PRIFYSGOL ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY

SENATE

Minutes of the meeting held at 14:00 on 27 MARCH 2019, at the Main Hall, International Politics building.

<u>Voting members:</u> Prof Elizabeth Treasure, <u>Vice-Chancellor</u>; Dr Anwen Jones, <u>Acting Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences)</u>; Professor Qiang Shen, <u>Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Business and Physical Sciences)</u>; Prof Chris Thomas, <u>Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation)</u>; Dr Gordon Allison; Dr Guy Baron; Dr Hazel Davey; Mr Tim Davies; Dr Gwion Evans; Mr Nigel Hardy; Dr Sarah Higgins; Ms Anna Wyn Jones, <u>UMCA President</u>; Dr Cerys Jones, <u>Chair of the AU Branch of the CCC</u>; Dr Ffion Jones, Dr Louise Marshall; Prof Robert Meyrick; Mr John Morgan; Dr Ola Olusanya; Dr Maria Plotnikova; Prof Eleri Pryse; Dr Simon Rodway; Prof Phillipp Schofield; Dr Victoria Wright; Mr Bruce Wight, <u>AberSU President</u>; and Prof Reyer Zwiggelaar, <u>Head of the Graduate School</u>.

<u>Non-voting members:</u> Prof Simon Cox; Dr Sarah Davies; Prof Iain Donnison; Prof Andrew Evans; Dr Thomas Jansen; and Dr Anoush Simon (until minute 34).

<u>In attendance:</u> Mrs Jean Jones, <u>Head of the Vice-Chancellor's Office</u> (from minute 33); Mr Geraint Pugh, <u>University Secretary</u>; Ms Emma Williams, <u>Academic Registrar</u>; Dr Stephen Atherton; Mrs Kim Braddick, <u>Deputy Registrar (Assurance and Enhancement)</u>; Mr Robin Halley, <u>Director of Marketing and Student Recruitment</u> (until minute 34); and Mr Andy Shenstone, <u>AdvanceHE</u>.

Apologies for absence had been received from Professor Neil Glasser, <u>Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Earth and Life Sciences)</u>; Professor Tim Woods, <u>Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience)</u>; Professor Richard Beardsworth; Ms Megan Hatfield, <u>AberSU Academic Affairs Officer</u>; Prof Malcolm Thomas; and Ms Louise Jagger.

26. MATTERS RAISED BY THE CHAIR

1. <u>Welcome</u>

   The following were welcomed to the Senate meeting:

   1. Dr Stephen Atherton, who had been asked by the Head of the School of Education to represent the department;

   2. Ms Kim Braddick, Deputy Registrar (Assurance and Enhancement), who would be observing the meeting as Secretary to the Academic Board;

   3. Dr Sarah Davies, interim Head of the Geography and Earth Sciences department;

   4. Dr Cerys Jones, new Chair of the Aberystwyth University (AU) Branch of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol (CCC);

   5. Dr Ffion Jones, elected representative from the Theatre, Film and Television Studies department;

   6. Prof Eleri Pryse, elected member from the Physics department; and

   7. Andy Shenstone of AdvanceHE, who was observing the meeting as part of the external review of governance effectiveness at the University, which had been commissioned by Council.

2. Condolences

Sympathies were expressed following the deaths of:

1. Emeritus Professor David J Batten, formerly of the Geography and Earth Sciences department;

2. Adam Dewulf-Peters, student at the International Politics department;

3. Dr Geoffrey Evans, former lecturer in the Education department; and

4. William Wolfgang Dieneman, former Librarian.

3. Governance Effectiveness Review

The University was required to conduct a review of governance effectiveness every four years, with the next review due to be completed by the end of the current academic year. AdvanceHE had been engaged to undertake this review on behalf of the University, and Senate members had been invited to attend a group discussion with a representative from AdvanceHE on 12 April 2019. All Senate members were encouraged to participate in this process.

27. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

28. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RECEIVED

Minutes of the meetings held on 14 November 2018 (SEN1819-038).

