**BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY**                                     **CONFIRMED**

**SENATE**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SENATE held on
16 MARCH 2011**


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| Present: | Prof J Vinney (**Chair**)<br>Mr C Allen; Ms A Allerston; Ms M Barron; Prof M Bennett; Dr C Bond; Dr S Eccles; Mrs K Everett; Mr T Horner; Mr A James; Ms J Jenkin (**Secretary**); Mr S Jukes; Ms Ko Leech; Prof J Roach; Mr J Tarrant; Dr K Vall; Mr D Willey (part A only); Ms J Woodcock. |
| Observers: | Prof D Buhalis; Prof T Darvill; Prof B Gabrys. |
| In attendance: | Ms C Cherry (Policy Adviser to the VC); Ms N Kett (Policy & Committees Manager); Mr G Rayment (Committee Clerk); Dr H Schutkowski (for Dean of the School of Applied Sciences). |
| Apologies received: | Prof S Ersser; Ms S Jeary; Mr P Kneller Prof B Richards; Prof G Thomas; Prof R Vaughan; Dr K Wilkes; |
| Not present: | Mr J Andrews; Prof P Comninos; Prof S Deutsch; Prof P Lewis; Mr D Newell; Prof D Osselton; Prof T Sheppard; Prof A Webster. |


**1.       MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SENATE HELD ON 10 November 2010**

The Minutes were approved as an accurate record.

**1.1     Matters Arising**

1.1.1     Minute 1.1.1  Work on the review of the use of research students for teaching is being progressed by the Academic Standards Committee (ASC) and a final version will be presented to the next Senate meeting.  Student feedback has included concerns regarding PhD lecturers marking assignments.  This will also be addressed through the ASC review.

1.1.2     Minute 1.2.3:  Progress on the review of peer observation among teaching staff was being made through the EEC.  It was anticipated that the review would be concluded this academic year.

1.1.3     Minute 4.2  The Policy & Committees Manager explained the Freedom of Information principles which were applicable to Electronic Senate meetings.  Essentially the same principles apply as to a live meeting, including the exemptions to the provision of information under the legislation.  Exemptions could apply to the Electronic Senate on-line comments depending on the usual factors (for example exemptions on the grounds of personal data, commercial sensitivity and the application of the public interest test).

1.1.4     Minute 6.5  A student experience action plan had been produced and submitted to the Electronic Senate for noting.  Further updates on its implementation will be submitted to future meetings as appropriate.


**2       REPORT OF ELECTRONIC SENATE MEETING OF 23 FEBRUARY TO 2 MARCH 2011**

2.1      Senate noted the report of the electronic Senate meeting. The Chair explained that a

sub-group of the University Leadership Team (ULT) was now reviewing the Senate and Executive committee structures. Senate also noted the paper on forthcoming Senate vacancies (SEN-1011-30). There were no actions to bring forward to live meeting.

2.2    The Senate discussed the need to ensure that the electronic meeting was quorate and whether it was necessary for members to comment on papers in order to be counted towards the quorum. Members agreed that it was too onerous to have to mark 'noted' against every paper and it was agreed to introduce a form of register where members could note their participation in the electronic Senate with a single entry (see Item 5.1 below).                                                                                                          **NK**

## 3.    BU VISION AND VALUES

3.1    The Chair tabled three papers showing the key themes which had arisen from his conversation events with staff and students, plus a GANTT chart showing the timing of the consultation process to date and through to July 2011. The Board meeting on 8 April was significant as it would test some of these emerging themes. After further consultation and discussion the revised BU Vision and Values would be signed-off by the Board in July 2011.

3.2    The current vision (produced in 2006) was considered to be fit for purpose but not very distinctive. There has been a shift (shown in the 'wordle' diagrams) of emphasis with student experience and excellence in teaching and research coming through as more important themes in the recent discussions. There would be further events over the next few months and a Confluence website (or similar mechanism such as myBU) hosting all the discussion documents and outputs. The Chair invited comments on the process moving forward. It was confirmed that the electronic site would initially be open to ULT for discussion before being opened-up to students and staff. Members discussed the short timetable and the rapid pace of change, although this was felt to be largely driven by external factors. Members also discussed the cultural changes which have taken place within the University since 2006. The Chair encouraged members to engage with the discussion through the various consultation processes over the next few months.

