



Buckinghamshire New University

draft:	22 November 2011
approved for circulation	11 December 2011
confirmed by Council with	19 March 2012

Joint Council/Senate Meeting

Minutes

date: **21 November 2011**
time: **4.00 pm**
location: **Boardroom, High Wycombe**

733 Declaration of potential conflicts of interest

733.1 No conflicts of interest were declared or identified.

734 Minutes of the joint meeting held on 22 November 2010

735.1 It was noted that the minutes of the last meeting were confirmed by Council on 21 March 2011.

736 Introduction of the Corporate Planning Statement with a specific emphasis on: “curriculum vision for Learning, focusing on two areas: making all areas of our curriculum accessible to our diverse student body and employability”

736.1 Overview Presentation and Vice Chancellor’s Report

The Corporate Planning Statement for 2011-12 as approved by Council was outlined within the Strategic Plan headings of Student Experience, People, Performance, Partnerships and Physical Environment (the S & 4P’s). It details what processes and improvements are planned for completion by the year end and who is the lead person responsible. All staff have an interest in and responsibility for completing the actions proposed.

For this meeting the focus was on Student Experience and how some of the key objectives link to how we position ourselves as a University, namely as a teaching led institution and providing the next step in career objectives through employability.

736.2 Employability

This was led by the Employability Champion Project Manager, a new role to support and improve employability across the University. In addition five Employability Champions have been appointed although all academic staff should have this role at the heart of their learning and teaching.

There is variation in the interpretation of the term ‘employability’ by staff at the University. It is much more than skills or work experience. Bucks, is not at the forefront of engagement in employability. It should be defined so that it and its’ wider implications are understood by all staff. A coherent framework should be put together to address the issues raised by the wider meaning as defined and this should be embedded in the work of tutors in their learning and teaching practices across the University. However this does not mean that one framework fits all as it does depend on both the subject being studied and the external market.

Having looked at several models, a Career Edge Model was proposed as appropriate for Bucks covering the following areas:

- Career – development and learning
- Experience – work and life
- Emotional intelligence
- Generic Skills
- Degree – subject knowledge, understanding and skills
- Reflection and evaluation on the above to promote
 - Self-esteem
 - Self-confidence
 - Self-efficacy

The aim of the project through talking and listening to people is to identify what is happening and where and create a plan for the University which can be launched before the summer and progressed during the next academic year.

It is anticipated that the final outcomes should be:

- Engaged and motivated colleagues
- Enhanced Students' Union
- Improved employability provision embedded in the curriculum
- Shared good practice
- Provision of a framework for local projects
- Improved Destination of Leavers in Higher Education (DLHE) scores
- Improved marketing opportunities for courses
- A national conference at Bucks on employability
- Bucks as a leader in the sector

736.3 Learning and Teaching

This was led by the Lead Co-ordinator for Learning and Teaching (L&T) who stressed that this is our core business and we need to have a coherent approach to it. There is much good will, many good practices and local knowledge identified but mostly in isolation and there is poor external knowledge of what we do. The focus on the project to improve and extend learning and teaching skills should be on people and their learning and teaching needs rather than structures and should acknowledge and address the connection between workloads, stress, learning and teaching and the NSS results.

Great work is already undertaken through:

- The Learning Development Unit – but this does not always connect with the wider learning and teaching community
- Research and Scholarship – Learning and Teaching Group
- Learning and Teaching Steering Group
- Co-ordinators for Learning and Teaching (CoLTS) – through Peer Observation and Peer Learning, Research and Scholarship and Technology Enhanced Learning

The very complex picture can be shared and managed through talking to each other openly with debate and discussion focusing on providing help in an easy and accessible manner through:

- Help4Students – weblinks to different sources – up and running by January
- Help4people – learning and teaching needs – these could be separated into Help4Tutors/PSE's/Technicians
- Naming the elephant – measure workloads (BAWL) and stress, stop doing some things and start doing some things smarter
- L&TV – access for everyone (Tutors/PSE's/Library/Technicians/Central Service Directorates)
- Open for L&T – full community/pedagogic researchers

Some projects have already started and new appointments made to assist the projects. Everyone should be encouraged to have and express a view to potentially influence the direction of individual projects and the overall framework.

736.4 Group Discussions - Employability – Where are the gaps in provision?

Groups were asked to discuss where they see gaps in provision and identify up to three important ones. The following were thought to be most important:

- Emotional intelligence and how this might be developed within different cultures
- Improvement in functional skills – how to present yourself
- Assessment Centres
- Linkage between work experience/placements and academic learning – offer the best possible and provide more with, choice
- Embed adequate CV writing and interview skills in the course across the curriculum including how to tailor applications to different jobs
- Provide help to achieve good networking skills through internships, work placements, life and work experiences
- Guided learning week should be more structured
- Promoting credentials of staff both to students and externally
- Modelling professional standards
- Mentoring internally and externally and with peers

736.5 Learning and Teaching – Starting to Stop

Groups were asked to draw on their experiences in industry, in the University or both, identifying up to three areas where they thought Bucks could 'Start to Stop', give up doing entirely, because in their view the activity does not contribute sufficiently to Bucks L&T:

- Reduce the number of meetings either by cutting out unnecessary ones and having less often and defining the agenda by outcomes
- Web pages – are always added, never reduced
- E mails – reducing email traffic and using emails appropriately
- Stop talking about workload and focus on outcomes
- Stop repetition
- Stop offering or creating pointless courses
- Cut down on curriculum development time - could buy in ready made
- Data collection – need questions that want answers
- Guided learning week needs to be structured

736.6 Comments from the Chair

The Chair thanked Ray Batchelor and Doug Coles for presenting and leading the discussions. He stressed that the Corporate Planning Statement is a working document to be shared with colleagues and used as a means to provide everyone's support to achieve the outcomes defined.

737 Date of next meeting

737.1 The next meeting of Joint/Senate Council is scheduled to take place on Monday 19 November 2012 at 4.00pm.

The meeting finished at 5.35pm

SIGNED:

DATE: