

SENATE

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SENATE held on 14 MARCH 2012

- Present: Prof J Vinney (**Chair**)
Mr C Allen; Ms A Allerston; Prof M Bennett; Dr C Bond; Mr D Evans; Prof B Gabrys; Mr J Holroyd; Mr T Horner; Mr A James; Dr S Jeary; Ms J Jenkin (**Secretary**); Ms K Jones; Mr S Jukes; Mrs J Mack; Prof T McIntyre-Bhatty; Mr D Newell; Ms J Quest; Prof J Roach; Prof G Thomas; Mr D Willey; Prof T Zhang.
- In attendance: Ms K Pichlmann (Head of Admissions, Item 5); Mr G Rayment (Committee Clerk); Dr R Scullion (Media School, Item2).
- Apologies received: Mr J Andrews; Prof D Buhalis; Prof P Comninou; Prof R Palmer; Mr D Reeve; Prof H Schutkowski; Mr J Tarrant; Dr K Vall; Dr K Wilkes.

1. WELCOMES, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies were noted as above and the Chair welcomed Professor Zhang, the newly appointed Head of the Graduate School, to the Senate membership. There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SENATE HELD ON 2 NOVEMBER 2011

The Minutes were approved as an accurate record.

2.1 Matters Arising

- 2.1.1 Minute 3.4. Review of the Electronic Senate process: The Secretary informed members that work was ongoing to review the electronic Senate process with a view to presenting any proposed changes for the following academic year. In the meantime, a single pdf document containing all of the electronic Senate papers in one electronic file had been made available for those who preferred to receive papers in this format.
- 2.1.2 Media School Charter. Following on from the Senate's previous discussion of the BU Promise, Dr Richard Scullion joined the meeting to present the Media School Charter. This was presented as an example of good practice which might be adopted by other Schools. The Charter had been produced in consultation with students and staff and was written in plain language which would be clear to all participants. It was driven by the requirement to improve student experience and had a pedagogic focus, designed to establish the collaborative nature of the academic/student partnership. Work was ongoing within the Media School to consider how the Charter could be communicated and embedded. Members welcomed the document and praised it for its clarity and simplicity. Members discussed the benefits of the cultural changes which could arise from such a charter and the DVC (TMB) suggested that this cultural imperative was more useful than targeting new/changes to policy as blunt instruments to re-set expectations of behaviour. Members agreed that there was no reason why such a model should not be implemented in other Schools, tailored as necessary to meet specific requirements. The Charter could be communicated to pre-course students as well as newly recruited staff members. It was suggested that it could be tailored to include academic activity beyond teaching (such as professional practice aspects) and workshops (in addition to lectures and seminars which were specified in the Media School model). It was also noted that there should not be nugatory duplication between

any Charter-based endeavours across the University and the development of the potential BU Commitment.

3. REPORT OF ELECTRONIC SENATE MEETING OF 24 to 29 FEBRUARY 2012

- 3.1 The Report was noted. The Chair thanked Mr James for his comments regarding the presentation of student reports at School Academic Boards and his concerns that these were presented only for 'noting' rather than fuller discussion. It was agreed that Deans would ensure that such reports were handled appropriately at meetings in future.

ACTION: To ensure student representative's reports receive an appropriate level of consideration at School Academic Board meetings.

ACTION BY: Deans

4. CHAIR'S UPDATE

4.1 BU Strategic Plan 2012-2018

- 4.1.1 The Chair reported that the BU Strategic Plan had been finalised and published and work was now proceeding within Schools and Services to draw up detailed delivery plans for the next 6 years, including consideration of budgets and resource implications. These plans would be subject to several iterations and scrutiny by the University Executive Team. The SUBU President welcomed the engagement with the Students' Union in drawing up the delivery plans. The Chair also updated Senate on the progress of government's Higher Education Bill. This had been delayed and was now expected to be presented in the second half of the next Parliamentary session. Indications suggested the Bill may be smaller in scope than originally expected, but that it would follow the same direction of travel with a focus on increased competitiveness in the sector.

4.2 National Student Survey

- 4.2.1 The DVC (TMB) informed Senate that the NSS campaign had been successful in achieving a high early response rate from students. IPSOS/MORI would now begin chasing outstanding respondents. The results of the NSS were expected to be made available in August.

