

SENATE

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SENATE HELD ON
21 FEBRUARY 2007

- Present: Prof P Curran (Chair)
Mr R Allan; Ms A Allerston; Dr B Astin; Mr R Burns; Ms R Dugan;
Ms J Hanson; Prof N Hemmington; Mr B Howard; Mr S Jukes;
Dr C Miller; Prof N Petford; Prof R Pope; Mr N Richardson;
Mr M Riordan; Ms C Symonds; Dr G Thomas; Prof K Vall; Ms J Winter
- In Attendance: Prof D Claremont; Prof P Comninos; Prof T Darvill; Prof D Freshwater;
Prof B Gabrys
Mrs A Schofield (for Item 3);
Mrs V Wood (Committee Clerk); Ms S Woolf (Committee Clerk)
- Observer: Prof T Husband (University Board)
- Apologies: Mr P Kneller; Mr A Hunt; Prof R Vaughan; Prof C Brady; Ms M Barron;
Mr M Gagan; Mr St Jukes; Mr D Willey; Prof J Vinney; Prof S Deutsch;
Prof B Richards; Prof T Sheppard; Prof A Webster; Prof P Lewis

Sue Eccles, who replaces Elspeth Caswell as the Media School Teaching Staff Representative, was welcomed to the meeting.

ACTION

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 6 DECEMBER 2006

- 1.1.1 The Minutes were approved as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

Paragraph 4.2: *"A submission for significant TOEF funding to support staff developments would be made"* should read *"A submission for significant TOEF funding to support staff development had been successful"*.

Paragraph 9.1: *"The Vice Chancellor (Education)"* should read *"The Pro Vice Chancellor (Education)"*

Paragraph 9.2.1: Delete *"... chaired by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Education)"* at the end of the second sentence.

Paragraph 9.4.1: Delete the word *"not"* from the final sentence.

1.1 Matters Arising

1.1.1 Review of Senate and its Committees

The Secretary & Registrar advised Senators that the first stage of the Senate Review (being chaired by Prof Husband, a member of the University Board) had been completed, though only thirteen Senators had responded to the questionnaire distributed by the Market Research Group. The responses received have been collated and will be circulated to Senators for information. Members were informed that further work would now be undertaken to identify best governance practice in the HE sector, with the aim of ensuring that the

University's Board, Senate and Executive functions all interact appropriately and that each best serves the needs of the University not only during the coming period of change but for the foreseeable future.

S&R

2. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

- 2.1 The Vice Chancellor reminded Senators that the next meeting would receive the first of the new style VC's Reports, collated from the individual School and Professional Service staff achievement reports.
- 2.2 The university has done well in terms of undergraduate applications received; these are up by 10.7% on last year and BU is ranked sixth in the UK in terms of the rate of increase. Thanks were expressed to all those involved in the admission process.
- 2.3 Interviews are underway to fill a number of senior academic appointments and it is anticipated that the successful candidates will commence in time for the start of the 2007-08 academic year.
- 2.4 *'The University Alliance'*, a new grouping of like-minded British universities, was launched in January 2007. This new grouping (which includes BU) comprises a mixture of those pre- and post-1992 universities which are not members of the Russell Group, the 94 Group or CMU. Institutions in *The University Alliance* have a balanced portfolio of research, teaching and enterprise. It is anticipated that *The University Alliance* will provide its members with national voice and be a balance to the views of the other interest groups.
- 2.5 The QAA draft report from last autumn's Collaborative audit was received at the beginning of February 2007. The auditors have expressed "broad confidence" in the University's management of our collaborative provision, with the report featuring one example of good practice and making seven recommendations for further action to be taken. Procedures will be put in place to ensure the University can respond appropriately to those recommendations. The final report will be published in May 2007.
- 2.6 Senators agreed that lunchtime "town hall-style" meetings could be a useful mechanism for communicating with staff at all levels within the University on topics such as strategic planning, the releasing potential initiatives and, indeed on any matters that may be of interest to, or a concern for, staff. It was agreed that the first such meetings would take place at the Talbot and Lansdowne Campuses at the end of March 2007. Staff would have the opportunity to submit questions in writing before the meetings.

UEG

3. ACADEMIC STAFF STRUCTURE REVIEW

- 3.1 Following extensive consultation with staff, the report of the Academic Staff Structure Review, chaired by Mrs Schofield, has now been published.
- 3.2 The issue of Grade 9 posts was discussed and it was agreed that these posts would provide a useful step on the career path to a Readership and should have an important motivational effect.
- 3.3 Senators noted that there was strong support for having Deans of Schools (not Faculties), with each Dean supported by two Deputy Deans – one with responsibility for Education and other with responsibility for Research & Enterprise (which mirrors the UEG structure). The question of electing rather than appointing Deputy and Associate Deans was raised but it was pointed out

that incumbents in these posts must be able to deliver to the job specification and that, in any case, the whole sector was moving away from elected to appointed positions because of the degree of responsibility that now rests with the individual post holder.

