

SENATE

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SENATE held on
19 OCTOBER 2005**

Present: P Curran (Chair)
A Allerston, B Astin, D Ball, M Barron, R Burns, E Caswell, R Dugan,
M Gagan, M Hadfield, M Heinrich, N Hemmington, B Howard,
S Jukes, P Kneller, P Luker, N Richardson, M Riordan,
C Symonds, D Williams, D Willey, R Wynne.

In attendance: J Lewis-Smith; V Wood (Committee Clerk)

Apologies: I Graham, N Grief, A Hunt, C Lewis, A Schofield, Dr K Vall (AECC)

The following new members were welcomed to Senate: Prof Paul Curran, Vice Chancellor, Rita Dugan, non teaching staff representative, Mark Gagan, IHCS teaching staff representative, Molly Heinrich, President of the Students Union, Ben Howard, Vice President Representation – Students' Union and, in his absence, Dr Ken Vall, Principal of the Anglo European College of Chiropractic.

ACTION

1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SENATE HELD ON 22 JUNE 2005

The Minutes were approved as a correct record.

1.1 Matters Arising

1.1.1 Memorial for Dr Coyne

The Pro Vice Chancellor (Corporate Development & Finance) reported that Mrs Coyne had expressed her pleasure that one of the new lecture theatres in the Thomas Hardy Suite would be named in memory of Dr John Coyne, former Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic). Mrs Coyne will be attending the dedication of the Coyne Lecture Theatre in December 2005.

1.1.2 Academic Leave Year

The issues related to the fact that the end of the academic leave year is 31 August had been discussed by the previous Vice Chancellor and the Director of Human Resources. Whilst no changes to the leave year were made, it was agreed that some flexibility might be considered in relation to the permission to carry over five days, if this was for good reason, such as heavy workloads in August.

HoS

1.1.3 Information on Staff Numbers

In response to a matter raised at the last Senate by a teaching staff representative, the Director of Human Resources confirmed that there were 646 (562.5 fte) members of academic staff, including demonstrators and 656 (569.6 fte) in Professional Services. This information is available on the Intrapap under Personnel Information and is updated annually after the HESA return.

1.1.4 Standing Professorial Committee

On behalf of the Standing Professorial Committee, the Director of Human Resources advised that nominations for Visiting Professors would shortly be sought from Schools.

HoS

1.2 Future Senate Agendas

- 1.2.1 The Vice Chancellor put forward proposals to alter the structure of the Senate agenda, one of which was to focus, at the start of meetings, on a major item of development or change within the University.
- 1.2.2 Members felt this should be coordinated with similar discussions held in School Committees, with highlights fed through to Senate, in its role as the focus for discussion and debate on academic matters. Members agreed that this proposal would be beneficial and requested advance notice of the Senate topic(s) to enable elected representatives to gain feedback. It was further suggested that, where appropriate, informational presentations should also be given on new initiatives, such as the VLE system, to raise the awareness of Senate. The Vice Chancellor assured Members that briefing papers on any major item proposing development or change would be circulated well in advance of Senate meetings but the 'system' may take some time to bed down.

VC

2. THE FUTURE OF BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY

- 2.1 The Vice Chancellor reported on the debate, started in September at the Senior Staff Seminar, on the future of the University. The discussion had centred on six dimensions, and the University's position on these both currently and in five to ten years time, focussing initially on the question "What was Bournemouth University for?"
- 2.2 The results of discussions to date, plus any other feedback received by UEG, would be incorporated in a draft corporate plan for the academic year 2006-07. This plan would then be for further debate and consideration within the University, including at Senate, and would eventually result in a new Strategic Plan for the development of the University; a Strategic Plan based on academic excellence and financial robustness, on outputs rather than inputs, and on the development of students as independent life long learners.
- 2.3 The recent National Student Survey (NSS) had, contrary to the staff's perception that high teaching loads led to high levels of student satisfaction, shown Bournemouth University's students to be the least satisfied outside London. Among the responses to the NSS being considered by the University are developments to the TLAS system that would enable good practice to be identified and promulgated whilst also providing support for staff with difficulties.
- 2.4 The Vice Chancellor also commented on the fact that devolution of responsibility for the majority of management information to Schools had created difficulties measuring the institution as a whole, for example the number of publications in journals, papers and books; overseas applications; market share and the employability of graduates in relation to other Universities. For the same reason, the Vice Chancellor added that assurances on the adequacy of Health & Safety throughout the University could not be made by UEG. It was noted that these issues would require resolution, as UEG had to be in a position to make decisions based on sound data available for the University as a whole.
- 2.5 The implications that a higher than usual number of students may have taken up places this academic year, in advance of the introduction of top-up fees, made the recruitment of appropriate student numbers for 2006 entry vital to the immediate future of the University. Members emphasised the importance of securing the maximum possible conversion rate from applicant to student. In respect of the efforts necessary to achieve this objective, members noted that AAT were concerned that increased efforts to raise student numbers may need additional resources in Schools. To ease that increased burden on Schools, the Registrar had agreed that appropriate elements of the process would be undertaken by Registry, for example, acknowledgements of applications would now be carried out centrally. The importance of continued academic staff involvement in the recruitment process was also noted.
- 2.6 Members commented on the enthusiasm being generated amongst staff by the new approach being expounded by the Vice Chancellor, but were concerned that care be taken to ensure that, in

the future, short term financial expediencies should not again take over from the longer term academic drivers currently being proposed. It was noted that a clear commitment to a five year academically driven Strategic Plan would address any immediate concerns over a return being financially led. The Vice Chancellor commented on the low level of the University's debt, compared with other institutions, although the corollary had been a lack of investment. It was felt that the Board would consider a proposal based on academic initiatives, if a convincing argument could be made through an academically and financially creditable plan and reasonable number and space assumptions.

- 2.7 Members wide ranging discussion included the need to address the lack of robustness of the monitoring systems, and the different results obtained depending on the form of data collection. The TLAS system, being based on responses by students, with scores linked to the quality of the unit, could not reflect the academic judgement and the professional commitment of staff. The Vice Chancellor commented that, at the moment, there was insufficient comparative analysis of student feedback and that this would have to be addressed to ensure the best academic outcome for students.
- 2.8 Members questioned why the University was not automatically the first choice for school leavers in the local conurbation and, to date, why the University had not taken advantage of the local older age profile, by offering programmes academically and socially of interest to that age group. The Vice Chancellor commented that Bournemouth was the only University in the centre of the largest non-industrial conurbation in Europe, and that the local demographic profile had seen an increase in younger people. In the past, part time students had not been targeted, primarily for financial reasons but, as this was now a priority of the current Minister for Education, increased funding for part time students was more likely.
- 2.9 The Vice Chancellor also advised that, of the press coverage the University received, there was very little in the national press. As a result, ICR had now taken on a freelance journalist who would be working with Schools and Professional Services to raise the University's profile. Whilst some Members thought that the reason insufficient stories appeared in the local press was lack of involvement in the community, the President of the Students' Union considered it to be more a matter of improving publicity for the wide range of activities that are already taking place.
- 2.10 The Vice Chancellor advised that broadening the University's academic footprint would move the institution away from the present vocational label. As an alternative USP, Members suggested that consideration could be given to using something based on 'professional' or on 'student experience' which would continue to recognise that the University offered something different to the traditional University sector. However, it was agreed that the core message should still be that the University was "student centred"
- 2.11 The new three-week standard for the return of student assignments was discussed, particularly in IHCS where these had to be submitted to external professional bodies. Assessment Standing Group had proposed initial feedback could be given within the deadline with the final mark and detailed feedback given at a later date.
- 2.12 Members commented there should be more cross-University sharing of resources (for example physiotherapy, included in the new Health Services programme, was also part of the Sports programmes) and greater opportunities for discussion outside the School framework, to assist in raising awareness.

3. NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY

- 3.1 The circulated paper had been presented to UMT on 3 October and the survey outcomes, despite caveats, were disappointing as the University did not appear in the upper quartile in any of the assessed areas. Key areas highlighted were poor assessment turnaround; and the University appearing to be disorganised. UMT was seeking an institutional understanding of the information to address difficulties mapping data to particular programmes. At the recent meeting

of ASC, SQCs were asked to discuss the Survey, and HoAG's to pull together information from sources like APRMs.

- 3.2 As one of the other University information sources being tapped, the President of the Students' Union was coordinating both the Union's information and that from the Student Advice Centre. The Head of ADQ was taking forward developments with University questionnaires that considered programme, rather than unit feedback. Developments included helping students become familiar, earlier in their programmes, with answering NSS-type questions and raising awareness of how their feedback would be utilised and, consequently, how their responses contributed to the perception of their own achievements as well as those of the institution. The President of the Students' Union was coordinating meetings between the Vice Chancellor and final year students on both campuses. Feedback would also be sought from graduates at Awards Ceremonies (as these were the students who responded to the NSS survey). Alan James was revisiting the Students' Union submission to the QAA Audit to compare with those responses with the NSS responses. The impact of feedback from IHCS students not being included was also being investigated.
- 3.3 Members discussed issues around students' expectations in relation to other institutions (of which they have little knowledge). Members felt that, as Bournemouth University encouraged students to be critical, care was required that realistic and achievable expectations were met and to ensure that unachievable performance standards are avoided.
- 3.4 Members felt that, even if some questions could be asked about data integrity, all other universities had been judged from the same base; although other institutions may have made greater efforts to encourage students to give favourable responses. The Vice Chancellor commented that similar results recorded in the service sector would be regarded as excellent, and emphasised that the scores were based on a very narrow range.
- 3.5 A Member commented that students could be disproportionately de-motivated by a small number of staff who continually did not meet marking standards, and appeared generally unenthusiastic about their discipline.
- 3.6 Members agreed that the issues raised by the National Student Survey could not be ignored, and were assured that their comments would be fed through to the Response Group.

4. VICE CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

- 4.1 The Vice Chancellor informed Members that the Report presented would be the last but one in its current format as would a similar Report presented to the Board for their information. In future, it would be more streamlined, with a format more appropriate to the audience being addressed.

VC

4.2 Capital Projects : DDA Compliance – Phase II

The President of the Students Union, whilst noting that the work on the footpath access from the main campus to Talbot House was completed, advised that part of the work relating to the drop between Talbot House and the car park was still outstanding. The Pro Vice Chancellor (Corporate Development & Finance) would feed this back to Estates for action.

PVC(CD&F)

4.3 Alumni & Development Office

The Pro Vice Chancellor (Corporate Development & Finance) informed Members that the gifts in kind of £50,000 made to Inforce had been for legal advice and the shares, whose value cannot be realised, were from a charitable fund.

4.4 **Marketing**

The President of the Students' Union, who was unaware of the Freshers' Survey, made a request for Students' Union involvement.

ICR

4.5 **Chaplaincy**

The President of the Students' Union sought clarification over comments on possible revisions to the name "Chaplaincy" and its location within the management structure. The Director of Human Resources clarified that, currently, Chaplaincy sat within Student Services and yet provided for staff as well as students, and that any future developments would address this anomaly.

4.6 **Bournemouth Media School: Refurbishment of Weymouth House**

Members were informed that the next phase of the refurbishment project for Weymouth House, to redesign the ground floor to provide a central meeting area with a café, was part of the Mature Learners Project and would address the different requirements for social space for this student group. The Head of Bournemouth Media School stressed that the proposed space would not be restricted to those in the School, but open to all at the University: academic and administrative staff as well as students.

4.7 **Institute of Business & Law – Conference on "Education for Sustainable Development: Graduates as Global Citizens"**

The President of the Students' Union commented on whether the University, as a result of this Conference, might be identified in the field as a leader in global perspectives. Whilst the University was working on an Environmental Strategy, and had appointed an Environmental Officer, this position may not survive close scrutiny, unless it was higher on the agenda in the forthcoming Strategic Plan. Members learnt that efforts were being made in curriculum development, and positive feedback and good attendance at the Conference meant it was likely to become an annual event.

4.8 **Inforce**

The President of the Students' Union raised concerns that external consultancy work being carried out for Inforce by Conservation Sciences staff could have an affect on students' Masters dissertations in the summer. Dr Astin admitted there was a tension between staff going overseas on behalf of Inforce during the summer months and the need to provide services to students during the same period. However, discussions were taking place between the School and the Head of Inforce to address this problem.

HoS CS

4.9 **Music & Performing Arts**

Members' attention was drawn to the choir and concert programme for 2005-06 academic year.

5. **REPORT FROM THE STANDING PROFESSORIAL COMMITTEE**

5.1 Members had been informed at the previous Senate that Professor Light, the Member of the Committee of professorial standing not a member of the staff in the University, wished to stand down after completing three years of his term of office. At the Committee meeting on 25 May 2005, it was decided to postpone any consideration of a successor until after Professor Curran had taken up post.

5.2 The Vice Chancellor now proposed, as a reflection on the maturity of the University, to cease to have the requirement for an external member of the Standing Professorial Committee and instead seek additional external views on the merits of cases for professorial designation.

- 5.3 **RESOLVED:** the requirement to have an external member of the Standing Professorial Committee should cease to apply. In seeking external views on the merits of cases for professorial designation, the Committee should seek the views of not less than four external assessors, rather than the current practice which requires the view of at least two such assessors. **SPC**

6. MATTERS RAISED BY ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

6.1 Precautions in Respect of Asian Bird Flu

Members noted that the University was waiting for Department of Health guidance over the threatened bird flu epidemic and the Director of Human Resources was meeting shortly with the Occupational Health Adviser to take a view. Members were reminded that there was a Surgery on the Talbot Campus whose services could be used if necessary in response to an emergency.

