ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY
PRIFYSGOL

SENATE

Minutes of the meeting held at 14.00 on 07 MARCH 2018, at MedRus Mawr, Penbryn.

Present: Prof Elizabeth Treasure, Vice-Chancellor (Chair); Ms Rebecca Davies, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Chief Operating Officer); Prof John Grattan, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience and International); Dr Rhodri Llwyd Morgan, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Welsh Language and Culture, and External Engagement); Prof Chris Thomas, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) (from minute 58); Prof Judy Broady-Preston, Director of IPD; Prof Mike Gooding, Director of IBERS; Prof Qiang Shen, Director of IMPaCS; Prof Tim Woods, Director of IAH; Dr Hywel Griffiths, Deputy Chair of the Aberystwyth University Branch of the CCC; Prof Reyer Zwiggelaar, Head of the Graduate School; Dr Guy Baron; Prof Richard Beardsworth; Prof Paul Brewer; Dr Hazel Davey; Dr Gwion Evans; Dr Chris Finlayson; Mr Nigel Hardy; Dr Anwen Jones; Dr David Ceri Jones; Dr Louise Marshall; Dr Ola Olusanya; Dr Rachel Rahman; Mr Tim Davies; Ms Louise Jagger; Ms Emma Beenham, AberSU Academic Affairs Officer; Mr Bruce Wight, AberSU Union Development Officer; and Mr Gwion Llwyd Williams, UMCA President.

In attendance: Mrs Jean Jones, Head of the Vice-Chancellor's Office; Mr Geraint Pugh, University Secretary; Mrs Judith Shepherd, Head of Collaborative Provision; and Ms Emma Williams, Director of the Academic Quality and Records Office (AQRO).

Apologies for absence had been received from Dr Gordon Allison; Prof Jo Crotty, Director of IBL; Prof Neil Glasser, Director of IGHPP; Mrs Lucy Hodson, Director of Planning; Dr Maria Plotnikova; Prof Malcolm Thomas; and Mrs Anne Uruska.

44.   CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared in relation to the business to be transacted during the meeting.

45.   MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RECEIVED

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2017 (SEN1718-049).

RESOLVED

That the minutes be confirmed as a correct record.

46.   MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

RECEIVED

A log setting out the progress made in taking forward decisions and actions agreed at the most recent Senate meeting, and outstanding actions from previous meetings (SEN1718-050).

NOTED

The update provided in the decisions log.

47.   DECISIONS TAKEN BETWEEN MEETINGS

RECEIVED

Report by the University Secretary (SEN1718-051).

NOTED

1.   The report detailed the instances since the last Senate meeting where the Vice-Chancellor had approved matters as Chair of Senate, in line with the provisions of Standing Orders.

2.   The matter approved by the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Senate was

      1.   the introduction of the Ordinary Degree as an exit qualification for all current students with immediate effect.

48.   CORRESPONDENCE

NOTED

The Vice-Chancellor had received a letter from the Aberystwyth University (AU) Branch of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol (CCC) regarding key considerations when progressing business cases as part of the Sustainability Implementation Plan (SIP). The Vice-Chancellor would be responding in due course (**ACTION:** Vice-Chancellor).

49.   VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

RECEIVED

Report by the Vice-Chancellor (SEN1718-052).

NOTED

1.   The report had adopted a new format and consisted of three key parts: a highlight report; a detailed report on student recruitment and enrolment, the National Student Survey (NSS) and league tables, and important external factors; and a summary of recent communications activities.

2.   The Vice-Chancellor provided a verbal summary of the progress being made to realise the SIP. Members were advised that the Vice-Chancellor intended to bring forward a whole institution reshape proposal to Council, and that Senate would be consulted in due course in accordance with established governance processes.

3.   Dr Timothy Brain's decision to step down as the University's Treasurer during December 2017 had provided an opportunity to review future need for such an honorary role. A recommendation to delete the office of Treasurer would be made to Council on 23 March 2018, and amendments consequently proposed to the University's Charter and Statutes. Other minor amendments would also be proposed to the governing documents as part of this process. However, these would not affect the institution's academic provisions.

