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Senate

Open Minutes

Date of meeting: **Wednesday, 08 June 2016**

Duration of meeting: **14:00** to **16:50**

Location: **G5.05, High Wycombe Campus**

Attendance

Name	Faculty / Directorate	Category of membership
Rebecca Bunting	Vice-Chancellor's Office	Ex-officio (Chair)
Miriam Moir	Academic Quality	Secretary
Marcus Wood	Academic Quality	Minute Secretary
Ian Plover	Vice-Chancellor's Office	Ex-officio
Sean Mackney	Vice-Chancellor's Office	Ex-officio
Tim Middleton	Vice-Chancellor's Office	Ex-officio
Lorraine Watkins-Mathys	Design, Media & Management	Ex-officio
Sue West	Society & Health	Ex-officio
Ellie Smith	Academic Quality	Ex-officio
Frazer Mackenzie	Design, Media & Management	Ex-officio
Lauren Griffiths	Society & Health	Ex-officio
Allen Stroud	Design, Media & Management`	Elected
Richard Jones (Items 1-8)	Design, Media & Management	Elected
Roland Radaelli	Design, Media & Management	Elected
Nasreen Akhtar	Society & Health	Elected
Christine Brooks	Society & Health	Elected
Ciaran O'Keeffe	Society & Health	Elected
Steven Pearce	Society & Health	Elected
Jo Rixon	Society & Health	Elected
Joe Collins	Students' Union	Student Member
Jenny Wade	Students' Union	Student Member

Apologies

Name	Faculty / Directorate	Category of membership
Ruth Gunstone	Student Services	Ex-officio

Sue Procter	Society & Health	Ex-officio
Phil Wood	Design, Media & Management	Ex-officio
Jake Kaner	Design, Media & Management	Ex-officio
Carol Pook	Society & Health	Ex-officio
Lois Drawmer	Design, Media & Management	Elected
Julian Lukaszewicz	Design, Media & Management	Elected
Carlo Lusuardi	Design, Media & Management	Elected
Sue Axe	Society & Health	Elected

Welcome / Apologies for Absence

16.62   The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

16.63   Apologies for absence were noted. It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

Minutes of the previous meeting (9 March 2016)

16.64   The minutes of the meeting were approved as an accurate record.

Status of actions from the previous meeting

16.65   The Action Sheet was noted. Updates were provided as follows:

a) (Minute 16.35) International Student Attendance Monitoring: A meeting has been arranged with colleagues from the Faculties and the Marketing & Student Recruitment Directorate for w/c 13 June to review arrangements and ensure that they meet UKVI requirements.

b) (Minute 16.41) Students' Union report

- Big Deal on Course: Proposals on the future approach (and related developments) are under discussion with SMT and have included discussion with SU representatives

- Assessment: The results of the survey of student experience in relation to assessment and feedback are awaited. Results will be discussed with the Deans and with the SU. There are issues to discuss around perceptions of fairness of assessments.

- Employability: Productive discussions have been undertaken between the SU President and the Head of Careers and Employability. This includes the ways that student representatives can be involved. The SU will continue to be involved in University plans to make a significant improvement in graduate outcomes, consistent with the strategy.

- Learning Gain: The closer integration of curricular and co-curricular learning is a common agenda for the University and SU. Developments in timetabling systems to incorporate smart devices make it possible to highlight to students the opportunities available to them from the SU. Discussions are ongoing to encourage greater engagement.

c) (Minute 16.50) External Examiner, Osteopathic Principles: Two potential examiners are being approached for this appointment and will be considered by the External Examiner Approval Panel.

Chair's Actions taken since the previous meeting

16.66   No Chair's Actions had been taken.

Vice-Chancellor's Report

UKVI Compliance Visit Outcome

16.67 Following the visit by the UKVI on 1-4 March 2016 (see Minutes 16.27-31), the University has been awarded a probationary licence. The conditions during the probationary period differ to those for a full licence, while compliance requirements have also been tightened in the interim. The University will now be tested against a 10% visa refusal rate and will need to demonstrate an 85% completion rate by international students. These are in addition to strict attendance requirements which must be monitored closely and procedures fully implemented.

16.68 The Director of Academic Quality noted that the University can expect to be visited by the UKVI up to three times during the probationary period and will be expected to provide full and current records on its international students. Additional resource may need to be allocated to support attendance monitoring given the level of risk of non-compliance. Requirements will be communicated to all staff alongside their obligations.

16.69 Members asked whether attendance monitoring will be extended to all students to ensure that students are treated fairly and equitably. This will be looked into, but there are some procedural requirements that need to be considered.

International strategy

16.70 The Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research & Enterprise has taken on responsibility for progressing the University's international strategy, which would include the approach to international partnerships.

HE White Paper: "Success as a Knowledge Economy – Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice" (SEN16.17)

16.71 The Government published the White Paper in May 2016 following up on the Green Paper in November 2015 (Paper SEN15.46). This will lead to a Bill being taken before Parliament. The paper (page 18) sets out a range of reforms to the higher education and research system in the following areas:

- Market entry, quality and risk-based regulation

- Choice, teaching excellence, social mobility and transparency

- Higher education, research and innovation architecture

16.72 The Vice-Chancellor set out issues for Bucks around the following areas:

a) Quality, excellence, and employment

b) Flexibility and diversification

c) Consumer Rights Act (CRA) and Competition & Markets Authority (CMA)

d) Partnership

16.73 Senate considered the paper and identified the following:

- The White Paper responds to concerns from employers on graduate readiness and over the use of taxpayers' money.

- Bucks is in a position to be more flexible in a competitive market. Processes are being reviewed to ensure the University is in a position to respond quickly and pro-actively.

- TEF metrics are still being finalised but will mainly be based around existing, published data including the NSS, DLHE, retention statistics, and information on teaching qualifications.

- There will in time be much greater visibility through the TEF at the subject level and there is a need for consistency across all subject areas, which may require some intervention.

- There are issues around levels of graduate employment and which programmes provide a route through to employment since in some areas, such as the creative industries, a degree may not be essential. Bucks is outperformed in some of these areas by competitor institutions, the reasons for which needs to be understood.

- There are opportunities for Bucks through the UKRI focus on business collaboration. Bucks has retained HEIF funding in this area while many HE providers are losing such revenue. There are also opportunities to demonstrate how both professional practice as well as research underpin teaching at the University.

- The White Paper sets out potential changes to the criteria for RDAP which need to be discussed in relation to the timing of a future submission. Unlike FDAP and TDAP, RDAP is not deemed a priority for new providers.

University Strategy 2016-2021: Strands (SEN16.18)

16.74 The strands of the University Strategy were presented to Senate in their final form. It was noted that there had been presentations given to all staff on both the Education and the Research & Enterprise strands; these were now joined by a new strand on People & Organisational Effectiveness. The three strands will be brought together into one document that will be provided to all staff and a range of other stakeholders.

Education Strand

16.75 The key message related to "education that changes lives", building on the University's focus on widening participation. The strand placed a stronger focus on student success (both academic and graduate-level employment) and was intended to stretch and challenge students and give them a competitive edge within the market. The University would continue to provide courses with applied focus, and would strive for consistency in teaching and learning excellence across all programmes.

16.76 The Vice-Chancellor drew attention to inclusion of a curriculum offer from Level 3. This would include either Access to HE courses or integration of a year-long 'Level 0' as a supplement to an existing three-year degree programme. This foundation year would be primarily aimed at applicants who had not met the stated entry criteria but could do so with additional skills and subject training.

Research and enterprise strand

16.77 Three main drivers were identified as being (1) productivity levels, (2) support, and (3) recognition. Through the areas outlined in the strand the University will grow its enterprise activity to help make research sustainable. The research environment is a key metric in assessment exercises and will focus on inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary activities and the Research & Enterprise Committee is looking at cross-cutting discipline areas to develop research clusters. The University needs to make better use of the dual-funding model for research funding and increase the numbers of bids submitted and thereby grow capacity. Finally, the Bucks Academic scheme will help colleagues identify development and support needs to deliver on the strategy (see below).

People and Organisational Effectiveness Strand

16.78   This strand was presented as focusing on underpinning the overall strategy. It encourages all employees to explore innovative ways of generating income, and as part of a cultural change to develop greater commercial understanding, robust processes to support commercial and collaborative activities are being developed.