6.2 Emergency Procedures

Members were reminded by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Corporate Development & Finance) that there were emergency procedures to deal with suspected terrorist incidents, made known to all staff at induction, and that the emergency number was 222. Members felt there may be a case for periodically reminding staff of the guidance notes. **PVC (CD&F)**

7. REVIEW OF THE PERFORMANCE OF SENATE AND ITS COMMITTEES

The Registrar informed Members of the new guidelines drawn up by CUC on the Governance of Professional Bodies. These now required University Boards to review not only their own performance on a five year cycle but also the performance of Senate and its Committees in the same time frame. In respect of Senate, the review tied in with the paper prepared by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic) in 2004. The Senate Review would be chaired by Prof Tom Husband, a Board Member, and would dovetail with the simultaneous review of the Board itself. A Facilitator would be appointed to assist with both reviews.

8. ACADEMIC SERVICES COMMITTEE 28 June 2005

The Minutes were noted.

9. ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEE 13 July 2005

9.1 The Minutes were noted.

9.2 At the meeting of the Committee held on 12 October, Members had agreed to recommend that the Head of Careers Service should become a co-opted member of the Committee, to recognise comments made at Institutional Audit on links with employability. Members had also discussed streamlining the process of the scheduling of draft procedural amendments.

9.3 **RESOLVED** the Head of the Careers Service, Pam Brooke, become a co-opted Member of the Academic Standards Committee. Professor Paul Curran would, of course, replace Professor Gillian Slater as the ex-officio Member. **Clerk**

9.4 **RESOLVED:** in order to improve communication of procedural amendments, new procedures be approved and issued by Easter. **ASC**

**10. MINUTES – RESEARCH COMMITTEE
23 June 2005**

10.1 The Minutes were noted.

10.2 In commenting on the lack of attendance from some parts of the Institution, Members suggested that representatives be required to send a substitute if they themselves could not attend. The Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic) informed Members that this issue had been raised at the Committee, and felt that the matter could be included in the Review of Senate and its Committees.

Clerk

**11. RESEARCH DEGREES COMMITTEE
6 July 2005
28 September 2005
4 May 2005
19 May 2005**

The Minutes were noted.

11.1 RESOLVED: that the following research awards, already approved by Chair's Action, be approved for conferment:

DBA	Dennis Brant	Institute of Business and Law
PhD	Hugh Chignell	Bournemouth Media School
	Lesley Lack	Institute of Health & Community Studies
	Gavin Matthews	Bournemouth Media School
	Hasan Huseyin Soyballi	School of Services Management

11.2 RESOLVED: that the following research awards be approved for conferment:

MPhil	Susan Fenwick	Institute of Health & Community Studies
PhD	Jon Finney	School of Conservation Sciences
	Zhi Peng	School of Design, Engineering & Computing
	Xin Qian	School of Design, Engineering & Computing
	Petr Voles	School of Design, Engineering & Computing
	Julie Whitfield	School of Services Management
	Zhe Xu	School of Design, Engineering & Computing

12. SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Resolutions and Recommendations

School Committee resolutions were noted and recommendations agreed unless otherwise stated. Recommendations and resolutions relating to programmes are approved subject to being checked with Academic Development & Quality to ensure that the proposals are in agreement with current academic regulations and procedures.

**12.1 Conservation Sciences
10 June 2005**

There were no resolutions or recommendations for the attention of Senate.

12.1.1 Members discussed concerns over the timeliness of submitting examination and coursework marks, especially with the Unit-E system taking longer to complete than the previous system. Members noted adverse comments had also been raised by External Examiners.

12.1.2 The Registrar advised that, whilst most of the core modules of the new student records system had been implemented without any difficulties being experienced by users, a number of problems had been experienced with the implementation of assessment module in Unit-e, largely as a result of legacy data being transferred from Hemis into Unit-e. The initial need for some reports to be run centrally, rather than in Schools, had also led to delays. However, it was considered these were one-off problems resulting from the initial implementation of the new Unit-e assessments module.

**12.2 Institute of Health & Community Studies
8 June 2005**

The recommendations and resolutions having been noted and approved at the June meeting of Senate, the Minutes were **NOTED**.

**12.3 School of Services Management
1 June 2005**

The Minutes were **NOTED**.

The Head of the School of Services Management reported that the Hotel School Project was proceeding to schedule. It is anticipated that the site will be cleared after Christmas, with the work on the new building starting in Spring 2006.

**12.4 Bournemouth Media School
5 October 2005**

12.4.1 The Minutes were **NOTED**.

12.4.2 The Vice Chancellor commented that some staff felt they were not as closely involved as they would wish with School activities. Therefore, to address this concern, it had been decided, in discussion with Heads of School, that, in future, all School Committee meetings would be “open” to all members of School staff.

HoS

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13.1 Professor Robert Jones

Professor Jones, Visiting Professor, and Academic Director of the University Centre Yeovil, will shortly retire. In recognition of his contribution to the University and UCY, Senate approved the award of an Emeritus Professorship to Prof Jones.

Members thanked Prof Jones for his outstanding contribution to the University and UCY.

14. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF SENATE

Wednesday, 1 February 2005 at 2.15 pm.