RESOLVED

That the minutes be confirmed as a correct record.

29. 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 (SEN1819-039).

NOTED

1. Research Strategy (minute 71, meeting dated 14 June 2017)

A consultation process on a draft Strategy was now underway with Faculty representatives and other key groups. This draft would be revised in light of the feedback received and presented to Senate on 12 June 2019 for approval.

2. Veterinary Training (minute 72, meeting 14 June 2018)

Negotiations with the Royal Veterinary College were continuing, with the intention of concluding the validation process during June 2019.

3. The Wheel (minute 9.2)

Following further discussions between the University and The Wheel Training Company, it had been decided not to progress with the proposed relationship.

4.   Translation of marks from other institutions (minute 16)

Some departments remained unclear as to how the revised rule was to be applied in practice, and sought further guidance from the Academic Registry.

RESOLVED

That a series of worked examples be circulated to clarify how the cascade system would work when various credits are missing (**ACTION:** Academic Registrar).

5.   The other updates provided in the decisions log.

30.   DECISIONS TAKEN BETWEEN MEETINGS

RECEIVED

Report by the University Secretary (SEN1819-040).

NOTED

1.   The report detailed the instances since the last Senate meeting when matters had been approved by members via correspondence.

2.   The matters approved by members via correspondence were:

1.   Recommendation of Annual Quality Assurance Statements to Council; and

2.   Appointment of Faculty representatives to advise on the development of the REF Code of Practice.

31.   CORRESPONDENCE

1.   General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

All academic staff were required to complete eLearning courses relating to GDPR and Information Security. The Governance and Compliance Committee was keen to see as many of those enrolled on the courses successfully complete the training as soon as possible, and Senate members were asked to encourage their colleagues to undertake the eLearning courses.

32.   VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

RECEIVED

Report by the Vice-Chancellor (SEN1819-041).

NOTED

1.   The report consisted of three key parts: a highlight report; a planning and student recruitment report; and a communications report.

2.   The Vice-Chancellor had returned from China the previous day, where a delegation from the University had met with partner institutions and agents. The visit had been positive, and had laid the ground for increased recruitment from that country.

3.   Members discussed the University's offer-making strategy. While AU was no longer making conditional unconditional offers, several competitor institutions continued to do

so despite recent negative coverage of such offers in the media. The Director of Marketing and Student Recruitment was preparing guidance for departments on how to respond appropriately to prospective students on this matter.

33. MARKETING AND STUDENT RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

RECEIVED

Report by Director of Marketing and Student Recruitment, incorporating a draft Marketing and Student Recruitment Strategy (SEN1819-042).

NOTED

1. A new Marketing and Student Recruitment Strategy was being developed to provide clarity and direction to the University's activities in this respect. Designed to complement the institution's Strategic Plan 2018–23, the draft Strategy would better define the University's brand proposition and outline how student recruitment would be approached in future.

2. Members discussed the contents of the draft Strategy and accompanying Action Plan in detail – particularly the expected contribution of academic departments to the realisation of the Strategy, and what would in future be organised centrally.

3. Proposals to increase the recruitment of students to the University's existing postgraduate courses was welcomed. However, members sought assurances that steps were being taken to improve the related admissions processes. It was confirmed that the Deputy Registrar (Admissions) was already working with the Director of Marketing and Student Recruitment in this respect.

4. While the University already had an existing 'Addewidion Aber' Strategy on Welsh-medium provision, it was recognised that it would be helpful to include a target in relation to the recruitment of Welsh-medium students in the new Marketing and Student Recruitment Strategy.

RESOLVED

5. To recommend that the draft Marketing and Student Recruitment Strategy be approved by Council, subject to the feedback provided by Senate on the current draft being considered further as part of work to develop a final iteration for consideration by the governing body (**ACTION:** Director of Marketing and Student Recruitment).

34. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ACADEMIC BOARD

1. Revised Employability Strategy 2018–23

    RECEIVED

    Report by the Academic Board Secretary (SEN1819-044).

