

Present:

The Vice-Chancellor

Dr Cindy Becker
Professor Dianne Berry
Dr Helen Bilton
Dr Nick Branch
Dr Sarah Brewer
Professor Gavin Brooks
Professor Laurie Butler
Dr David Carter
Professor Ben Cosh
Dr John Creighton
Professor Richard Frazier
Professor Roger Gibbard
Dr John Gibbs
Professor Ginny Gibson
Professor Suzanne Graham
Professor Stuart Green
Professor Paul Hadley
Dr Richard Harris
Dr Paul Hatcher
Professor Peter Kruschwitz
Dr Elizabeth McCrum
Professor Steve Mithen
Professor Julian Park
Professor Helen Parish
Dr Daisy Powell

Professor Ros Richards
Professor Patricia Riddell
Mrs Edith Rigby
Dr Calvin Smith
Dr Craig Steel
Dr Catherine Tissot
Professor Richard Tranter
Professor Robert Van de Noort
Professor Sue Walker
Professor Adrian Williams
Professor Parveen Yaqoob
The University Secretary

Students:

Ben Cooper
Pip Oppenheimer
Molly Philpott

In attendance:

Ms Sam Foley
Ms Louise Sharman

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed Ms Sam Foley (Chief Financial Officer) to her first meeting.

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

Mr Dean Madden, who began working for the University in 1990 as a Research Fellow at the National Centre for Biotechnology Education, in 2001 he became Joint Director of the Centre and in 2016 the sole Director.

Mr Len Webb, Senior Administrative Officer at Bulmershe College, Senior Assistant

Bursar in the Faculty of Education and Community. He was awarded an honorary degree in 1993

Mrs Andrea Atkinson, secretary in the Department of Agricultural Botany, and then to Professor Hugh Bunting.

Mr Ulric Spencer, volunteer at the Reading Film Theatre since the early 1970s

Mrs Jill Betts, Education Officer in the Rural History Centre, who retired in 2001.

17/02 The Minutes (16/76-16/91) of the meeting held on 30 November 2016 were approved.

17/03 New Year Honours (Item 2a)

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

OBE – Professor Ros Richards for services to language support for international education

17/04 Report of a Committee of Selection (Item 2b)

The Senate received the following Reports of Committees of Selection:

- i) Associate Professor in Coaching
- ii) Professor of Mathematics and Director at Reading of the MPE Doctoral Centre

17/05 Report of the Vice-Chancellor (Item 3)

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

- i) The appointment of Dr Julia Waters as Acting of Head of School for the School of Literature and Languages for the period from 1 April to 31 July 2017. The appointment of Professor Gail Marshall as Head of School of Literature and Languages from 1 August 2017 for a six year term.
- ii) The University received a response from HEFCE in respect of the Annual Provider Review (APR). The APR considers two areas – quality and standards, and financial responsibility, good management and governance. HEFCE had confirmed that it had ‘no concerns’ and the institution was ‘not at higher risk’.
- iii) REDACTED SEC 43
- iv) Building on the success of previous discipline-level projects, a project had been established in Law. A small group had also been established to conduct a farms strategy. Revised arrangement had also been agreed for large-scale projects such as the Electronic Management of Assessment Programme, the Thames Valley science Park, Degree Apprenticeships, and the University of Reading Malaysia.

- v) Brexit, and the approach being taken by Universities UK to encompass actions required now, key negotiating points when Article 50 is triggered, and domestic changes that should be made post-Brexit.
- vi) The first anniversary of the official open of the University of Reading Malaysia. Whilst the operating environment was tougher than expected, the University was working hard to establish its presence.
- vii) An upcoming visit to the United States to develop the university's alumni base and partnership opportunities with Rhode Island, Rochester and Mary Washington universities.
- viii) The NUIST-Reading Academy in China had now received approval from the Ministry of Education for a BSc Atmospheric Science programme with 40 students per year, starting this September.
- ix) The Government's Industrial Strategy which included science, research and innovation as a pillar of success.
- x) The Higher Education and Research Bill, where the Government recently announced a series of amendments as the Bill reached its final stages in the House of Lords. Key changes included:
 - The Office for Students having regard in everything it does to promote autonomy
 - Standards should be set by the sector, and greater clarity on conditions of revocation and limits on removal of Royal Charter
 - More flexible fee structures being allowed for accelerated degrees
 - Much easier movement for students between courses and universities
 - More detailed reporting requirements on student diversity
 - New providers would be encouraged, but there would be no compromise on standards
 - The OfS should take account of collaboration between institutions and not simply promote competition
 - The Haldane Principle would be enshrined in legislation
- xi) Teaching Excellence Framework – the Minister for Higher Education had restated a commitment to a genuine 'lessons learned' exercise on the back of this year's TEF; subject level TEF would not be introduced until TEF Year 5.
- xii) Fees – the University had already agreed fees for 2017/18 and would be required to do so for 2018/19 very soon in order to give prospective students for September 2018 adequate notice. The University is strongly minded to take the opportunity for a further increase in 2018/19, should the Bill allow it, the TEF outcome enable the University to do so, and the formula to be applied properly understood. This matter will need further discussion with RUSU. Any fee increase from 2018/19 would only apply to new starters and would not be applied retrospectively.