4.   Odgers Berndtson had been engaged to work with the University to recruit new Independent Members to the governing body, and had been asked to identify suitable candidates with financial skills and / or higher education experience.

5.   The shortlist for the 2018 WhatUni Student Choice Awards had been announced that morning. AU had been shortlisted for seven awards, including for the University of the Year award for the second year running. The winners would be announced on 19 April 2018.

50. STRATEGIC PLAN 2018–23: PROPOSED KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

RECEIVED

Report by the Director of Planning; and the Head of Strategic Development (SEN1718-053).

NOTED

1. On 27 November 2017, Council had approved in principle the proposed text of the 2018–23 Strategic Plan, and had delegated authority for the then Chair of Council to formally approve an amended text following receipt of any last-minute feedback. A copy of the approved text had been appended to the report.

2. 12 high-level Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) had been identified which would enable Council to monitor delivery of the Strategic Plan. These were outlined in the report and discussed by members.

3. The Pro Vice-Chancellors were now developing a series of sub-strategies, drawing on the measures which had been proposed as part of the overarching Strategic Plan. A further suite of more detailed KPIs would consequently be agreed and monitored by the University Executive in relation to these sub-strategies.

RESOLVED

4. To endorse the 12 high-level KPIs to be presented to Council on 23 March 2018 (**ACTION:** University Secretary).

5. To suggest that the KPIs developed in relation to the sub-strategies include those relating to Postgraduate Taught provision, and the time taken to fill staff vacancies (**ACTION:** Vice-Chancellor).

51. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ACADEMIC BOARD

1. Postgraduate Taught Regulations

   RECEIVED

   Report by the University Secretary (SEN1718-054).

   NOTED

   1. On 16 February 2018, the Academic Board had considered changes to Postgraduate Taught regulations for implementation from September 2018. The proposed changes would bring Postgraduate Taught regulations in line with Undergraduate regulations where reasonable, particularly in respect of time limits and the number of permitted resit opportunities.

   2. Members debated the proposed revisions in relation to 'Registration Periods and Time Limits', and noted the inconsistencies which would remain in the Regulations should the proposed changes be approved by Senate – particularly in relation to distance learning candidates, and those full time candidates with an intercalary or industrial year.

   RESOLVED

   3. To request that the Academic Board reconsiders the proposed revisions and brings forward alterative changes to the Regulations for the Vice-Chancellor to consider and approve on behalf of Senate (**ACTION:** Academic Board).

52. BLANK COURSE COPY

RECEIVED

Report by the Director of Information Services (SEN1718-056).

NOTED

1.   Student feedback had highlighted the difficulty faced by some in navigating the Blackboard system, and adopting consistent structure across all modules would assist in this respect. However, this would require revised module skeletons to be created, and repopulated with module content.

2.   The report therefore proposed that during summer 2018, all modules on Blackboard be recreated without any content for the following term, regardless of whether those modules had been taught previously. This would result in staff needing to reload content into their modules for the forthcoming academic year.

3.   Members highlighted the need to consult with academic colleagues in order to agree a revised structure for Blackboard sites, and that this consultation had not happened to date. The importance of providing additional training to colleagues whose Blackboard sites could be enhanced was also underlined.

RESOLVED

4.   To agree in principle the need for consistency across modules on the Blackboard system, and request that a series of town hall meetings are held over the coming months to consult with academic colleagues on a revised structure for modules, with a further report presented to Senate at its meeting on 20 June 2018 (**ACTION:** Director of Information Services).

5.   That opportunities be identified to provide targeted training to colleagues on how to improve their Blackboard sites (**ACTION:** Director of Information Services).

53.   ANNUAL EQUALITIES REPORT

RECEIVED

Draft Annual Equalities Report for 2016–17 (SEN1718-057).

NOTED

1.   In line with the statutory requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duties (PSED) 2011 for Wales, the University was required to publish an annual report detailing how we are complying with these duties. The Annual Equality Report outlined the progress AU is making to embed equality and diversity, and to promote an inclusive culture and environment for students, staff and the wider community who use its facilities and services.

2.   Members of the Professional Development, Staffing, and Equality Committee had reviewed the draft annual report on 09 February 2018 and had recommended that it be approved, subject to minor amendments.

RESOLVED

3.   To recommend that Council approves the draft Annual Equalities Report for 2016–17 (**ACTION:** University Secretary).

54.   ANNUAL REPORT ON THE WELSH LANGUAGE SCHEME

RECEIVED

Draft Annual Monitoring Report on the Welsh Language Scheme for 2016–17 (SEN1718-058).

NOTED

1. This would be the last Monitoring Report prepared in relation to the University's Welsh Language Scheme before AU is required to comply with the Welsh Language Standards from 01 April 2018. At the request of the Welsh Language Commissioner, the report concentrated on the main KPIs provided in the reporting template which had been drawn up by the Welsh Language Board.

2. Members of the Welsh Language Strategy Committee had reviewed the draft annual report on 09 February 2018 and had recommended that it be approved.

3. Members queried the accuracy of some data included within the report in relation to the number of non-academic staff members within Institutes who could speak Welsh. It was confirmed that this data had been obtained directly from the Human Resources department.

RESOLVED

4. To recommend that Council approves the draft Monitoring Report (**ACTION:** Manager of the Centre for Welsh Language Services).

55. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

RECEIVED

Members received reports on the following for information:

1. Report on Semester One Examinations (SEN1718-059);

2. Annual report on academic appeals and complaints (SEN1718-060);

3. Report from the AU branch of the CCC (SEN1718-061);

4. Senate meeting dates for 2018–19 (SEN1718-062);

5. Research grants which had been awarded since the last Senate meeting (SEN1718-063); and

6. Summary Corporate Risk Register (SEN1718-064).

NOTED

7. The contents of the reports presented for information.

56. REPORTS FROM SUB-COMMITTEES

RECEIVED

A composite report comprising the following (SEN1718-065):

1. Academic Board (16 February 2018);

2. Council (27 November 2017);

3. Finance and Strategy Committee (14 February 2018);

4. Professional Development, Staffing and Equality Committee (27 October 2017); and

5.   Welsh Language Strategy Committee (27 October 2017);

NOTED

5.   The reports received from the committees.

57.   ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1.   <u>Llanbadarn Campus</u>

NOTED

Communications were being prepared to advise staff of the proposed relocation of academic units between the Llanbadarn and Penglais campuses by September 2018. The Heads of the academic departments in question and the University's Space Planning Manager were thanked for their work on this project.

2.   <u>Farewell</u>

NOTED

This had been Ms Emma Beenham's last meeting of Senate since she would be resigning as the Aberystwyth University Students' Union (AberSU) Academic Affairs Officer during April 2018 in order to take up employment elsewhere. She was thanked for her contribution to AberSU and AU since June 2017.

58.   REF CODE OF PRACTICE

RECEIVED

Report by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research); the Director of Research Excellence and Impact; and the REF and Research Monitoring Manager (SEN1718-055).

NOTED

1.   In November 2017, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) had provided further details on its decisions regarding staff and outputs for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021. This included a requirement that institutions submit a Code of Practice detailing how it intended to ensure "a fair approach to selecting outputs" and processes for identifying staff to be submitted within each Unit of Assessment.

2.   The report outlined the University's provisional thinking for the required Code of Practice, and a timeline for its development and implementation. HEFCE would be providing further guidance and a template with respect to the Code of Practice during the course of the year, a key requirement of which would be that the University consults all staff in the development of this Code of Practice.

3.   Members discussed the report, and debated the amount of time allocated to research in the Workload Allocation and Management Model (WAMM) and the expected outputs. The importance of a robust internal assessment method, and the provision of training for colleagues, was emphasised.