

Senate 27 October 2021

Wed 27 October 2021, 14:15 - 16:00

MS Teams



Attendees

Board members

Prof John Vinney, David Reeve, Prof Einar Thorsen, Prof Keith Phalp, Dr Lois Farquharson, Jacky Mack (Secretary), Mandi Barron, Julie Northam, Chiko Bwalya, Samantha Leahy-Harland, Dr Ruth Williamson, Dr Diogo Montalvao, Rebecca Hindley, Dr Ian Jones, Dr Amanda Wilding, Dr Ursula Rolfe, Dr Steph Allen, Helen Best, Andrew Bird, Prof Bronwen Thomas, Prof Christos Gatzidis, Prof Heather Hartwell, Jack Guymer (Committee Clerk)

Absent: Prof Y T McIntyre-Bhatty, Naomie Lebe, Prof Sam Porter, Dr Shanti Shanker, Prof Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers, Jim Andrews, Dr Laura Crossley

In attendance

Prof Carol Evans, Dr Sara White, Debora Almeida

Meeting minutes

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Chair

Members were welcomed to the meeting and apologies were noted as above. The Chair welcomed the following new members: Dr Diogo Montalvao (elected rep, FST), Dr Ian Jones (elected rep, BUBS), Dr Amanda Wilding (elected rep, FHSS), Dr Ursula Rolfe (elected rep, FHSS), Dr Laura Crossley (elected rep, FMC), Dr Steph Allen (elected rep, FMC), Andrew Bird (elected rep, PSS), and Prof Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers (professorial rep, FHSS).

The following individuals were noted to be in attendance: Dr Sara White (attending in the interregnum period between the previous and new Executive Dean, FHSS), Prof Carol Evans (University Board member), Debora Almeida (Lecturer, FHSS).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Chair

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF 9 JUNE 2021

3.1. Accuracy/approval of previous minutes

For Approval

Approved: The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.

Chair

3.2. Matters Arising

Chair

There were no actions from the previous meeting.

3.3. Report of Electronic Senate meeting of 29 September to 6 October 2021

For Approval

Noted: The report of the Electronic Senate meeting of 29 September to 6 October 2021 was noted.

Chair

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Item 4 (Cover Sheet) Terms of Reference.pdf

4.1. Senate

No amendments had been made, except to reflect the year of approval.

Approved: The Senate Terms of Reference (ToR) was approved.

To Approve

J Mack

4.2. Academic Standards and Education Committee

No amendments had been made, except to reflect the year of approval.

Noted: The ASEC ToR was noted.

To Note

J Mack

4.3. Faculty Academic Board

No amendments had been made, except to reflect the year of approval.

Noted: The FAB Terms of Reference was noted. An action was noted for FST FAB to review its ToR at the next opportunity, with this activity not taking place prior to Senate.

To Note

J Mack

4.4. Research and Professional Practice Committee

The membership of the RPPC ToR had been amended to standardise how representative roles were expressed on other BU committees; specifically, the membership had been changed from: 'four members of the Professoriate' to 'up to four members of the Professoriate'.

Approved: The RPPC ToR was approved.

To Approve

J Mack

5. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

5.1. HE Sector and BU2025 Update

HE Sector

On changes to the Cabinet, it was reported that Nadhim Zahawi had been appointed as the new Secretary of State for Education. No major shift in policy or change in direction was expected under his leadership. Michelle Donelan was noted to remain in place as the Universities minister, with an expanded brief to include the strategy for post-16 education and attendance at Cabinet. It was also reported that George Freeman had been appointed as the new Minister for Science, Research and Innovation.

Several Bills were reported to be travelling through parliament, including the Advanced Research and Invention Agency Bill, the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill, and the Freedom of Speech Bill. Having been mentioned in the Budget to Parliament, the Research and Invention Agency Bill was considered to be a key part of the government's drive to improve productivity and innovation across the country.

Whilst there was a lack of clarity at the time of the meeting, it was expected that more information would be provided in due course in relation to the Budget and the likely funding amendments to the student loan system.

BU2025

Whilst momentum had been impacted by the pandemic, implementation against BU2025 was reported to have continued. The University was noted to be in a strong recruitment position and was building financial resilience. However, some areas had been impacted by the pandemic, including actions relating to community, student experience and research.