## 4.    RESEARCH & ENTERPRISE COMMITTEE – UPDATE TO TERMS OF REFERENCE

4.1    The PVC Research, Enterprise & Internationalisation (R,E & I) presented revised terms of reference for the Research & Enterprise Committee (a Senate Standing Committee with Board representation). The proposed amendments had arisen from a recommendation from the internal auditors (Kingston City Group) that it might not be appropriate for independent Board Members to be engaged in research and enterprise matters at an operational level. In future a Board member would be in attendance as an observer at the once-a-term 'formal' meetings to consider strategic research and enterprise issues. These meetings would be interspersed with smaller 'informal' monthly operational meetings. It was agreed that Student's Union Bournemouth University (SUBU) representation would also be included for the termly meetings and that references to 'informal meetings' will be removed from the draft Terms of Reference. The Senate endorsed the amended Terms of Reference for recommendation to the Board.                                                                                          **MB**

## 5.    ELECTRONIC SENATE PROCESS

5.1    The Policy & Committees Manager explained the changes being made to the Electronic Senate process so that the onerous requirements for members to mark 'noted' against individual papers would be removed. Also, standing committee minutes would include notes to show whether they contained any items for approval by Senate. Members suggested that a change was required to the time that the Electronic Senate closed (i.e.

some members had tried to access it on the final day only to find it closed at 9.00am that morning).  It was agreed to change the closing time to the end of the working day.  Members asked what would happen if an Electronic Senate was not quorate.  In these circumstances, the Chair would take a view on how to proceed although it was preferable that the meetings be quorate.                                                    **NK**


6.    **DEBATE: ASSESSMENT TURNAROUND AND FEEDBACK**

6.1.    The Director of Student & Academic Services (SAS) introduced this background paper to provide a framework for the discussion.  She and Prof Thomas had been tasked with reviewing the impact of the 3 week assessment turnaround policy.  They found that this had now been implemented successfully across the University.  However, an informal survey of other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) assessment turnaround confirmed that there was no correlation between faster turnaround of assignments and quality of feedback or improved student satisfaction.  It was proposed therefore that a standard for feedback be introduced in order to help drive up quality and student satisfaction.  This might be based on an existing template and would apply to all types of feedback.  In order to help implement these quality measures, Schools would be given discretion to extend the turnaround deadline to 4 weeks in certain circumstances (when pre-planned and clearly communicated to students).

6.2    Members felt that it was important to set a date for feedback and stick to it.  It was broadly agreed that staff would be happy to accept more flexibility on the deadline.  Occasionally being able to have 4 weeks to complete assessments would help to alleviate pressure in some areas. It was noted that, following a sometimes difficult implementation, Schools were now used to the 3 weeks deadline.  The problems arising from students who were given extensions were noted (they were still tied to the 3 week deadline so this is an issue for some lecturers).  The Student Representatives informed Senate that feedback included some incidences of lecturers just giving the overall marks to students in order to meet the 3 week target and then providing detailed feedback later.  They also noted that students tended to compare grades and would query any apparent inconsistencies.  Some students had asked that they only have one member of academic staff providing their feedback throughout a course for consistency (in some cohorts it can currently vary between assignments).  In general personalised feedback was preferred (although other forms of feedback were also valued) and 'better feedback' was considered more important to students than 'faster feedback'.  Provision of a 'model answer' was often helpful for students.

6.3    In respect of an assessment template, most members would prefer to be able to provide free text rather than having to adhere to 'generic tick boxes'.  Some academic staff were also happy to give group feedback so that students could 'learn from others' mistakes' in addition to their own.  It was suggested, however that students do not always see this as feedback in the same category as personalised feedback.  Some academic staff would welcome an efficient electronic assessment system and felt this would help to drive-up the quality of feedback.

6.4    Members discussed the value & appropriateness of the 3 week turnaround standard.  It was suggested that it was useful as a guide but not always helpful as an absolute deadline.  It might be more acceptable to use it as an average measure and allow more flexibility.  Practical considerations were also noted.  For example, group work reduces the amount of marking required.  It was more challenging for large cohort sizes to achieve the target.  It was suggested that 'short fat' units put greater pressure on academic staff.