16.79   Senate discussed the strand:

- It was noted that there is a need to consider how the University raises its profile and reputation, and how to promote staff and student pride in the institution.

- Discussions on value for money and technology are crucial in order to enable staff to secure the best outcomes for Bucks.

Bucks Academic Framework – Consultation process (SEN16.19)

16.80   The Bucks Academic Framework builds on the original exercise conducted in 2010 and the previous strategy. It sets out opportunities and expectations for staff on academic contracts to help deliver the objectives set out in the strategy. Expectations are set out across the following three domains:

a) Education

b) Research

c) Professional practice

The expectations have been developed based on sector equivalents, with reference points including the National Professional Standards framework and Vitae Researcher Development framework. The research domain is also congruent with the Concordat to support the career development of researchers. Expectations for professional practice staff at competitor institutions have also been explored.

16.81   The timeline sets out a phased approach for implementation starting with key staff including Professors, Readers, Heads of Academic Departments and Principal Lecturers. The Framework would be reviewed after the first phase, prior to PDRs taking place in 2017. The intention is to adjust the timeline in line with the consultation and with feedback received. Senate was asked to approve the process for consultation.

16.82   Senate noted the following:

- An extraordinary meeting of the Research & Enterprise Committee has been scheduled in September to discuss the framework. Other committees will also be consulted.

- There will be an opportunity for students to feed into the process. A meeting will be set up with the SU to discuss the best way to take this forward.

- The timeframe of 2 years for academic staff to meet the expectations seemed appropriate to balance the strategy needs of the University while allowing targeted development work to be undertaken.

- The number of staff affected in Phase 1 is expected to be ~45.

16.83   Senate approved the proposed process and timeline for consultation on the framework.

Institutional Audit Action Plan (SEN16.20)

16.84   The University was last audited in March 2010. The Action Plan arising from the Institutional Audit Report has been updated on an annual basis, and the 2016 update was presented to Senate. It was noted that of the 27 actions on the plan, 21 had been

addressed in full. Of the remaining six actions two had been planned and would be implemented pending IT solutions, a further two would be addressed through planned changes to the administrative structure and the introduction of the Bucks Academic Framework, and two required completion and review of two policy documents which will be presented to Senate within the next academic year.

16.85   Senate agreed that, as the process for external review has been changed and the University will not be undertaking Higher education review in 2016-2017 as anticipated, the Action Plan would be noted as having been addressed and completed with no requirements for further updates.

HEFCE revised operating model for quality assessment: Transitional arrangements (SEN16.21)

16.86   It was noted that following the decision to replace Higher Education Review with a proposed risk-based approach, the University has been informed by HEFCE that it will be subject to 'transitional arrangements' during 2016-2017.

16.87   Transitional arrangements will focus on the Annual Accountability Return completed by governing bodies and submitted to HEFCE. This will be updated to include statements on the student academic experience, student outcomes and the robustness of approaches adopted by HE providers.

16.88   Senate discussed how the University could provide Council with the means to enable it to provide the assurance required by the due date of 1 December 2016. Discussions were based on the suggestions included in the paper:

- The process from HEFCE was similar to risk assessment reporting for the NMC on nursing programmes. Evidence is required to underpin statements but there is a need to be open and honest about areas where matters have been unsuccessful to demonstrate management of risk.

- Greater oversight by Council members in the work of Senate will align with Council requests for a greater understanding of the wider work of the University which is emerging from a governance review. This should be balanced against the need to ensure there is sufficient distance between the roles of Council and the executive structure.

- Council representation on Senate and/or its sub-committees was considered but rejected as it was felt to breach the boundary between the role of Council and the University executive. Council members should only be asked to observe any such committees; this might include the annual joint committee of Education and Quality & Standards to review PRE-SURE and observe the effectiveness of the University's key audit mechanism.

- A review should be undertaken of Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidance (ESG) (2015) – which are incorporated in Part A of the UK Quality Code – since this is referenced by the Accountability statement. This is to be considered by Council at its July meeting.

16.89   Senate asked the Director of Academic Quality to revise the paper to take into account the comments above and to propose specific interventions for Senate to agree at its September meeting.