In terms of research, it was reported that there had been a decline in bidding activity over the past year; this despite a positive trajectory before the pandemic. Whilst the University was unlikely to meet its research targets this year, it was felt there were plenty of positives to build upon, including an increase to the average bid size as well as bid values and success rates. The Chair reported that the University would be reflecting on how to reset ambitions around research income moving forwards to ensure it was manageable, but also something which remained a key part of the overall mix of income at BU.

The Chair was pleased to report on the increase in staff submission rates for the recent Research Excellence Framework exercise, with a figure of 76% compared to 29% in the previous exercise in 2014. Whilst the increase in staff submission rates was considered to demonstrate positivity in terms of staff engagement in research activity, it was noted that challenges remained to realise the full ambition of BU2025 in relation to research bidding.

Whilst it was recognised that bidding numbers had declined since the onset of the pandemic, Ms Northam reported that the numbers had been slowly increasing since January 2021. Specifically, it was reported that bidding numbers had reached new highs over the last two months, with approximately 120 to 130 bids in development at any point compared to a monthly average of 80 bids. It was also noted that the number of research bids submitted had increased from around 8 per week to 25 over the past few weeks.

Despite the challenges, it was considered that good progress had been made in many areas of BU2025. The Chair thanked staff for their continued contribution to help keep actions on track.

6. FOR DISCUSSION

6.1. National Student Survey (NSS) results 2021

The University's overall satisfaction score was reported to have fallen from 80.19% in 2020 to 61.24% in 2021. The net impact of the changes meant that BU was now 14.17% below the sector average compared to 2.46% in the previous year. BU was noted to be 11.62% below the benchmark for overall satisfaction and was classed as being significantly below the benchmark. The movement ranked BU 148 out of 154 institutions; the fourth largest decline across the sector.

In line with the sector, the results for the questions in the *Learning Resource*, *Learning Community* and *Student Voice* categories saw the biggest decline. It was noted that BU was now behind the sector in all questions having been ahead in five questions the previous year.

Whilst all faculties had seen a decline in the overall satisfaction scores, the Faculty of Health and Social Sciences (FHSS) had seen the smallest decrease (3.33%). It was added that FHSS had seen an improvement in five questions, whereas the other three faculties had witnessed a decline in all 27 questions.

At a programme-level, it was reported that nine programmes had improved their overall satisfaction with three showing improvement of 10% or more; these were noted to all reside in FHSS. However, 12 programmes were reported to have seen their overall satisfaction decline by at least 30%.

On average, students from FHSS were more satisfied with the Covid-19 questions than those from the remaining three faculties. It was considered this might explain a smaller drop in FHSS's overall satisfaction as there appeared to be a correlation in these questions with the overall satisfaction at a departmental level.

In terms of gender, it was reported that male students were less satisfied than female students: 58.72% overall satisfaction compared to 63.24%.

As expected, it was noted that practical courses appeared to have been more impacted compared to non-practical courses.

6.2. Student Experience

In recognition of the recent NSS results, the chair introduced the item and provided a presentation on the broader view of the student experience:

- **Graduate outcomes** – BU graduates were reported to continue outperform the sector in terms of highly skilled employment outcomes, and although behind the sector, BU was noted to have seen greater year on year increases in the number of students going on to further study. At a departmental level, all departments were reported to equal or exceed the sector average in that subject area. In addition, 12 of 19 departments equalled or exceeded the sector average in that subject area in terms of highly skilled roles.
- **Longitudinal educational outcomes** – the data highlighted that graduates were performing well in terms of median earning following graduation, with several subject areas ranked in the upper quartile range.
- **Non-continuation and completion** – non-continuation rates were reported to outperform sector averages in the 2017-18 year of entry, with a figure of 89.4% compared to 88.9%. It was also noted that these figures had been improving year on year. Whilst completion rates had fallen marginally, it was considered that much of the fall was due to students transferring from BU to the AECC University College.
- **Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)** – whilst there had been a drop in performance relating to resources and support as well as overall satisfaction, the decreases were reported to be consistent with the sector.
- **Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES)** – four out of the nine questions areas were noted to be above or in line with the sector average. Whilst scores relating to resources, supervision, research culture, and overall satisfaction were below the sector, it was reported that the gaps to the sector in these areas were less significant compared to the NSS results.

In terms of the NSS, the Chair noted that, whilst overall satisfaction scores had been expected to fall nationally due to the impact of the pandemic on learning and teaching, the focus of discussions across the University Leadership Team (ULT) had been on understanding why BU's overall satisfaction score had fallen by 18.95% compared to a sector average decline of 7.24%.

An analysis of the six Covid-19 related questions highlighted that students at BU were overall less satisfied than the average for all institutions. As above, it was noted that students from FHSS were more satisfied with the Covid-19 questions than those from the remaining faculties. It was considered important to reflect upon this result and potentially learn from the way students experienced their learning in the last academic year.

In relation to themes, it was reported that 15% of BU students were ambivalent and scored the University neutrally compared to 5.7% in the previous year. It was considered that a small change in this area could have supported a better result.

The learning community scores were considered to suggest that BU did not always successfully adapt its approach for remote engagement and online learning.

Another theme where student expectations were considered not to have been met related to the access to facilities that underpinned the campus premium proposition. It was noted that many students were not able to undertake placements, which were an important characteristic of many BU programmes. It was considered that the impact of not being able to

undertake a placement and the experience of online learning and teaching significantly impacted the NSS results.

In reference to league tables, the Chair noted how NSS scores had an impact on national rankings, with the three main league tables using NSS results in their methodologies. It was noted that BU had been performing reasonably well until the latest data set and had since dropped nearly 30 places in both the *Guardian* and *Complete University Guide*. Whilst the *Good University Guide* came out before the NSS results, the University's ranking was expected to fall in line with the other league tables when the next iteration was published. Whilst elements of NSS performance were out of kilter with the data shared around the broader student experience, league tables were noted to impact on how the University was perceived by prospective applicants, with a potential impact on the ability to recruit following a reduction in performance.

In contrast, BU's global rankings were at their highest point, with performance noted to be based on a different set of metrics and factors. It was reported that BU had improved its position from 401-500 to 351-400 in the Times Higher Education (THE) World Rankings, and from 95th to 77th in the THE Young University Rankings. It was noted that good performance was a driver for international applications, with recruitment looking strong in this area.

It was considered important to rectify the current position and move back into a place where NSS results were more aligned with other metrics. It was noted that several actions were in place to have a positive impact on the future student experience, including: a return to face-to-face delivery; a focus on core quality to ensure core delivery was right, such as looking at how staff spent their time and how to support the use of technology and online resources; and putting in place new ways to hear the student voice. In terms of the latter, the Chair reported that he would be chairing a new student voice and engagement committee that met regularly with students.

The Chair invited the Executive Deans to provide an update from each faculty on actions planned in response to the NSS:

- FHSS – the Deputy Dean was pleased to note that performance in the NSS had been positive despite a significant number of final year students working in clinical practice, with this area of work recognised as an extremely challenging environment during the pandemic. Whilst performance was positive, it was noted that action was required to improve results further. An analysis of qualitative comments highlighted that a prominent feature of dissatisfaction related to a lack of access to facilities, especially the new Bournemouth Gateway Building which had been advertised to students as part of the campus premium. It was reported that graduates from the previous academic year had been invited back as alumni to visit the facilities and hopefully complete further study with BU. Work was also underway to help improve communications with students, including the messaging around community and access to opportunities with the Students' Union.
- Faculty of Science and Technology (FST) – the faculty was reported to have identified actions in each of the nine categories of the NSS. Students were noted to have returned to face to face, on campus delivery this academic year. The faculty was looking at learning opportunities as part of planned periodic reviews across several undergraduate programmes. The faculty was also reported to be working with Centre for Fusion Learning, Innovation and Excellence (FLIE) to review assessment and feedback strategies. Based on good practice, the faculty was using Panopto for feedback, with this being well received by students. Student voice was also highlighted as a faculty theme, with revisions to student forums being made to adopt more of a student voice approach.
- Faculty of Media and Communication (FMC) – performance in the NSS was considered to have been impacted by practical courses that relied upon specialised equipment and facilities. As with FHSS, these resources were noted to be part of the campus premium advertised to students. The faculty was considered to have neither communicated well enough nor had been sufficiently persuasive in their messaging last year, with students' perceptions about how access to resources was communicated filtering through to other categories of the NSS. One particular action to be taken in the faculty was reported to relate to fostering informal dialogue. This involved the timetabling of regular fortnightly meetings between staff and students, with conversations focussing on positive messages as well as identifying issues to be resolved. It was considered that highlighting success stories would help to reinforce students' sense of confidence about their experience at BU, including employability and career prospects. A different action related to sustainability, with a focus on the upcoming Climate Change Conference (COP26). This involved running several initiatives that aligned with the timing of COP26 to drive a positive student experience. It was noted that plans were in place to run similar activities during Earth Week in April 2022.
- BU Business School (BUBS) – the Executive Dean commented that the faculty was due to launch a new festival (EDfest), with this focussed around adding value to the student experience, feedback, and community. The week-long experience was reported to include career workshops, a 'hackathon', and a barometer session for each level of study where student feedback would be discussed and answered. For the theme relating to people and organisation, the faculty were working with FLIE to create Academic Advisor (AA) auditor reports, a new form to allow AAs to easily record key aspects of their discussions with students, and the creation of a group to enable the Associate Dean Student Experience and Head of Departments to map resources for supporting AAs and identify gaps and create opportunities for sharing best practice. The faculty was also continuing to support students with identifying placements; this involved additional discussions with existing and new employers. Work was noted to be already underway to develop the faculty's identity and culture for both staff and students.

