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Senate

Open Minutes

Date of meeting: **Wednesday, 06 June 2018**

Duration of meeting: **2.00pm to 4.30pm**

Location: **G5.05 High Wycombe Campus**

Attendance

Name	Faculty / Directorate	Category of membership
Rebecca Bunting	Vice-Chancellor's Office	Ex-officio (Chair)
Miriam Moir	Academic Registry	Secretary
Nick Braisby	Vice-Chancellor's Office	Ex-officio
Sean Mackney	Vice-Chancellor's Office	Ex-officio
Ellie Smith	Academic Registry	Ex-officio
Julie Irwin	Learning & Teaching	Ex-officio
Phil Wood	Design, Media & Management	Ex-officio
Paul Morgan	Society & Health	Ex-officio
Lyndon Buck	Design, Media & Management	Elected
John Hathaway	Design, Media & Management	Elected
Carlo Lusuardi	Design, Media & Management	Elected
Nic Fryer	Design, Media & Management	Elected
Tim Coole	Design, Media & Management	Elected
Penny Farrelly	Society & Health	Elected
Lee Curtis	Society & Health	Elected
Ciaran O'Keefe	Society & Health	Elected
Margaret Rioga	Society & Health	Elected
Ben Parmar	Students' Union	Student Member
Lauren O'Shea	Students' Union	Student Member

Apologies

Name	Faculty / Directorate	Category of membership
Gulen Addis	Society & Health	Elected
Karen Harrison-White	Society & Health	Elected
Karen Buckwell-Nutt	Society & Health	Ex-officio
Florin Ioras	Research	Ex-officio

Welcome / Apologies for absence

18.45 The Chair welcomed members to the Senate meeting. Apologies for absence were received.

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2018

18.46 The open minutes of the meeting were approved as an accurate record.

Status of actions from the 14 March 2018 meeting

18.47 It was noted that there were two actions arising from the last meeting. It was noted that despite an increase in the number of reminders, the student evaluation participation rate had not markedly improved. Senate members suggested that the University should consider giving timetabled slots for students to complete the questionnaires, or to evaluate by course rather than by module to reduce the number of interactions required. Further research into the reasons for non-participation was needed, and it was suggested that the Union Council could help to facilitate this. Encouraging students to see participation as part of their social responsibility towards improving the experience of their peers was also suggested.

Chair's Actions taken since the previous meeting

18.48 Senate endorsed the Chair's Actions taken since the last meeting as noted on the summary sheet provided.

Vice Chancellor's Report to Senate

18.49 The Vice-Chancellor gave a verbal report to Senate.

18.50 It was noted that the University had applied for registration with the Office for Students (OfS), and details of this would be given to Senate members under the agenda item 7.

18.51 The Vice Chancellor congratulated the University on its achievement of the TEF Silver award, thanked all of those involved in preparing the information required and gave special thanks to Professor Nick Braisby for his leadership of the application. It was noted that the application had been a successful team effort.

OfS Registration (SEN18.09)

- 18.52 Senate was reminded that the Office for Students had provided guidance for the registration process in March, and it was noted that the University had submitted its application by the deadline of 23 May 2018. An OfS assessor will consider the application and may require further information to be provided.
- 18.53 It was noted that the OfS requires institutions who are not yet registered to ensure that applicants for September 2019 are made aware that registration is awaited.
- 18.54 Details of the application were given, and it was noted that this consisted of background information to the University and its awarding powers, its governance and management, its academic partners and details of its governing-body members and constitution. Attention was drawn to the specific documents provided to Senate.
- 18.55 **Annex C – Consumer Law (SEN18.09a)** details the University’s approach to compliance with consumer protection law, and the actions taken to monitor and review compliance and to mitigate risk. Information was also provided on the University’s complaints handling process.
- 18.56 **Annex G – Management and Governance (SEN18.09b)** details the University’s management and governance arrangements, and its compliance with the CUC Higher Education Code of Governance. Information was also provided student engagement in governance.
- 18.57 The **Student Protection Plan (SEN18.09c)** is a new policy, detailing the University’s arrangements to protect the quality and continuation of study for students should adverse circumstances occur. It includes the measures in place to monitor and mitigate against risk, and details actions to be taken in a range of circumstances. As a new policy this will be kept under review, and its approval by the OfS is awaited.
- 18.58 The **Refund and Compensation Policy (SEN18.09d)** is also a new Policy, detailing the University’s approach to providing redress to students and its resource planning for refund and compensation payments.
- 18.59 The **Access and Participation Plan 2019-20 (SEN18.10)** was submitted as part of the OfS registration application. The analysis of data undertaken for the TEF 3 application was utilised in the Access and Participation Plan. Senate noted that the University is successful in widening participation, where it performs above benchmark, but that further work needed to be undertaken to improve achievement (“success”) and the securing of highly skilled employment after graduation (“progression”).
- 18.60 Senate was informed that the OfS had suggested that in the future more information based on protected characteristics may be required, and the sector was considering the collection, storage and access to this sensitive information.
- 18.61 It was noted that the outcome of the OfS application for registration would be known in mid-September.

Bucks Academic Framework (SEN18.11)

- 18.62 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor updated Senate on the pilot project introducing the Bucks Academic Framework to specific categories of academic staff, enabling calibration against the expectations. Engagement with the Union had also taken place, and the helpful comments received from all had resulted in improvements being made to the Framework. Feedback received during this pilot had resulted in significant changes being made as follows:

- The four dimensions in the original Framework have been rationalised and reduced to three: High Quality Performance, Knowledge and Practice, and Leadership and Management.
- There has been a move away from examples to criteria.
- The tables now detail criteria set against expectations.