    NOTED

    1. On 13 March 2019, the Academic Board had considered and recommended that proposed revisions to the University's Employability Strategy 2018–23 be approved by Senate. These revisions had been developed by the Student Experience Committee.

    RESOLVED

2.   To approve the revised Employability Strategy 2018–23 (**ACTION:** Head of Student Support and Careers Services).

2.   Proposal to extend the Semester One examinations period

RECEIVED

Report by the Academic Board Secretary (SEN1819-045).

NOTED

1.   On 13 March 2019, the Academic Board had considered a proposal to extend the Semester One examinations period to 11 working days, with an additional day being provided at the end of the period.

2.   The additional day would be used primarily to run larger on-line computer examinations, which should have no impact on academic marking time, and allow the Timetable Office to reduce bunching of examinations. The additional day would also remove the need to hold examinations on Saturdays.

3.   Data provided by the Timetable Office for the most recent examinations period had confirmed that there had been no students with two examinations in the same day. Relieving the pressure on students during the examination period was one of the clear aims of the AberSU Academic Affairs Officer, and members welcomed the data as a significant step forward in this goal.

RESOLVED

4.   To approve the extension of the Semester One examinations period to 11 working days (**ACTION:** Academic Registrar).

3.   Senate Examination Board External Reviewer

RECEIVED

Report by the Academic Board Secretary (SEN1819-046).

NOTED

1.   On 21 November 2018, the Academic Board had considered a proposal that three options be written into the procedures on steps which could be taken should the External Reviewer be unable to attend the Senate Examination Board at short notice. Academic Board members had recommended that the proposed amendment be approved by Senate, and be included within the Academic Quality Handbook.

2.   Senate members welcomed the proposed addition, and proposed that such procedures could be replicated at departmental-level examination boards.

RESOLVED

3.   To approve the proposed amendment to the Academic Quality Handbook, with steps taken to replicate the procedures in relation to departmental-level examination boards (**ACTION:** Academic Registrar).

4.   DProf Regulations

RECEIVED

Report by the Academic Board Secretary (SEN1819-047).

NOTED

1. The University's current Regulations for the DProf stipulated that candidates should be in an external place of employment. However, for the MProf, the Regulations stated that candidates must be in relevant employment or engaged in relevant professional practice.

2. On 13 March 2019, on the recommendation of the Research Degrees Committee, the Academic Board had considered a proposal to apply the MProf wording to the DProf regulations in order to be consistent and also to allow for DProf candidates to be based in Aberystwyth. Academic Board members had recommended that this revision be approved by Senate.

RESOLVED

3. To approve minor amendment to the regulation for the DProf (**ACTION:** Academic Registrar).

35. STUDENT VOICE STATUS REPORT: SEMESTER 1

RECEIVED

Report by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience); the Director of Information Services; and the 'Tell Us Now' Project Manager (SEN1819-048).

NOTED

1. The report outlined the outcome of the Semester 1 module surveys which had been undertaken as part of the 'Your Voice Matters' student voice initiative. Members discussed the report in detail, and in particular the approach to different kinds of modules, and response rates for smaller modules.

2. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience) had met with academic departments during February 2019 to develop action plans in response to the feedback received during Semester 1. These action plans were now being delivered.

3. The 'Your Voice Matters' initiative only applied to undergraduate students. Given the University's desire to increase the number of postgraduate students, members encouraged the inclusion of postgraduate students in future 'Your Voice Matters' campaigns (**ACTION:** Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience)).

36. NSS RESPONSE RATE

RECEIVED

Report from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience) (SEN1819-049).

NOTED

The report provided the latest National Student Survey (NSS) response rate for the University, and details on individual response rates for both academic departments and courses.

37. REVIEW OF ACADEMIC SUB-COMMITTEES

RECEIVED

Report by the Academic Board Secretary (SEN1819-050).

