

SENATE

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SENATE held on 30 OCTOBER 2013

- Present: Prof J Vinney (**Chair**)
Mr C Allen; Ms M Barron; Prof M Bennett; Dr C Bond; Dr C Chapleo;
Ms T Hixson (Secretary); Mr J Holroyd; Mr A James; Dr S Jeary; Mr S Jukes; Ms J Mack; Ms J Quest; Prof J Roach; Prof H Schutkowski; Mr M Simpson (SUBU); Ms A Stevens; Ms C Symonds; Dr H Thiel; Dr K Wilkes; Prof T Zhang
- In attendance: Mr S Cox (Estates); Ms M Frampton (Committee Clerk); Prof I MacRury; Mr K Papa (Architect); Prof D Patton; Mr G Rayment (Committee Clerk)
- Apologies received: Mr J Andrews; Mr G Beards; Prof D Buhalis; Prof P Comninou; Mr D Evans; Prof B Gabrys; Mr J Gusman (SUBU); Prof T McIntyre-Bhatty; Prof A Mullineux; Prof R Palmer; Prof E Rosser; Prof G Thomas

1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and apologies were noted as above.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SENATE HELD ON 19 JUNE 2013

The Minutes were approved as an accurate record.

2.1 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

2.2 Membership

The Chair welcomed the new members of Senate: Mr Beards (Director of Finance & Performance), Mr Simpson (SUBU President), Ms Barron (in her new role as Head of Student Support Services), Ms Mack (in her new role as Head of Academic Services); Mr Gusman (SUBU Vice President), Ms Stevens (Elected Professional & Support Staff Representative), Prof Mullineux (Professorial Representative, the Business School).

3. REPORT OF ELECTRONIC SENATE MEETING OF 9TH TO 16TH OCTOBER 2013

It was noted that Item 6, which referred to the University Research Ethics Committee Terms of Reference, had been withdrawn and would be presented at the next Electronic Senate meeting in February 2014.

4. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S COMMUNICATIONS**4.1 Strategy & HE Sector Update**

- 4.1.1 The Chair reported that the final Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) Institutional Review report had been formally published on 6 September 2013 and was available to view on the QAA website. The outcome of the review was a remarkable achievement for BU and thanks were given to those members specifically involved. BU had become the first University to be 'commended' for the quality of student learning opportunities, which was an excellent outcome. BU was now required to submit an Action Plan although as there were no formal recommendations this would be focused on building on areas of existing good practice highlighted in the review.

4.1.2 BU had made good progress with its ranking in The Times league table by increasing its standing by 14 places. An aggregate ranking of joint 59th had now been achieved across the three leading UK league tables (The Times/Sunday Times Good University Guide 2014, The Guardian University Guide and the Complete University Guide), which was noted as an excellent accomplishment. Our BU2018 KPI is to have secured a top 50 aggregate ranking. It was noted that the National Student Survey (NSS) was influential in terms of league table positioning and a review had recently been commissioned by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to establish whether the NSS was working successfully and whether any improvements could be made. Feedback on the current NSS approach was invited from individuals (as opposed to an institutional response) by 13 November 2013 via the NSS website. Senators were encouraged to respond.

4.1.3 This year had proved to be a successful year overall for student recruitment in comparison to many other universities. Undergraduate student recruitment had shown to be strong however postgraduate and overseas student recruitment remained a challenge.

4.1.4 In order to try to increase student recruitment numbers, Ms Quest questioned whether BU should follow the example of other universities, such as Birmingham University, and give consideration to becoming more flexible when making offers to applicants. In essence to make unconditional offers before results are known. Ms Barron commented that BU should continue to be controlled and only make offers to applicants considered able to meet the demands of our programmes. She continued that it was therefore important to identify students' potential and whether they could be developed to succeed. It was confirmed that BU did now make contextual offers. Ms Mack agreed to look into the admissions cycle and explore further with Ms Pichlmann and the Fair Access Group, along with examining Birmingham University's success with its student recruitment, as their approach could be a useful mechanism in the areas where BU struggles to recruit.