18.63 It was also noted that the expected qualification of a doctorate or equivalent would be changed from essential to desirable.

18.64 It was explained that the Framework was designed to clarify discussions at PDRs, to enable Line Managers to discuss performance in the context of the University's expectations and was presented for Senate's approval in order for it to be used in the next round of PDRs. Senate was informed that further work on the production of guidance in the interpretation and application of the criteria would be undertaken in time for the PDRs.

18.65 Senate members were asked for their comments on the Framework. While it was recognised that the Framework will be a useful tool in quality conversations about performance, and that the clarification of expectations was welcomed, a number of concerns were raised over the following:

- The urgency with which Senate was being asked to approve the Framework, which was a long and complex document
- Whether the Framework was in line with practice at other institutions
- Consultation with academic staff
- The lack of an Equality Impact assessment
- The timeframe – introducing the Framework before the guidance had been prepared
- How the Framework would be used in terms of recruitment
- The potential impact on staff development resourcing

18.66 Senate members were reminded that work had been undertaken on the Framework for two years, and that it had been discussed at Senate on several occasions. Work on the Framework had been undertaken by representative groups around the University and the resulting document was a collective view. It was considered important that the University should have a mechanism to measure performance consistently and equally, and that this should be in place for 2018-19.

18.67 It was also noted that concerns raised by Senate members involved the operationalising of the Framework and were more to do with process rather than with principles.

18.68 Due to the concerns raised it was proposed that Senate would reconvene on 9 July 2018 with the Bucks Academic Framework as the single item on the agenda. Before that date a number of actions would be undertaken:

- An Equality Impact assessment to be undertaken. **ACTION:** Nick Braisby
- Heads of School to discuss the Framework with their teams and send one collated response per School to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor. **ACTION:** Heads of School
- Further feedback from UCU to be sent to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor. **ACTION:** Carlo Lusuardi

OIA Annual Statement (SEN18.12)

- 18.69 Senate's attention was drawn to the Annual Statement produced by the OIA. It was noted that the number of complaints forwarded to the OIA for Bucks was small, and that most complaints were dealt with internally. Those handled by the OIA fell into four categories: Academic Status, Financial, Service Issues and Welfare and Accommodation.
- 18.70 It was noted that the OIA had recognised Bucks' engagement with development opportunities for staff that it offered.

University Deliberative Committees– revisions (SEN18.13)

- 18.71 The covering paper supplied to Senate gave a full explanation for the revisions to the formal document *University Deliberative Committees*, undertaken to ensure that the committee memberships are aligned to the new academic structure.
- 18.72 It was noted that the number of elected members on Senate had been reduced and it was requested that this be reconsidered.
- 18.73 Senate agreed that the addition of more members would be beneficial to Senate, and that a further revision to the document should be made, to be then approved by Chair's Action.

ACTION: Ellie Smith

In Year Retrieval (SEN18.14)

- 18.74 Senate's attention was drawn to the proposal to introduce an in-year retrieval scheme for Foundation Year and Level 4 students from 2018-19. The proposal was the culmination of a pilot scheme undertaken in 2017-18, a consultation with staff undertaken in May 2018 and sector research. Education Committee had discussed the principles on several occasions, and a working group from Education Committee had put forward the final proposal for Chair's Action which had now been taken.
- 18.75 Following discussion Senate welcomed and approved the proposal and agreed that the changes made to the *Academic Assessment Regulations* to accommodate it could be taken by Chair's Action.

ACTION: Miriam Moir

External Examiners' Handbook – update (SEN18.15)

- 18.76 Senate noted that a number of updates to the External Examiners' Handbook and to membership of the External Examiners Appointment Panel had been made.
- 18.77 Senate approved the proposed changes with effect from June 2018.

External Examiner Appointments (SEN18.16)

- 18.78 Senate received the update from the External Examiner Approval Panel and endorsed the decisions made in each instance.

Validation: recommendation of awards for approval (SEN18.17)

- 18.79 Senate reviewed the outcomes of validation events held since the previous meeting, and noted the update that programmes seen at validation events on 30th May and 31st May had all been approved with conditions to be met by 4 July 2018.
- 18.80 Senate approved programmes for delivery where there were no conditions and where the conditions set had been satisfactorily completed.
- 18.81 Senate noted that there were a number of courses with conditions due to be met by during June and July and over the summer and agreed that these would be approved by Chair's Action.

Report from Education Committee 9 May 2018 (Minutes)

- 18.82 The Minutes from the meeting held on 9 May 2018 had been circulated. The business of the committee included:
- Updates on the Access and Participation Strategy and the Education Strategy
 - Developing an Assessment Approach
 - Improving participation in module evaluation
 - Students' Union Report on Programme Committees
 - Chairing arrangements for Boards of Examiners

Report from Research & Enterprise Committee 15 May 2018 (Minutes)

- 18.83 The Minutes from the meeting held on 15 May 2018 had been circulated. The business of the committee included:
- Update on REF preparations
 - Developing research work with museums and archives
 - Update on the Innovation Hub

Report from Academic Planning Committee 19 April 2018 (Minutes)

- 18.84 The Minutes from the meetings held on 19 April 2018 had been circulated. The business of the committees included:
- Consideration of a number of initial proposals and business cases
- 18.85 Senate was reminded that the Minutes of this meeting were confidential and business sensitive.

Date of next meeting

- 18.86 The date of the next meeting is Monday 9 July 2018 at 1pm-2pm with the one agenda item of The Bucks Academic Framework.