

SENATE

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH & KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 18 APRIL 2013

**Present:** Prof M Bennett (**Chair**); Dr C Dickson ; Prof I MacRury; Prof M Hadfield; Dr C Ncube; Prof S Page; Prof J Parker; Prof H Schutkowski; Prof R Stillman; Prof J Zhang; Prof T Zhang.

**In Attendance:** Prof A Blake; Dr H Hassani; Prof A Innes; Prof S Noroozi; Prof K Phalp; G Rayment (Committee Clerk); Dr M Weaver (Project Manager, Item 4); Dr K Welham.

**Apologies:** M Barron; J Beard; Dr M Cash; Dr G Esteban; Prof B Gabrys; Dr H Hartwell; D Kilburn; Prof S McDougall; D McQueen (University Board); Prof A Newton; H O'Sullivan; Prof D Patton; Mr A Riggs; Prof J Roach; Dr K Wilkes;.

**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

1.1 The Chair welcomed new attendees to the meeting. He explained that, having reflected on the operation and effectiveness of the committee and the need to increase the degree of engagement around research with the wider BU community, it was apparent that there was a need to ensure that all Research Theme Leaders and key Professors/Researchers without portfolio were able to contribute to the dialogue. As Chair, therefore, he had invited additional attendees to attend meetings in this capacity.

**2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (4 March 2013)**

The Minutes were approved as an accurate record.

**2.1 Matters Arising not covered elsewhere in the Agenda**

2.1.1 Minute 3.2 – Research Data Management Roadmap: Dr Dickson informed Members that no comments had been received. A Working Group had been established to take forward this activity as agreed at the previous meeting.

2.1.2 Minute 6.2 – Graduate School: The ULT paper on PG space requirements had been circulated to the Committee. The PGR Monitoring system was discussed under Item 4 (below).

2.1.3 Minute 9.1 – Roadshow Events: Dr Dickson tabled details of an event which had been organised for 30 April on KTP and SMART.

2.1.4 Minute 10.1 – Institute of Directors (IoD): The Chair reported on behalf of Ms Barron that a renewed drive to recruit more IoD students has resulted in 115

applications which were currently being considered. Further work to promote membership would be undertaken after the Easter break. Discussions were also taking place with Dorset IoD on the possibility of them establishing a BU branch. SAS had requested 150 memberships for 2013/14 in their delivery plan.

- 2.1.5 Other matters arising were dealt with under the substantive agenda items below.

### **3. GRADUATE SCHOOL ACTIVITIES UPDATE**

- 3.1 Prof Zhang provided a verbal update on key activities within the Graduate School. Following UK Border Agency policy changes, a new programme was being established to accommodate international PG students in line with the new policy on issuing visas. A programme to offer English language provision to PGR students was also being considered. Both proposals would be submitted to the Research Degrees Committee shortly for consideration. In respect of first round matched funding studentships, 5 were available and applications were currently under consideration.
- 3.2 Following presentation of the PG Space Management paper to the ULT, further work was being undertaken to survey current practice, requirements and priorities. ULT would consider the issue again in May. The Chair added that ULT had agreed to centralise PG space in the longer term and had made a commitment to the creation of a graduate innovation hub located in one of the new buildings planned for the Talbot campus. The main Research Themes were expected to help inform how space was allocated.
- 3.3 Members queried whether there would be any benefits to offering more than 3 PG student intakes per year, but Prof Zhang explained that this would be difficult to accommodate and that one intake per team appeared to be the correct balance for the time being.

### **4. PGR MONITORING SYSTEM**

- 4.1 Dr Weaver (Project Manager) joined the meeting to present his update report on the development of the PGR Monitoring System. The project remained on-track to go-live in September 2013 ready for the next academic year. Converis software was being configured to meet the University's requirements and the delivery of the necessary technical infrastructure was proceeding to plan. Work had been undertaken with Schools and Student & Academic Services (SAS) to ensure datasets were identified in preparation for uploading to Converis. A Converis User Group had also been established. Dr Weaver confirmed that the system would be accessible from off campus.
- 4.2 Consideration was currently being given to whether to upgrade to the latest product version (version 5) which had recently been launched by the vendor. This upgrade was more advanced and intuitive, but would have implications for the scope and costs of the project as well as the training plan. A decision was expected to be made within the next few weeks.
- 4.3 The Chair welcomed the developments in light of the fact that MyBuild had been taken off-line the previous Summer and paper-based systems were currently in use pending the implementation of the new system. It was also

important that the new system be compatible with others currently in use, such as BRIAN. The Committee agreed that adequate staff engagement and training were essential and asked to be kept closely informed of developments. Dr Weaver agreed to present an communications plan to the June meeting of the Committee.

**ACTION** : Present a communications and training plan for the PGR Monitoring system to the June meeting of the Committee.