6.5    In summary, Senate broadly agreed that the benchmark for the turnaround of assignments should remain at 3 weeks, but that this could be extended to 4 weeks in exceptional circumstances provided this was clearly communicated to students in advance.  Further consideration should be given to investigating the wider issues around assessment quality and feedback separately (including the consideration of

alternative models employed by other HEIs).  The Director of SAS would take these comments on board and bring a fuller report back to the next meeting.  Members were welcome to submit any further comments to her direct.                                                          **JJ**


## 7.    REVIEW OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

7.1    The PVC (R,E &I) introduced this paper setting out early draft proposals arising from the Working Group to review Postgraduate (PG) Support and the role of the Graduate School.  There were several reasons for reviewing the position and role of the Graduate School, including legacy issues arising from the Professional Services Restructuring. Also, emerging data showed that the University had poor PhD student completion rates. Consequently, a review had taken place (as outlined in the paper), involving students & SAS as well as academic staff.   This review had looked at models used in a selection of other HEIs.  A spectrum of possible models was proposed ranging from a 'registry version' Graduate School administering PGR students only and focused on operational matters to a fuller PG Graduate School with the aim of delivering PG student experience and growth of BU research culture. Senate's views were sought on where the University should position itself on this spectrum.

7.2    Prof Roach added that the Working Group had looked at Postgraduate Research (PGR) and Postgraduate Taught (PGT – i.e. 'Masters' students) to assess 'what a PGR/T student looks like'.  They concluded that such students should be enterprising, innovative, well rounded researchers.  They also concluded that there was potentially a lot of synergy to be gained between PGR and PGT.  There are shared skills sets between Masters and PhD students.  The idea of joining a 'PG community' could form an attractive proposition to PG students. It was suggested that Masters students are mostly part-time and in employment, however, and that this might just add an unwanted level of additional complexity to their student experience.  However, it may be worth exploring further for full-time Masters students.  Some members felt that there was no particular demand for this 'dual citizenship'.  Other members felt that the Graduate School was essentially and 'artificial concept' whereas others felt it was important to have a Graduate School to provide strong academic leadership.  PhD student feedback suggested that students liked the centralised feel of the Graduate School and having a single point of contact.  Others felt that PG students seek recognition that they are different and have a need to feel part of a PG community.  Members suggested that PGTs tended to relate to their School but not the wider University.

7.3    Members considered the University's UG/PG balance.  The Chair informed Senate that BU was currently at about 10% PG which was below sector average.  This was an unregulated market so there were no restraints on growth.

7.4    The Policy Adviser also suggested that Senate recognise that it would not be known for some time how PG demand will change with the flux in HE environment.  Also we do not know about the impact of visa changes (tier 4 and 2 year work visa) which may reduce demand from PG overseas students.

7.5    The Chair thanked members for their thoughts and said that proposals would be taken back to the Working Group for further discussion and brought back to the next Senate meeting.                                                                                                                        **MB**


## 8.    MATTERS RAISED BY MEMBERS

8.1    No additional issues were raised, beyond those already raised and responded to in the Electronic Senate.  Members queried whether making this item part of the Electronic Senate might be seen as devaluing the issues raised by staff.  It was explained that this was not the intention, but it was agreed that, for future meetings, any matters raised by elected representatives would be brought forward to part C of the live agenda to ensure

that there was opportunity for further debate if needed.


## 9. MINUTES OF STANDING COMMITTEES


### 9.1 UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
23 March 2011

The minutes were noted.  Members noted the Committee's requested for clarification on the issue of non-research ethics issues.  The Chair asked that the Committee look at other models in the HE sector and suggest revised Terms of Reference to broaden its scope.  For example, to cover all academic ethical issues and refer other ethical issues to the ULT.

### 9.2 STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE
23 March 2011

The minutes were noted.

### 9.3 RESEARCH & ENTERPRISE COMMITTEE
25 March 2011

The minutes were noted.


### SCHOOL ACADEMIC BOARDS

### 9.4 Health & Social Care
3 March 2011

The minutes were noted.

## 10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10.1   Widening Access: The Chair informed Senate that Office for Fair Access (OFFA) guidance had now been received and work was moving forward on assessing the impact for BU.  There was an explicit link to fees that we charge.  Discussions on what level of fees the University would charge were moving forward.  Some universities had already made announcements.  Market research was also being undertaken to help inform these decisions.  Recommendations would go to the Board for consideration on 8th April 2011.


   **DATE OF NEXT MEETING –** 22 June 2011, 2.15pm Boardroom.