

Senate

18/46 A meeting of the Senate was held in G06 Chancellor's Building, on Wednesday 7 November 2018 at 2.15 pm.

Present:

The Acting Vice-Chancellor (Chair) (not for 18/51)

Dr Emma Aston
Professor Adrian Bell
Dr Rebecca Berkley
Professor Dianne Berry
Dr Katrina Bicknell
Professor Gavin Brooks
Dr David Carter
Dr Giuseppe Di Fatta
Professor Clare Furneaux
Professor Paul Glaister
Professor Ellie Highwood
Dr Lawrence Hill-Cawthorne
Professor Carmel Houston-Price
Dr Alan Howard
Ms Rebecca Jerome
Dr Steve Langdon
Dr Anne McCartney
Professor Elizabeth McCrum
Professor Gail Marshall
Professor Matthew Nicholls
Dr Karen Poulter
Mr Enzo Raimo
Dr Mark Shanahan
Dr Stephanie Sharp

Professor Simon Sherratt
Professor Catherine Tissot
Professor Julia Waters
Professor Emily West
Professor Parveen Yaqoob
Professor Dominik Zaum

Students:

Jason Dabydoyal
Lillie-Mae Firmin
Dan Bentley
Nozomi Tolworthy
Ali Perry

Student Representatives:

William Page
Cham Formoukum
Luigi Serino
Callum Whittingham

In attendance:

Ms Louise Sharman (Secretary)
Dr Richard Messer
Ms Sam Foley
Ms Jess Johnson (18/49)
Ms Jen Rich (18/49)

The Acting Vice-Chancellor welcomed members to the Senate, and in particular the new RUSU Officers and new Senators.

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

Emeritus Professor Tony Atkins – Professor of Mechanical Engineering from 1981, Head of the School of Engineering and Information Technology from 1986 to 1990, Head of the Department of Engineering to 1994. He later went on to join

the new School of Construction Management and Engineering in its formation.

Mr Peter Barnes – Web producer in IT from 2006, VLE Systems Administrator in 2008, and Analyst Programmer from 2009 before leaving the University in 2014.

Mrs Mary Midgley - Lecturer in the Department of Philosophy between 1949 and 1950 under her maiden name of Scrutton, before marrying and moving to Newcastle. Mary was well known and respected for her significant contributions to the field of moral philosophy

Mrs Margaret Watson – Secretary in the School of Engineering in 1980 until retiring in 2006.

Dr David Rowell – Lecturer in the Department of Soil Science 1965, Senior Lecturer in 1981, he retired in 2002.

18/47 The Minutes (18/20 - 18/42) of the meeting held on 28 June 2018 were approved.

18/48 Membership of the Senate in 2018/19 (Item 4)

The Senate received a list of its membership for the session 2018/19.

Items for Presentation and Discussion

18/49 National Student Survey (Item 5)

The Senate received a summary of the National Student Survey (NSS) for 2018 and key headlines. It was noted that the 2018 results had been disappointing in a number of areas and that the University was reviewing how best to address issues raised and improve student satisfaction.

The Education Officer and the Welfare Officer gave a presentation to the Senate highlighting key responses, in particular in regard to:

- Assessment and feedback
- The student voice
- Learning resources
- Learning community
- RUSU

Members of the Senate undertook an exercise for each area to identify why there was an issue and short-term and long-term solutions, points raised included:

- Assessment and feedback
 - Consideration should be given to the amount of time given for feedback; it would be helpful if there was time to incorporate