- 3.4 In answer to a question on the eligibility of current Professors for the Deputy and Associate Dean roles, Senators were informed that some of the detail of the proposals has yet to be worked through, including detailed job and person specifications for each role, which will clearly determine eligibility. Senators noted that line management responsibilities may also change as these new proposals are implemented in each School.
- 3.5 Senators noted that tensions exist between the School Executive, the School Committee and the Academic Groups and that the cohesion apparent in some of the Academic Groups is not reflected at School Committee level. The need to strengthen, therefore, the role of School Committees was discussed, though it was recognised that ultimate authority must rest with Senate. Senators agreed that the School Committee should be a fundamental part of a system of checks and balances within the University. That being the case, it is imperative that there is a much greater degree of engagement of academic staff not only at Senate but within the School Committee itself. School Committees must be involved both in determining policy at School level and in implementing that policy.
- 3.6 The Chair reminded Senators that the University is trying to achieve a balance between the current line management structure and the need for a more collegiate approach.
- 3.7 The subject of Demonstrators was raised and the mechanisms through which Demonstrators could transfer to lecturing grades. Senators noted that Grade 6 is an assistant lecturer grade for staff joining with Masters level qualifications and that this might also provide the appropriate opportunity for advancement to those wishing to transfer from a demonstrator role to a full academic role.

4. PROFESSORIAL DESIGNATION: PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 Senators noted that it is proposed to introduce two grades of professorship: Professors Grade 1 at pay grade 11 and Professors Grade 2 at pay grade 12. In addition, there will be a new title of Associate Professor at pay grade 10. The latter will be the first step on the path to a full professorship. Senators noted that there will be opportunities for Readers (also at pay grade 10) to become Associate Professors. Senators were informed that, as part of the review, guidelines and clear criteria would be published for appointments to each of these three posts and that, for full professorial designation, those guidelines and criteria would specifically identify the different expectations of Professors at Grade 1 and those at Grade 2.
- 4.2 Senators endorsed the general principles outlined in the paper and agreed to the Chair of Senate taking Chair's Action to implement any decisions reached on this matter by the Standing Professorial Committee.

SPC/Chair

5. UPDATE ON STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

- 5.1 Senators were advised that Phase 3 of the strategic planning process has begun and that a draft Strategic Plan will be available in June. A final version will then be presented for approval to the July Board Meeting before being sent to HEFCE.

- 5.2 The Deputy Vice Chancellor highlighted four issues:
- Phase 2 of the process had identified Centres of Academic Excellence; some obvious and others emerging and requiring investment;
 - The university is currently making a loss of circa £1.6m on its taught Masters Degree programmes. As this results largely from very small numbers of students on many such programmes there is also concern about the quality of the student experience. That being the case the University intends to develop a Masters Framework with pathways designed to provide a better student experience and to be cost effective and sustainable;
 - There is a £10m backlog of maintenance required to the University's estate. In addition, in order to bring the University's overall physical resource provision up to 2003 student space norms, a further £70m will be required and the process will take until 2010-11. More short term developments identified include a large multi-function lecture theatre, enhanced sports facilities and central common-use laboratories;
 - Some other measures can be taken in the short term to enhance the student experience. Such measures include investment in IT focussed on what students want and need, including further development of the VLE.
- 5.3 Senators were supportive of these possible developments, emphasising the need for any IT spend to be carefully focussed to ensure that genuine and sustainable enhancements are provided for both staff and students.
- 5.4 Senators also highlighted the need for the University to deliver an enhanced level of individual student support during this period of evolution and noted that investment would be required to ensure that this can be delivered.

6. MATTERS RAISED BY ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

- 6.1 Senators were advised that the University's VLE project (*myBU*) was approved at SMT and that funding for the first two years of the project was met from the e-learning capital fund. The on-going cost of licence fees and for Blackboard upgrades are included in the University's IT budget.

7. MINUTES – ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

- 7.1 The minutes were taken as read.

8. MINUTES – ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEE

- 8.1 Senators approved the proposed changes to the *Blue Book*, subject to the proviso that any further comments received by ADQ from Senators would be incorporated in the final version.

ADQ

9. MINUTES – HONORARY DEGREES COMMITTEE

- 9.1 Senators approved the list of nominees.
- 9.2 The Secretary & Registrar advised Senators that all those who had nominated candidates for Honorary awards would be contacted and advised of the outcome of the deliberations at Honorary Degrees Committee.

S&R

- 9.3 The Chair reminded Senators that nominations for Honorary awards were sought from staff and others each autumn and encouraged Senators to engage fully with the process.

Senators

10. MINUTES – STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

The minutes were taken as read.

11. MINUTES – SCHOOL COMMITTEES

11.1. Conservation Sciences

The minutes were taken as read.

Senators approved the appointment of Bruce Eagles, Bill Putnam and Richard Harris as Visiting Fellows in the School.

James Bullock has been nominated as a Visiting Professor. This matter was referred to Standing Professorial Committee.

11.2 Design, Engineering & Computing

The minutes were taken as read.

11.3 Institute of Health & Community Studies

The minutes were taken as read.

11.4 Media School

The minutes were taken as read.

11.5 Services Management

The minutes were taken as read

Leo Jago has been nominated as a Visiting Professor. This matter was referred to Standing Professorial Committee.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Senators noted that this was the final meeting for both Alan Hunt and Rob Allan and thanked them both for their very significant contributions to the work of Senate and the University.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, 13 June 2007 **at 3.00 pm**