ACTION: Ms Mack would look into the admissions cycle and explore further with Ms Pichlmann and the Fair Access Group, along with examining Birmingham University's success with its student recruitment.

ACTION BY: Ms J Mack

4.1.5 Research undertaken by BU's Prof Fletcher had shown that BU contributes more than £1m a day to the local community. A regional launch event had been held to publicise this impact and it would now be built into our key messages.

4.1.6 Prof Patton commented that BU needed to address how BU systems and processes supported business engagement.

4.1.7 The Government's Immigration Bill had been through its second reading in Parliament and the Chair had included some of the details within his recent email to staff members. There would be a number of implications for Higher Education which included charging students for access to the NHS. The recently published Review of Universities and Growth by Sir Andrew Witty had highlighted the significance of economic growth which could influence Government policy in advance of the next General Election. Within the Review documentation it was commented there could be increased funding for universities and that universities should be the focus for creating growth within the UK moving forward. Senators were encouraged to read these important documents.

4.1.8 David Willetts MP had recently published a pamphlet on the legacy of the Robbins report and the Future of Higher Education which had flagged key issues, such as the level of research being undertaken within universities and whether this was helpful to the sector as a whole. Work would also be undertaken to look at the response of the Higher Education funding system on demographic changes and the decreased number of 18 to 20 year olds. Thinking 30 years in advance, and with the possible increase of approximately 400,000 students, it was noted that the Government would need to re-visit its funding mechanisms.

- 4.1.9 The Office of Fair Trading (OFT) had shown interest in the HE Sector as a whole, and they had started to look into the £9,000 annual fee cap and whether this was a barrier to competitiveness. The OFT may also look into other areas such as uncapped fees and uncapped student numbers.
- 4.1.10 The recently published 'Top 10' cards and the BU Annual Review 2013 report had been distributed to members. The information contained within the Annual Report was available to view on the BU website and by scanning the purple triangles with the Augmented Reality (AR) Reader on smartphones.

5. FUSION BUILDING 1

- 5.1 Mr Cox of the BU Estates Department introduced the Fusion Building 1 presentation for which he was joined by Mr Papa of BDP Architects. The Estates Development Framework and Estates Plan had now been approved by the University Board. These provided the overall framework for estates development over the next 40 years and a detailed plan through to 2018. Fusion Building 1 is a key part of the Plan.
- 5.2 The Project Board had looked at the space available at Talbot Campus and the facilities needed. The architects had listened to the needs of stakeholders and it was anticipated the plans for the new building would accommodate Fusion, research, teaching and business engagement which in turn would provide greater opportunities for collaboration which were being considered by the academic representatives on the Project Board.
- 5.3 The new building would sit centrally on the car park adjacent to the Sir Michael Cobham Library. All furniture would be multi-use and/or mobile to allow spaces to be used flexibly. Lecture theatres, seminar/teaching rooms, meeting rooms and break out spaces were planned in addition to 'Fusion space', e.g. contemplative space, research space and an area to bring businesses into the university.
- 5.4 The ground floor would mainly provide space for public activities e.g. exhibition space and catering. The second floor would provide lecture theatres, meeting rooms and seminar rooms which would all have open space with balconies and include free flowing movement areas. The top floor would provide quiet café space and seminar rooms. The whole building would provide a light, airy and accessible environment.
- 5.5 Prof Patton and Prof MacRury, members of the Project Board, described a landmark building which would support the Fusion concept. They considered the form of the building to be excellent and that there had been a very imaginative use of space which had great potential for collaboration between academics and students. The Centre of Excellence in Learning (CEL) and the Centre for Excellence in Media Practice (CEMP) had also contributed ideas to the architects. They welcomed the idea of providing an exhibition space to showcase students' work which would link different areas of the University together and show the value of research to students.
- 5.6 The discussion moved on to the possible relocation of the School of Health & Social Care (HSC) to the Talbot Campus. It was confirmed that Fusion Building 1 would not accommodate this but that it was intended that future buildings would, but not until 2018/19. It was confirmed that due to the construction of Fusion Building 1, there would be a need to find solutions for future parking and this is part of the planning considerations.
- 5.7 It was also confirmed that investment would continue in existing buildings. Due to the difference in quality and aesthetics between the current and the proposed new buildings, funding had been earmarked to improve and renovate the existing estate. In the longer term, a main boulevard would be created through the campus in order to connect key elements of the campus. Spaces would be introduced between buildings to create a landscaped parkland feel which would fit with the local area.
- 5.8 Following discussion, it was suggested that the Project Board give further consideration to the ground floor of Fusion Building 1 and the possible uses of the area, especially the type of furniture used. The management of break out areas near teaching rooms was noted as an area of concern as this space was not able to be pre-booked.