Action: Director of Academic Quality

Competition & Markets Authority (CMA) / Consumer Rights Act (CRA) Working Group

16.90 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor reported that in March 2016, the University received a query from the CMA seeking clarification in the following areas and how these impacted on consumer rights protection legislation:

- Academic sanctions for non-tuition fee debt
- Student complaints procedure and implications for attendance at graduation
- Additional course costs
- Variations of course content

16.91 The University has responded to the CMA and made some changes to some of its policies. In particular, it has confirmed that no academic sanctions will be imposed for non-tuition fee debt, the student complaints procedure now allows complainants to attend their graduation ceremony, and the new Course Amendment Policy makes specific provision for communicating changes to both students and applicants. The University has also clarified how it communicates additional course costs for students.

16.92 The CMA has accepted the University's response and has indicated that it will be taking no further action at this stage. Additional information will be provided to the CMA by 15 June.

16.93 The query highlighted the need for all areas to consider CMA requirements carefully in all areas of activity. The University has established a CRA Working Group to identify potential areas of non-compliance and to make revisions to processes where necessary. The group has representation drawn from across the University and is meeting monthly to develop processes. Issues to date have included:

- Clarity around course amendment processes and what happens where students do not accept the proposed changes
- Class cancellations
- Processes to cover the departure of members of staff
- Comments made by staff at Open Days and their future impact on the University

16.94 Briefings have been arranged to communicate the implications of the CMA to all staff and the CRA is now specifically included as part of staff induction. A CRA mailbox will be set up for issues to be forwarded to the working group. Issues will also be logged to establish precedent to inform future decision-making.

16.95 The group is also supported by a sub-panel consisting of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Director of Academic Quality and Director of Marketing & Student Recruitment to consider more immediate issues.

Partnership with Staffordshire University - Update

16.96 The Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research & Enterprise informed Senate that documentation confirming the partnership between Staffordshire University and Bucks for the delivery of research degree programmes had been signed in May, the Bucks website was being updated, content was about to go live and the University was now focusing on research student recruitment.

16.97 The proposed joint Professional Doctorate programme with Staffordshire University was scheduled for development over the summer / autumn of 2016 with a view to recruiting students from early in 2017.

Outline: Work-based and Placement Learning Policy (SEN16.22)

16.98   The paper presented from the Education Committee recommended to Senate that the current draft Work-based and Placement Learning Policy be approved as a 'marker policy' pending approval of the full document which would set the policy in the wider context. It was emphasised that the University needs a draft policy in place for QAA compliance purposes.

16.99   The draft policy was noted, pending production of the full document.

Approval Process (SEN16.23)

16.100   The Director of Academic Quality informed Senate that a consultation group had been tasked to streamline the current Validation Process.

16.101   A revised Approval Process had been drawn up. Changes included:

- Revisions to the Validation Proposal (Business Case) form – including Partner versions

- Nomination of external reviewers is to be moved to the development phase for approval by FMTs

- A group approach to new programme proposals is to include directorate representatives as suggested members of programme development teams

- Clarification over the responsibilities of the Academic Planning Committee for approval of proposals

16.102   In particular, the process for re-approving current programmes had been revised:

- The automatic requirement for a revalidation has been removed. Programmes would now go through a Critical Programme Review, using data from PRE supported by a self-evaluation document, to ensure continued approval is appropriate

- Revalidation will remain primarily for programmes that exceed their course amendment allocation

The revised process would be kept under review for one year and changes made as required.

16.103   Senate considered the following:

- The need to monitor the length of the overall process from start to finish

- The need for TEF to be a driver for new programmes, and in particular how new proposals are assessed as meeting TEF requirements

- Levels of externality in the critical programme review – It was noted that teams would produce a self-evaluation document which should include comments on externality but it was agreed that this would be made explicit in the process

    Action: Director of Academic Quality

16.104   Subject to the amendment proposed, the process was approved.

Short Course Approval Process (SEN16.24)

16.105   It was noted that the original process had been written in 2010 and was due for review. Following review the process had been revised as follows:

- The initial proposal stage has been removed to speed up the process

- The previous approval body (Course Amendment Sub-Committee) has been replaced in the document by the Course Amendment Panel

- Responsibilities have been clearly defined

- A revalidation process has been added

- Forms have been simplified to reduce duplication

16.106   It was noted that a non-credit-bearing short course can now be approved through a single Faculty Management Team meeting to improve the ability to respond more quickly to opportunities, especially for enterprise activities.

16.107   The following amendments were agreed:

- Fees should be approved by the Director of Finance and not by the Lead Academic / FMT (paragraph 7 and bullet point).

- A link should be made to the APL Policy (below) to prevent the development of a course through the accumulation of accredited modules

The document would be updated accordingly.

Action: Director of Academic Quality

16.108   Subject to the amendments noted, the process was approved.

Accreditation of Prior Learning Policy and Procedure (SEN16.25)

16.109   The University's Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (CATS) documentation was last updated in 2011 and had therefore undergone a review. The main changes in the new document presented to Senate were:

- Title change from "CATS" to "Accreditation of Prior Learning" (APL)

- Clarification of the scope of the policy and definitions

- Alignment with the Quality Code

- Addition of section on Learning Agreements for outgoing exchange students

- Addition of section on individual programmes of study

- A University-wide APL panel rather than Faculty-based CATS committees

16.110   Senate asked about the limits on APL claims for Professional Doctorate students (paragraph 22 and table). It was agreed that this would be reviewed with Staffordshire University as part of the development of Professional Doctorates and added to the APL Policy and Procedure.

Action: Director of Academic Quality

16.111   It was noted that the management of articulation agreements will be clearly stated via a separate articulation process document which is being prepared.

16.112   The process was approved.

Research Data Management Policy (SEN16.26)

16.113   It was noted that the policy is required to ensure compliance with expectations of funders and was being recommended to Senate by the Research & Enterprise Committee.

16.114   It was further noted that the University is working with JISC and CREST on processes that will support all types of provider.

16.115   The wording of paragraph 6 was reviewed and it was agreed that this should be revised to include all staff (not just academic staff).

Action: Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research & Enterprise

16.116   Subject to this amendment, the policy was approved.

Academic Assessment Regulations – Pre-Registration Nursing (UG & PG) (SEN16.27)

16.117   Regulations have been revised following the revalidation of the pre-registration nursing programmes to meet with PSRB requirements and will be appended to the current Academic Assessment Regulations.

16.118   Senate asked about the CMA implications of the new regulations. It was noted that this is one of the issues being considered by the CRA working group (above).

16.119   The regulations were approved.

External Examiner Approval Panel Update (SEN16.28)

16.120   Senate received the update from the Approval Panel. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education noted that there had been a robust discussion regarding the external examiner appointments and each had been scrutinised by the Panel.

16.121   Senate endorsed the decisions made in each instance.

Validation: Recommendation of awards for approval (SEN16.29)

16.122   Senate reviewed the outcomes of validation events held since the previous meeting and endorsed the decisions in each case.

16.123   It was confirmed that:

- Conditions for the BSc (Hons) Strength and Conditioning course had now been met

- Paperwork for the BSc (Hons) Health & Social Sciences will be re-presented to a Panel on 24 June 2016

16.124   Senate approved programmes for delivery where Conditions had been satisfactorily completed or no Conditions had been required. It was noted that Chair's Action would be taken to confirm those programmes with outstanding Conditions.

Committee reports

16.125   Senate received Executive Summaries for the following meetings without further comment:

- Quality & Standards Committee, 11 May 2016 (SEN16.30)

- Education Committee, 4 May 2016 (SEN16.31)

- Research & Enterprise Committee, 20 May 2016 (SEN16.32)

- Academic Planning Committee, 26 April 2016 (SEN16.33)

- Equality & Diversity Committee, 21 April 2016 (SEN16.36)

- Design, Media & Management Faculty Board, 20 April 2016 (SEN16.34)

- Society & Health Faculty Board, 10 March and 4 May 2016 (SEN16.35)

Senate membership for 2016-2017

16.126   It was noted that this was the final meeting for a number of members, whose term of office had come to an end, were leaving the University, or retiring.

16.127   The Chair thanked all departing members for their contribution to Senate and the work of the University as a whole.

Date of next meeting

16.128   The date of the next meeting will be Wednesday 28 September 2016.