4.3 Assessment Board Terms of Reference

- 4.3.1 The DVC (TMB) explained that the Academic Standards Committee (ASC) had established a Working Group which had undertaken a lengthy, in-depth review of the assessment process and proposed a number of changes which had been agreed by the ASC in December 2011, to come into effect this academic year. The new process had been established in consultation with the academic community. Amended Terms of Reference for academic boards had been drafted as part of this process and required approval by ASC and subsequently, Senate. The changes were not substantial. Due to timing issues (the next ASC meeting was not scheduled to take place until May) Senate were asked to delegate authority to the Chairs of ASC and Senate to approve the revised Terms of Reference on their behalf. At the request of members it was agreed that the Terms of Reference, together with the relevant extracts of ASC minutes, would be circulated to members electronically. Subject to this, Senate delegated authority to the Chair to approve the Terms of Reference.

ACTION: To circulate the revised Assessment Board Terms of Reference to members and to delegate authority to the Chair to approve them on behalf of the membership.

ACTION BY: VC/DVC(TMB)

5. FAIR ACCESS AND WIDENING PARTICIPATION

- 5.1 The Secretary introduced this debate by explaining that a Fair Access Working Group had been established to oversee and review the Fair Access Agreement, working to a submission deadline of mid-May. A Fair Access Management Group had also been established to ensure that fair access was embedded throughout all Schools and Services. The SUBU representatives presented a summary of the outcomes from the consultation with the Students' Union. Two key issues had emerged in respect of hidden course costs and bursaries. On the former, they welcomed the University's commitment to transparency in respect of course costs, but questioned whether the same information was available consistently to students on all programmes, and whether there was a risk of additional unforeseen costs arising mid-course. On bursaries, they noted that the University offered a choice of fee waivers or accommodation bursaries, but highlighted that fee waivers delivered no benefit to students in the short term. For accommodation bursaries, they noted that these were only available in respect of specific locations and that students in other accommodation could not benefit from this support. Also, these were limited to students who applied to Bournemouth University as a firm choice and not those listing Bournemouth as an 'insurance' option. They also queried the policy in respect of accommodation bursaries for care leavers.
- 5.2 The Head of Admissions responded that consultation was ongoing with the Accommodation Office on providing a wider choice of accommodation which would be eligible for bursaries, however she explained that the University had to be mindful of the potential financial risks associated with arrangements involving private landlords. In respect of care leavers, they were eligible for an accommodation bursary in any university controlled building. This policy recognised that care leavers, unlike other students, needed all year-round accommodation. However, care leavers represented a very small proportion of the student population. She also explained that consideration was ongoing in respect of admissions processes and policy in respect of 'insurance choices' versus 'firm choices' and how these would be handled in future.
- 5.3 Mrs Mack, the Academic Partnerships Manager provided a short presentation on the University's approach to widening participation and future developments. Performance had previously been measured against a KPI to meet 2 out of 3 HEFCE benchmarks, but progress against this target had not been achieved. Outreach activity had been undertaken via the 'Aim Higher' initiative. It was suggested that there were some negative perceptions of widening participation in some areas and that this weakened the level of institutional commitment. Moving forward, there would be a focus on outreach activity, provision of financial support and improving retention. Examples of outreach activity included the University's sponsorship of St Aldelm's Academy. Through the Access Agreement performance would be measured as a percentage of total expenditure. She explained that there would be fewer bursaries in 2012. In reviewing the Agreement it would be necessary to consider the impact of the agreement to date and the effect of tuition fee increases; the decision to withdraw student numbers from partner institutions; and the need to align widening participation activity to the new Strategic Plan and the academic core.
- 5.4 The Head of the Graduate School noted that widening participation was a cross-cutting theme in the Strategic Plan, but wondered whether it could be made clearer, with perhaps more specific projects for target groups (for example, ethnic minorities). The University had below average retention rates for some target groups which could be addressed through specific activities. She also suggested that there was a need for strong leadership and clear ownership of any performance targets in order to ensure delivery.
- 5.5 Members debated the issue of fee waivers and the lack of immediate benefit which they provided to students. The University recognised this issue, but noted that the Government had encouraged universities to adopt fee waivers. This is why the University had introduced the option of accommodation bursaries and was also

considering the introduction of a voucher scheme to provide additional benefits to students. Members debated the use of 'aspire' cards and similar schemes adopted in other universities which provided access to a wide variety of services. Some institutions also used the data gathered from the use of these cards to gauge levels of student engagement and highlight any potential issues for students who were failing to use the services on offer.

- 5.6 Members debated the University's performance in terms of the percentage of income spent on widening participation. Historically the University had appeared in the upper quartile of the league table of expenditure but had subsequently moved down the list in relation to other institutions. Some members felt that ethnic diversity was a particular challenge for the University and, whilst this was not a financial issue, it was important in terms of instilling a culture of global citizenship. In terms of outreach and Aim higher it was noted that the goal of such activity was to raise aspirations and participation in higher education generally – not necessarily limited to recruitment to Bournemouth University. Others suggested that the University might consider a wider variety of recruitment methods – such as an increased focus on interviews, portfolios and contextual information rather than grades. This was already the case for some programmes and it was suggested that it might be helpful to produce some data on whether it had actually widened participation on these courses. The SUBU President asked whether there were any particular arrangements for HSC students who were not in receipt of NHS funding and the Dean of HSC explained that such students would be eligible for the same support as any other HEFCE students.
- 5.7 The Chair thanked members for their input. The OFFA guidelines were expected to be published in late April and conversations with OFFA on the details of Access Agreements would take place from May.

6. OTHER REPORTS

6.1 Updated Terms of Reference for the Senate Research and Enterprise Committee

- 6.1.1 The Chair presented draft revised Terms of Reference for the Research and Enterprise Committee which brought the Committee in line with the new approach to knowledge exchange activity and made some updates to the membership. The revised Terms of Reference were approved.

6.2 Terms of Reference for the Student Voice Committee

- 6.2.1 The DVC(TMB) presented these Terms of Reference which established the former Student Voice Working Group as a permanent sub-committee of the Education and Student Experience Committee. The Terms of Reference were approved.

6.3 Revisions to External Examining Policy

- 6.3.1 The DVC(TMB) presented proposed amendments to the policy in respect of External Examiners to bring the policy in line with the revised QAA quality code on external examiners. The revised policy was approved.

6.4 Graduate School Academic Board (GSAB) Structure

- 6.4.1 The Head of the Graduate School presented this paper which established a structure and Terms of Reference for the Graduate School Academic Board and its sub-committee, the Research Degrees Committee. These reflected the Graduate School's enhanced remit in respect of PGR and PGT student experience and overseeing the delivery of research degrees. It was agreed to add a SUBU Representative to the membership of the GSAB (in addition to the student representation already present). Subject to this amendment the Terms of Reference were approved.

ACTION: Terms of Reference approved subject to amendment of the membership as above.

ACTION BY: Head of the Graduate School

7. MATTERS RAISED BY MEMBERS

7.1 There were no matters raised for the live meeting.

8. MINUTES OF STANDING COMMITTEES

8.1 Research & Enterprise Committee, 29 February 2012 (unconfirmed)

The minutes were noted.

8.2 Honorary Awards Task Group, 1 March 2012 (unconfirmed)

The minutes were noted. The recommendations for 2012 Honorary Awards were approved and will be presented to the University Board for their approval on 27th April. Some members suggested that one of the nominations might be deferred until 2013. It was also suggested that the criteria and/or process for considering nominations be reviewed for next year. Both of these points would be drawn to the Board's attention.

8.3 Academic Standards Committee, 15 February 2012 (unconfirmed)

The minutes were noted.

8.4 Business School, School Academic Board, 15 February 2012 (unconfirmed)

The minutes were noted.

8.5 School of Design, Engineering and Computing, 22 February 2012 (unconfirmed)

The minutes were noted.

8.6 School of Health & Social Care, 15 February 2012 (unconfirmed)

The minutes were noted.

8.7 The Media School, 28 February 2012 (unconfirmed)

The minutes were noted. In respect of online assessment handling it was confirmed that there were no mandatory targets for the roll-out of the online assessment system.

8.8 The School of Tourism, 15 February 2012 (unconfirmed)

The minutes were noted.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 There was no other business.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

**Electronic Senate – 9.00am, 30 May 2012 to 5.00pm, 8 June 2012
Live meeting – 2.15pm, 20 June 2012 (Boardroom)**