The discussion was opened to all members:

The Academic Registrar reported that colleagues in the Library were undertaking several actions relating to the student voice. In addition to working with faculties, several campaigns had been planned this academic year to help enhance the user experience in relation to the library's resources. There was a strong focus on improving communications in terms of student support and their assessment journey. For example, the narrative would be shifted to focus on what measures the university was putting in place to support students, including existing measures. It was considered that the actions put in place last year in relation to 'Protecting Student Outcomes' aligned with the sector, however, the messaging was not always clear for students.

The Director of Student Services reported that concerns had been raised around the University's mental health support. Whilst online support had been developed in response to the pandemic, it was noted that students had been looking for practical support during the year which had been challenging to provide due to national restrictions. In terms of actions, it was reported that Student Services would be looking to expand its mental health support further, improve student communications, and help staff better understand what support was available to students.

It was reported that work was underway to address the decline in the NSS question relating to the Students' Union, with the result reported to have fallen below the sector average for the first time. Whilst the question related to academic representation, the Chief Executive of the Students' Union was keen to emphasise that the Students' Union at BU offered a wide range of services that were not reflected in the question. These were considered to offer great value to the student experience. The Students' Union was looking forward to being part of the conversation in relation to the student voice. This included raising awareness of the opportunities available to students, such as SUBU Advice and the various clubs and societies.

7. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

7.1. University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust (UHD)

Verbal Update
Dr R Williamson

The senior member of UHD provided an update on the first year of the partnership between BU and UHD:

- **Strategic alignment** – a joint strategy was reported to have been agreed, with this setting out the key themes of the partnership. It was noted that the strategy had been approved through each partner's governance structures.
- **Research and Innovation** – staff from both organisations were reported to have attended a range of scoping events. These events focussed on developing new research communities, with relationships noted to be at different stages of maturity. It was reported that several joint research bids had been submitted during the first year with more in the pipeline. It was considered that the relevant foundations were in place to support collaborative research and innovation moving forward.
- **Education and Training** – in addition to the development of MSc Medical Imaging with Management, it was noted that other new programmes were under discussion, including a graduate entry training programme for radiographers and a postgraduate apprenticeship in management. The partnership was reported to have also supported the development of new placement opportunities, with the expansion of placements expected to continue across all faculties in 2021-22.
- **Recruitment and Retention** – it was reported that UHD had seen an increase in the quality of applicants for consultants and other specialist positions, with applicants showing an interest to be part of a wider academic organisation.
- **Future Challenges** – BU's sustainability team were reported to have supported UHD with the design of their new building based on good practices.
- **Wider private and public partnerships** – it was reported that BU and UHD continued to work together in the future development of the Wessex Fields.

The Chair reported that he was impressed with the dynamic nature of the new merged trust, but also how the partnership had progressed over the past year.

Prof Phalp commented on the sense of belonging from other faculties and noted that discussions with UHD were open and transparent.