- feedback into the next piece of work submitted
 - Fairer distribution of assessment would avoid bottlenecks
 - Further support should be given to international students to have earlier preparation before they arrive in the UK, and aid in their transition to University. This could be done at the application stage as students were less attentive to communications later on.
 - Extra introductory sessions could be laid on for late arrivals
 - Lecturers/Module Convenors could be clearer about assessment and feedback criteria
 - Improved communications around content/layout would be helpful
- Student Voice
 - Students often don't know why decisions have been taken
 - Often Student/Staff Liaison Committees (SSLC) are used as a means of communication; some of these work well, others not
 - Communications should be more straightforward; rather than hedging a response such as 'we are looking into this/review this' the University should be clearer in saying 'we have thought about this and are not going to do it because' or 'we will do this but it won't happen till'
 - Measures could be taken to improve the course rep system and to review SSLCs
 - Student voice varies between Schools and their size
 - Many surveys are undertaken of the student body and it is not clear what the outcome is of these changes
 - Students generally don't read long emails
 - It often feels that student feedback is not listened to or acted upon
 - Improved coordination of communications between local and University wide messages
- Learning Resources
 - Student expectations differ to that of several years ago, e.g. students now expect lecture recordings
 - The definition of learning resource needs to be broader, it is not just about the Library, and should include for e.g. access to labs (science/IT), tutorials
 - Screen casts and lecture recordings should be made available on BlackBoard before the lecture
 - Further thought should be given to teaching spaces, not just size (although that was an issue in some case), but also the layout, position/more whiteboards, acoustics, and ensuring that the technology works.
- Learning Community
 - There was a lack of common room spaces across the University as

- these have been given up for teaching
- Space should be used creatively, e.g. adding sofas and charging points
 - Measures to improve the community feel would be welcomed, for e.g. Meteorology's weekly student staff meetings; this would help to develop a more personal relationship
 - Students should feel comfortable in speaking with their Head of School and vice versa
 - There was a need to better integrate the support centres; the location of some had an impact on foot fall.
 - The University should celebrate more cultures to improve integration between home and international students; a global campus should just become the norm
 - It feels as though the university is offering a community that they think students want but that is not the case
 - There should be more flexibility around office hours
 - There were some examples of good practice around campus in regard to the Learning Community, these could be better shared with colleagues.

The Senate thanked the Education Officer and Welfare Officer. It was agreed that the feedback would be collated and added to the continuing discussions on the NSS.

18/50 Report of the Vice-Chancellor (Item 6)

The Senate received the Vice-Chancellor's address the Senate, noting in particular:

- a) Financial pressures – the University faces significant financial pressures arising out of an increasingly competitive student recruitment environment, uncertainties around Brexit, funding review and increased pension costs. The impact of these pressures on the financial sustainability of the University in 2018/19 was being actively managed. In the context of the demographic dip it was likely that the University would consider the establishment of a severance scheme. The University Executive Board would also consider strategic/structural changes in order to meet financial targets whilst still meeting strategic aims of academic excellence in teaching and research,
- b) USS Pensions Update – The University Executive Board and the Strategy & Finance Committee had responded to the UUK consultation on the Joint Expert Panel (JEP) report. The JEP expressed a view that greater weight should be given to the unique features and strengths of the higher education sector and recommended a number of ways in which adjustments to the 2017 valuation could be considered. If adopted these would, in its view, achieve total required contributions estimated at 29.2% (9.1% from members, 20.1% from employers), significantly lower than the current proposal from USS. Overall, the University supported the JEP proposals, whilst acknowledging that further work was required to make the scheme financially viable, the potential consequences of the increased contributions required, the higher level of risk that employers would have to adopt, and the possibility of

greater variance in future contributions.

- c) National Pay Bargaining – Following the failure of the national pay bargaining process to reach full agreement UCU had balloted members with a view to taking strike action and/or action short of strike. At Reading the 50% threshold for voter turnout was not reached (48.3%). Across the sector a small number of institutions did reach the threshold for strike action.
- d) Brexit: EU Settlement Scheme – Details on the scheme would be published shortly.
- e) Engagement with Reading Borough Council – An independent study of the economic and social contribution of the University had been commissioned. The Acting Vice-Chancellor was meeting with the Chief Executive and Leaders of Reading Borough Council to explore areas of mutual benefit. The University was continuing to experience higher level of complaints about poor student behaviour. A pilot scheme of street wardens was launched in April and would be piloted until June 2019. The wardens work in three areas around the University including Northcourt Avenue and the Christchurch Road area.

18/51 Update on the Process for the Appointment of the Vice-Chancellor (Item 7)

The Senate received a note from the University Secretary in respect of the process to appoint the Vice-Chancellor.

It was noted that in line with Ordinance B1, the Appointments and Governance Committee met on 14 August 2018, and approved the composition of a Selection Committee. The Selection Committee comprised the President (in the Chair), a Vice-President (Kate Owen), the Chair of the Audit Committee (Tom Beardmore Gray), a lay member of Council (Bina Rawal), the President of RUSU (Jason Dabydoyal), an academic member of the Senate elected by the Senate (Professor Gail Marshall, Head of the School of Literature and Languages), and another member of the academic staff (Professor Dianne Berry, Dean of Postgraduate Research Studies).

The Selection Committee met for the first time on 25 September 2018. It received an oral report from Odgers on the opinions of a wide variety of the University's staff and students on what the University should be looking for in its next Vice-Chancellor. Having due regard to these opinions, the Committee approved the advertisement, job description, etc. The advertisement appeared in the Times Higher Education on 4 October, in jobs.ac.uk at the same time, and in the Chronicle and the Sunday Times.

Odgers have provided weekly reports from 12 October onwards, which details the ongoing position as to interest in the role. To date there have been six applications; twenty seven examples where there is initial or sustained interest;

twenty-eight examples where contact has been made without reply as yet; and twenty-two examples where contact was made but there was no interest. The weekly report is circulated in confidence to the Selection Committee.

The timeline to be followed for the appointment process is as follows:

- *Second meeting of the Selection Committee* Wednesday 28 November, to agree a long-list of candidates
- *Third meeting of the Selection Committee* Thursday 24 January, to agree a short-list of candidates
- Thursday 14 February: three interview panels, one of academic staff, one of professional and managerial staff, and one of students; with perhaps in addition a presentation to the Leadership Group
- *Final meeting of the Selection Committee* Friday 15 February 2019, to receive the reports of the three interview panels and of the Leadership Group, to interview the shortlisted candidates, and to make its decision
- Late-February, early March: Council meets to approve the recommendation of the Selection Committee, followed by communication of the appointment.

18/52 Office for Students Update (Item 8)

The Senate received a note from the University Secretary in respect of the Office for Students (OfS).

[Redacted, Section 43]

Having passed initial registration, colleagues were now working on full registration, which was due in August 2019. It covered in particular the availability and publication of a whole range of applicant and student data broken down by disadvantaged groups.

While not part of the registration process, all HE providers were obliged to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the OfS that they were implementing the Prevent Duty. The requisite annual return had been prepared for approval by the Council at its meeting on 28 November, for submission to the OfS by 3 December.

18/53 Post Project Report and Management Response – School of Systems Engineering Closure (Item 9)

The Senate received the Post Project Review into the closure of the School of Systems Engineering.

Two members of the Senate raised factual errors and unjustified assertions contained within the report. The University Secretary asked for specific details, and agreed to correct the version which on to Council, and to ensure that lessons were learned for the future.

18/54 Report of the University Executive Board (Item 10)

The Senate received a Report of the meetings of the University Executive Board held on 25 June, 9 and 16 July, 13 August, 3, 10, 17, 24 September, 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 October 2018.

In particular, members of the Senate sought to understand possible changes to the Personal Titles process. It was noted that the University's Research Committee was considering the criteria in regard to research income and PGR supervision. It was noted that any significant amendments to the process would need to be discussed with UCU.

The Senate asked that an amendment be made to reflect Fellow of the HEA *or equivalent*; it was agreed that this amendment would be made.

18/55 Report of the University Board for Teaching, Learning and Student Experience (Item 11)

The Senate received the Report of the meetings of the University Board for Teaching, Learning and Student Experience (UBTLSE) held on 10 July, 19 September and 10 October 2018, and on 30 October 2018 on the University's Annual Learning and Teaching Report.