**ACTION BY:** Dr Weaver

## 5. BU's RKE PERFORMANCE

- 5.1 The RKE performance reports were re-circulated for information, having been discussed in more detail at the previous meeting. New reports would be available in two weeks. The Chair reminded members that the contents of the reports were potentially sensitive and should not be shared outside of the Committee. He also reported some headline comparison data on sector averages for information. These included 42k (per fte) for Humanities; 37k Medicine and Health; 225 Biological Sciences; 180 Physics & Maths; 109 engineering & technology and 9k visual and performing arts.

## 6. RESEARCH THEMES

- 6.1 The Chair presented a paper which set out the background to the existing research themes and structures and proposed possible new structures. The current themes had been introduced in 2011 and supported the need to work collectively rather than in structure based silos. The themes provided an societally based, narrative presentational mechanism for communicating the University's research externally. The paper set out a number of questions and issues relating to the existing 8 themes and proposed 2 possible alternative structures. In respect of research centres, the designation National Centres of Excellence would continue to sit with ULT and Schools would be free to organise themselves internally into research centres, but these should align with REF Environment narratives and academic groups. The Research Themes, however, would be the primary mechanism for promoting BU research and organising research communities. Members were invited to comment on the proposals and the Chair noted that he had already received feedback out of committee from Dr Hartwell and Prof Newton.
- 6.2 Members debated the 'Culture & Society' theme which was felt to have lacked definition and failed to gain traction. Some noted that this was a very diverse and wide-ranging theme which potentially brought together all Schools. 'Communities, Culture & Conflict' was suggested as an alternative, which would better reflect the range of activity and incorporate elements such as disaster management.
- 6.3 The increased visibility of psychology (in both options 1 and 2) was welcomed. It was suggested that 'Security' might be included with the 'Technology and Design' theme. Members also asked where software systems research would sit and the Chair confirmed that he would be happy to receive proposals on this point. Members also debated whether 'Aging' should be a separate theme. It was noted that this was recognised as a key future research area in horizon

20/20 and as a theme for research councils' cross-working. Approximately 30 staff were estimated to be working in this field, with approximately half of these working on dementia. It was proposed, however, that the theme be 'Aging' rather than 'Aging and Dementia'.

- 6.4 The Chair thanked Members for their comments and agreed to take any further comments out-of-committee provided they were submitted within the next few days. Following further consideration, it was intended that the final themes would be implemented in Summer 2013, but would not impact on the Festival of Learning.

**ACTION 1** : Any further comments on the Research Theme proposals to be submitted to the Chair as soon as possible.

**ACTION BY:** All Members and Attendees.

**ACTION 2:** To update the Research Themes paper before the next meeting with priorities outlined by RCUK and the EC.

**ACTION BY:** Dr Dickson

## **7. FESTIVAL OF LEARNING UPDATE**

- 7.1 Dr Dickson presented this update report on preparation for the Festival of Learning. Information leaflets had been distributed across the conurbation and proved very popular and 18,000 copies of the full festival programme were being distributed. The website would be live from 9<sup>th</sup> April and a variety of advertising and PR activities had been undertaken. Details of the operational preparation were reported, including work to ensure estates, catering, staff and IT capacity were available. A dedicated telephone line was being established and AskBU staff had been briefed. An evaluation of the event would be carried out to assess the impact of the event and identify any improvements for future years. Members noted the report.

## **8. EC HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH BADGE UPDATE**

- 8.1 Dr Dickson presented this report which provided an update on progress in implementing the Action Plan previously agreed by the Committee. Members noted the report.

## **9. REF HIGHLIGHT REPORT**

- 9.1 The Chair presented the REF update report and explained that REF was now entering a critical stage and that the mock exercise was currently in progress. Any staff wishing to appeal against non-selection would have to do so by 31 July 2013. Activity would be required in June to raise awareness of the agreed thresholds. Members noted the report.

## **10. FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT OPEN DATA SOURCE**

- 10.1 Dr Dickson presented this paper which set out proposals for the University to join the RCUK supported initiative to share information on the UK facilities and equipment website. The proposal was designed to foster further research collaboration and would require specific information to be provided by the University. Deputy Deans of Research would be asked to provide this information during April 2013. R&KEO would then work with IT to upload the information. A link to the site would also be placed on the BU webpages. The Committee noted the paper and endorsed the proposals.

**11. MINUTES OF THE HEIF MANAGEMENT PANEL, 6 MARCH 2013**

- 11.1 The minutes were noted.

**12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 12.1 Dr Dickson tabled a paper setting out the programme for an Introduction to Grant Writing event which had been run by the Media School for staff new to the University and emerging scholars. Members noted this good practice example.
- 12.2 Dr Dickson tabled a paper on Universities South West ERDF Innovation Vouchers, but due to time constraints it was agreed to carry this forward to the next meeting for discussion.

**ACTION:** ERDF Innovation Vouchers to be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

**ACTION BY:** Dr Dickson

**Date of next meeting:**

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2.00pm, The Casterbridge Room, Thomas Hardy Suite .