NOTED

1.   In approving a revised academic sub-committee structure on 10 October 2018, Senate had asked the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience) to review how the new structure was operating after two meeting cycles and bring forward a summary of any recommendations to Senate at the current meeting.

2.   The timing of meetings meant that some sub-committees had only met the once. Initial feedback had therefore been sought from each sub-committee in the first instance, and this was set out in the Academic Board Secretary's report. Further feedback would be sought from key stakeholders over the coming weeks.

3.   Members discussed the report. There were some queries in relation to the role of the Head of Department and their interactions with various committees. The recent restructure of academic administration staff also meant that there remained some uncertainty over the responsibilities of some staff in supporting Faculty- and departmental-level academic committees. This would be addressed as colleagues settle into their new roles.

RESOLVED

4.   That the Academic Registrar meet with representatives from each Faculty to consider feedback about the Faculty Academic Affairs Committees. In doing so, departmental-level boards should also be considered (**ACTION:** Academic Registrar).

5.   That the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience) convene a small group to reflect on how the academic committees have worked this session under the new arrangements, and bring forward a report to Senate as appropriate (**ACTION:** Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience)).

38.   ELECTIONS TO SENATE

RECEIVED

Report by the University Secretary (SEN1819-051).

NOTED

1.   The majority of the elected Senate representatives would be coming to the end of their current terms on 31 August 2019, and elections would need to be held to appoint or reappoint individuals for a new three-year term from 01 September 2019.

2.   The report set out the procedures to be followed, and proposed a timetable for holding the elections.

RESOLVED

3.   To approve the election procedures and timetable set out in the report (**ACTION:** University Secretary).

39.   UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

RECEIVED

Report by the Research Ethics and Integrity Officer (SEN1819-052).

NOTED

1. Since 01 August 2018, the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) had reported directly to the Senate (rather than jointly to Council and Senate as was previously the case).

2. In light of the new reporting lines, the Committee has reviewed its terms of reference and membership to ensure that they remain appropriate. Revisions are consequently being proposed as set out in the report. The revisions proposed sought to expand upon the previous version to ensure that the work of the Committee is clear and explicit.

RESOLVED

3. To approve the proposed revisions to UREC's terms of reference (**ACTION:** University Secretary; and Research Ethics and Integrity Officer).

40. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

RECEIVED

Members received reports on the following for information:

1. Annual report on academic appeals and complaints (SEN1819-053);

2. Report from the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol (CCC) (SEN1819-054);

3. Research Grants (SEN1819-055);

4. Summary Corporate Risk Register (SEN1819-056); and

5. Senate meeting dates 2019-20 (SEN1819-057).

NOTED

6. The contents of the reports presented for information.

41. **REPORTS FROM SUB-COMMITTEES**

RECEIVED

A report comprising the following (SEN1819-058):

1. Academic Board (21 November 2018, and 13 March 2019);

2. Recruitment and Marketing Board (05 March 2019);

3. Collaborative Provision Board (05 March 2019);

4. Research Board (18 February 2019)

5. University Research Ethics Committee (13 March 2019) and;

6. Council (27 November 2018, and 08 February 2019).

NOTED

7. Academic Board (13 March 2019)

On 20 June 2018, Senate members had approved the phased introduction of blank course copy. Level 1 modules had already been addressed during the summer of 2018, and blank course copy for Level 2 and 3 modules would be progressed this summer. Level M modules were scheduled to be addressed during 2020.

8. The reports received from the committees.

42.   ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1. <u>REF Code of Practice</u>

    1. The University was required to submit its REF Code of Practice to Research England by 07 June 2019. Senate had already appointed three representatives – one from each Faculty – to advise on the development of the Code of Practice prior to its consideration by Senate.

    2. Since the next scheduled Senate meeting is 12 June, it was proposed that a short, Special Meeting of the academic governing body be held to consider and approve the Code of Practice.

        RESOLVED

    3. That a Special Meeting of Senate be held at 14:00 on 20 May 2019 to consider the REF Code of Practice, for submission to Research England by 07 June 2019 (**ACTION:** University Secretary).