7.2. Dorset Healthcare University NHS Foundation Trust (DHUFT)

Verbal Update
Chair

The Chair reported that the Memorandum of Understanding between BU and DHUFT was in the process of being finalised, with continued dialogue about the potential to model the arrangement like that with UHD; specifically, senior representation within each other's governance structures.

8. FOR APPROVAL/ENDORSEMENT

8.1. Quality and Standards Report 2020-21

BAME attainment was highlighted as an important institutional theme for the 2021 annual monitoring cycle. It was reported that several actions relating to BAME would be overseen by the Access, Excellence and Impact Committee (AEIC), including further data analysis to understand the reasons behind the BAME attainment gap at BU.

Despite a slight increase, the proportion of Good Honours for 2019-20 was reported to remain below the sector average, with this considered to have been impacted by the actions identified in the Degree Outcomes Statement to strengthen the institutional approach to monitoring student outcomes, and potential grade inflation

It was noted that there had been a 121% increase in the number of confirmed academic offences between 2019-20 and 2020-21, with 70% (130/186) of cases relating to plagiarism. Given the rise in academic offences, there was an action in the report to investigate the underlying causes of the offences and identify any mitigating actions for 2021-22.

Following feedback from ASEC, the report also provided an analysis on the introduction of the new Foundation Year programmes that provided a progression route onto the first year of several undergraduate degrees at BU. There was an action on faculties to maintain oversight of the Foundation Year annual monitoring action plans during 2021-22.

Endorsed: Senate endorsed the Quality and Standards Report 2020-21 for onward consideration by the University Board.

For Approval
J Forrest

8.2. Policy Updates to 6A - Standard Assessment Regulations

The proposed changes included the introduction of 'in-year retrieval' and a change to the late submission policy. The first change would provide Level 4 students with an opportunity to retrieve failure at a mid-point in the academic year.

The proposal was considered positive and had been designed to help improve retention and continuation figures. The change to the late submission policy was also considered positive by removing the requirement for late submissions to contribute to reassessment limits.

Approved: Senate approved the policy updates to 6A - Standard Assessment Regulations.

For Approval
M Barron

8.3. Policy updates to 11K - Student Disciplinary: Policy and Procedure

In addition to improving its accessibility, the policy had been updated to reflect new guidance published by the Ofs relating to sexual misconduct, anti-Semitism and hate crimes. The revisions were noted to have been through an extensive consultation, including with the Students' Union and external groups. To meet the Ofs's timescales, it was reported that the revised policy had been published at risk in advance of Senate's approval.

Approved: Senate approved the policy updates to 11K – Student Disciplinary: Policy and Procedure.

9. FOR NOTE

9.1. Annual Concordat Report

The paper summarised progress made in adhering to the commitments detailed within the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.

Progress against the Concordat was reported to have been impacted in 2020 due to the reprioritisation of workloads in response to the outbreak of Covid-19, with the research concordat now meeting more frequently.

The report highlighted the need for wider leadership to effect culture change for research staff. It was noted this would be discussed at a future meeting of RPPC.

Noted: Senate noted the Annual Concordat Report.

For Note
J Northam

9.2. Prevent Duty Annual Report

The report provided Senate with information about Prevent activity during the 2020-21 academic year as well as information on BU's compliance with Prevent requirements. No prevent-related incidents were reported.

Noted: Senate noted the Prevent Duty Annual Report.

For Note
M Barron

10. REPORTING COMMITTEES

10.1. Faculty Academic Board Minutes

For Note
Executive Deans

10.1.1. FHSS FAB minutes of 6 October 2021

Noted: Senate noted the FHSS FAB minutes of 6 October 2021.

10.1.2. BUBS FAB minutes of 5 October 2021

Noted: Senate noted the BUBS FAB minutes of 5 October 2021.

10.1.3. FMC FAB minutes of 13 October 2021

Noted: Senate noted the FMC FAB minutes of 13 October 2021.

10.1.4. FST FAB minutes of 14 October 2021

Noted: Senate noted the FST FAB minutes of 14 October 2021.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A vacancy for a Senate representative to sit on ASEC was noted. It was requested that any expressions of interest were sent to the Secretary.

12. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING:

Electronic Senate: 26 January to 2 February 2022

Senate 'in-person' meeting: 1 March 2022