The Senate noted that the report included updates on the Curriculum Framework, Academic Tutor System and Teaching Space Project, along with the outcomes of the Extenuating Circumstances Implementation Review Group, Working Group on Module Credit Weighting and Working Group on effective liaison between Boards of Study and UoRM Programme Boards. The report also provided an account of the Board's recent discussions of the National Student Survey (NSS) 2018, Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2018, Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey 2016/17, UK Engagement Survey (UKES) 2018 and Reading Student Survey (RSS) 2018.

The Senate noted that the following policies had been introduced or revised/updated since its last meeting:

- Revisions to the Quality management and enhancement process at the University of Reading, with effect from 2018/19;
- Revisions to the University guidelines on module descriptions and module description template with effect from 2018/19
- Revisions to the policy on Reviews of Examination Results for Higher Degrees by Thesis;

- The introduction of the Degree Apprenticeships – Guidance for School and ‘How to Approach Degree Apprenticeships’ Toolkit for Schools;
- The introduction of a new Policy on the Academic Tutor System and associated appendices with effect from 2018/19
- Revisions to Section 10: Marking and Section 13: Moderation of the Assessment Handbook with effect from the 2018/19 academic session.
- A revised Programme Handbook template and guidelines for the 2018/19 academic year; and
- Publication of a Guidance note seeking approval to run a student survey.

The Senate received and noted the University’s Annual Learning and Teaching Report and agreed that it be recommended to the Council.

The Senate noted that the University had been accepted for a pilot for subject level TEF. It was acknowledged that this would be a substantial amount of work for Schools and Functions.

18/56 Report of the University Board for Research and Innovation (Item 12)

The Senate noted the report of the University Board for Research and Innovation had not yet met this term. Instead the Senate received an update from the University Research Committee and principal sub-committees.

18/57 Report of the Global Engagement Strategy Board (Item 13)

There was no report on this occasion. Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Mr Raimo) informed the Senate the work Global Engagement Strategy Board was now being embedded in University activity more broadly. A useful joint meeting had been held with the Teaching and Learning Strategy Board earlier in the term.

18/58 Interim update on 2018 student recruitment outturn (Item 14)

The Senate received a report from the Director of Global Recruitment and Admissions giving a provisional analysis and insight into Undergraduate and Postgraduate taught recruitment outturn. A fuller analysis would be submitted to the Senate at its Spring Term meeting.

Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Mr Raimo) drew the Senate’s attention in particular to:

- The mixed picture across Schools and between programmes, but also between UG/PGT/PGR, Home/EU/ Overseas
- Growth in international intake
- Increased growth in off-shore delivery through a range of partnerships, such as NUIST

18/59 Report of the Senate Standing Committee on Examination Results (Item 15)

The Senate received Reports from the Senate Standing Committee on Examination

Results held June to September 2018.

18/60 Report of the Student Appeals Committee (Item 13)

The Senate received the Report of the meeting of the Student Appeals Committee held on 10 July, 15 August, 13, 14 September 2018, and noted the outcomes of the Committee's decisions.

18/61 Items approved by Chair's Action (Item 17 a)

The Senate noted the following items had been approved by Chair's Action:

- Policy and Procedures for the Admission of under 18s onto Undergraduate Programmes
- Admissions Policy covering Postgraduate Research Programmes
- Ratification of a decision taken by the Senate Standing Committee on Examination Results
- Appointment of [Redacted, Section 40] to the Student Appeals Committee
- Appointment of [Redacted, Section 40] to the MERL Committee

18/62 Retirement of Professors (Item 17 b)

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

Professor Vivien Edwards (30.9.2018)

18/63 Other Retirements (Item 17 c)

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

Dr Geoffrey Griffiths (31.07.2018)

Dr John Schollar (31.07.2018)

Ms June Fenner (31.08.2018)

Mr Melvin Morbey (21.09.2018)

Dr Peter Cook (30.09.2018)

Mrs Barbara Pembroke (31.10.2018)

Mrs Julia Munro (30.11.2018)

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Student representatives withdrew from the remainder of the meeting
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