- 5.9 Mr Cox advised that the planning application for Fusion Building 1 would be submitted in early February 2014 and it was anticipated that construction would commence in August/September 2014.

6. OTHER REPORTS

6.1 REF Update

- 6.1.1 The final BU Research Excellence Framework (REF) submission was due to be submitted in November 2013. Around one third of academic staff would be submitted which represented a significant increase on 2008. The results would be available in December 2014, with the expectation that funding allocations would be set around March 2015. Work on REF 2020 would commence in January 2014. The Chair thanked Prof Bennett for his leadership of the REF.

6.2 Integration of the School of Design, Engineering & Computing (DEC) and the School of Applied Sciences (ApSci)

- 6.2.1 Prof Roach provided an update on the progress made regarding the integration of ApSci and DEC which would become an integrated entity from January 2014. It was anticipated that this would provide a stronger entity with enhanced academic synergies and increased opportunities for growth and development.
- 6.2.2 Following the first joint Executive meeting, an email had been sent to affected staff advising them of the proposal to form a new Faculty of Science and Technology (name to be decided). The general consensus of staff appeared to be in favour of the integration. Prof Roach had discussed the integration of ApSci and DEC at the recent ICE Forum to update colleagues and Unions and a formal consultation document had been circulated. The consultation period would remain open until 22 November 2013. All students had been made aware of the proposed integration and no negative comments had been received to date. Following the consultation, and subsequent approval, it was hoped that interviews for senior staff positions would take place with effect from 1 December 2013 and all successful candidates would be in post by January 2014. An overall launch of the new Faculty along with its new branding would take place in February 2014.
- 6.2.3 The use of the word 'Faculty' in the update was queried and the Chair confirmed that whilst the university had operated previously with a mixed economy of Schools and Institutes this was not ideal and that careful consideration would be given to any new terminology adopted. Prof Roach provided a range of generic definitions and Dr Bond suggested that a BU definition of what is meant by the term 'Faculty' might be useful. The Chair confirmed that if we went down the 'Faculty' route across BU that it would not be a simple renaming of existing Schools, but rather would be academically led and aimed at delivering greater academic synergy and strength aligned to delivering BU2018, as was the case with the current School integration. The Deans who were present, Dr Wilkes and Mr Jukes, showed their support for further discussions around future options. A further update will be given at the next Senate meeting.

7. MINUTES OF STANDING COMMITTEES

7.1 International & UK Partnerships Committee, 2nd October 2013 (unconfirmed)

The minutes were noted.

7.2 University Research Ethics Committee, 16th October 2013 (unconfirmed)

The minutes were noted.

Prof Bennett confirmed the University Research Ethics Committee was due to meet in December 2013 to agree a revised set of proposals.

It was noted that Section 4 of the minutes made reference to the name of a complainant. Prof Bennett advised that these details would be removed from the minutes. Prof Zhang confirmed that BU should ensure it had a robust system in place without comprising the research undertaken at BU. The process should be examined in detail to ensure that all areas were covered.

7.3 School of Applied Sciences, School Academic Board, 3rd October 2013 (unconfirmed)

The minutes were noted.

7.4 School of Health and Social Care, School Academic Board, 3rd October 2013 (unconfirmed)

The minutes were noted.

7.5 Media School, School Academic Board, 2nd October 2012 (unconfirmed)

The minutes were noted.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

8.1 There was no other business.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

Electronic Senate – 9.00am on 5 February 2014 to 5.00pm on 12 February 2014

Live meeting – 2.15pm, Wednesday 26 February 2014