17/06 Review of the Effectiveness of the Senate (Item 4)

Professor Gibson, as Chair of the Senate Review, gave an oral update on progress with the Review. It was noted that the Review Group had met on eight occasions and had also met separately with a number of Senators in order to inform thinking.

It was noted that the Review Group had spent time reflecting on what Senate's role was given that it was the most senior governance body in relation to academic standards, the education provided to our students, and research. Early in the Review Group's discussions it became apparent that the role and responsibilities of Senate were impacted by a range of internal and external factors and that the Review Group needed to be mindful of these in its deliberations.

External factors included:

- requirements of the CUC Code that the governing body (Council) should receive assurance that academic governance was effective, that academic risk was effectively managed, and that quality was maintained.
- Annual Provider Review which required Council to consider a report and action plan relating to the continuous improvement of the student academic experience and of student outcomes. Senates would need to ensure that strategic issues were brought to the fore.
- The Higher Education and Research Bill which was changing the policy and governance architecture for HEIs.

Internal factors included:

- The Revised Academic Structure – which had changed following the removal of the faculty structure, creation of new roles such as Research Deans and Teaching & Learning Deans, and the establishment of more communities of Practice.
- The Leadership Group – which has emerged as a new forum which has no governance status but has a significant overlap with the membership of the Senate.
- The University's relationship with students - there was a developing tension between students who were increasingly seen as consumers, as defined by contractual arrangements, and students as partners in learning and part of the wider collegiate community. Increasingly students expected more consultation and engagement. With the increasing emphasis on the student experience it was important that students felt that they could have a voice in how the University works and changes that are made.

It was apparent that there was some frustrations amongst Senators that Senate was simply a 'rubber stamping' body and that too much time was spent on routine reporting that had been seen by Senators on several other occasions.

It was noted that the Review Group had focussed on what the Senate should be doing and its composition; the Group's initial thoughts would result in a different look and feel to the Senate.

It was suggested that in the future the agenda would be divided into the following sections:

- a) One or two substantive items that would help the University reflect on continuous improvements in academic standards. These items would encourage debate and a more open conversation. The Senate should not be seen as an

opportunity to block items of business or to delay or hinder the workings of the University, but instead should be seen as a critical friend. Examples of possible items might include: reports from the Pro-Vice-Chancellors, major thematic items, post project reviews, plans for major change projects, items raised by the Council, items brought forward by Senators.

b) The Vice-Chancellor's address.

c) Routine reports.

A Senate Agenda Group would be established to set topics in advance.

In regard to composition it was noted that the Senate had over 80 members, over half of whom were there because of their positions. The Review Group was keen to ensure that there was wider representation from across key communities, whilst trying to reduce the Senate's size in order to promote better discussion.

It was suggested that there would be a smaller ex officio membership of the Senate and that representation would be elected from Heads of School, Heads of department, Research Deans, Research Division Leads, Teaching & Learning Deans, Schools Directors of Teaching and Learning, Senior Tutors, University Teaching Fellows; RUSU and student representation would remain as currently.

A number of comments were raised by the Senate for further consideration by the Review Group, in particular:

- How to ensure diversity in membership, particularly if elections were used.
- How to ensure that the wider academic community was represented.
- Developing a mechanism by which Schools could report into the Senate, and for Senators to be able to report back to their constituencies.

Several members of the Senate asked to see more details on the proposed changes in order to prompt a properly informed discussion.

Members of the Senate were asked to give further thought to the suggested agenda and composition outlined and to provide any feedback or comments to the Professor Gibson and Ms Sharman.

17/07 Report of the Strategy and Finance Committee (Item 5a)

There was no report on this occasion.

17/08 Report of the University Executive Board (Item 5b)

The Senate received a Report of the meetings of the University Executive Board held on 21, 28 November, 5, 12 December 2016, 16, 23 January, 6, 13, 27 February 2017.

In respect of item 1 on the Sustainable Planning System, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor Van de Noort) informed the Senate that the University needed to increase income, or cut expenditure, by £9m each year simply to meet inflation, promotions and incremental progression. The Sustainable Planning System faced a significant

challenge to achieve this £9m of improvements along with supporting growth and generating efficiencies in the Schools and Functions. REDACTED SEC 43

In respect of item 5 and 6 the Senate noted the Annual Staff Diversity and Inclusion Report and the Gender Pay Gap Report; a number of actions reported in these reports would be taken forward as part of the Athena Swan action plan and the People Strategy.

17/09 Report of the University Board for Teaching and Learning (Item 6a)

The Senate received the Report of the meetings of the University Board for Teaching and Learning held on 5 December 2016, 11 and 30 January, and 20 February 2017.

In respect of item 7 of the report it was noted that the Henley Business School was working on the development of plans for Degree Apprenticeships within the School and that a number of other Schools were also interested particularly in the areas of Food and Health. The Board had recognised that the scheme would require marked changes to the University's Teaching and Learning infrastructure and that this would impact on several of the central functions.

In regard to item 8 it was noted that the Strategy and Finance Committee had signed off a three-year programme of work for the Electronic Management of Assessment Programme; a launch event for the programme was due to be held on 14 March 2017.

In regard to item 12 the Senate noted the input from RUSU into a number of projects and initiatives which helped to improve the student experience.

REDACTED SEC 43

17/10 Report of the University Board for Research and Innovation (Item 6b)

The Senate received the report of the University Board for Research and Innovation held on 21 February 2017.

REDACTED SEC 43

17/11 Report of the Global Engagement Strategy Board (Item 6c)

There was no report on this occasion.

17/12 Report of the Senate Standing Committee on Examination Results (Item 4d)

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

17/13 Report of the Standing Committee on Academic Misconduct (Item 6e)

The Senate received the Report of the meeting of the Standing Committee on Academic Misconduct held on 19 December 2016 and noted the outcomes of the Committee's decisions.

17/14 Report of the Standing Committee on Academic Engagement & Fitness to Study (Item 6f)

The Senate noted that there had been no cases of Academic Engagement and Fitness to Study referred to the Committee since the last meeting. However, one case was referred to the Chair under section 16 of the policy because it was considered that there were concerns for the health and welfare of the student. REDACTED SEC 40

17/15 Report of the Student Appeals Committee (Item 6g)

The Senate received the Report of the meeting of the Student Appeals Committee held on 1 December 2016; this was the second occasion that the Committee had met. Two cases were considered. REDACTED SEC 40

17/16 Report on behalf of the Standing Disciplinary Committee on disciplinary sanctions imposed in the Summer Term (Item 6h)

The Senate received a Report on behalf of the Standing Disciplinary Committee of disciplinary sanctions imposed for breaches of discipline other than academic misconduct and neglect of work.

17/17 Retirement of Professors (Item 7a)

The Senate approved that under the provisions of Ordinance B7 the title of Professor Emeritus be conferred upon the following with effect from the date indicated:

Professor Kerry Patterson (30 September 2016)

17/18 Other Retirements (Item 7b)

The Senate approved that the following be accorded the title of Honorary Fellow for a period of five years with effect from the date indicated:

Mr Martyn Drage (31 December 2016)
Dr Margaret Perkins (31 December 2016)

17/19 Committee Membership (Item 7c)

The Senate noted that Professor Matthew Almond and Professor Sue Walker had been appointed to the Personal Titles Committee for one year.

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Student representatives withdrew from the remainder of the meeting
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RESERVED BUSINESS

17/20 The reserved minutes (16/92-16/93) of the meeting held on 30 November 2016 were approved.

17/21 Reports of Examiners for Higher Degrees by thesis (Item 9b)

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