



## SENATE

**Minutes of the meeting held at 14:00 on 02 OCTOBER 2019, at MedRus Mawr, Penbryn.**

Voting members: Prof Elizabeth Treasure, Vice-Chancellor; Prof Neil Glasser, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Earth and Life Sciences); Dr Anwen Jones, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences); Prof Colin McInnes, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation); Prof Qiang Shen, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Business and Physical Sciences); Professor Tim Woods, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience); Dr Hazel Davey; Mr Prysor Davies; Dr Sarah Davies; Prof Iain Donnison; Dr Rebecca Edwards; Dr Gwion Evans; Dr Patrick Finney; Dr Sarah Higgins; Mr Tomos Ifan, UMCA President; Dr Aloysius Igboekwu; Dr Ffion Jones; Mr Chris Loftus; Dr Alex Mangold; Mr David Moyle; Prof Eleri Pryse; Mr Dhan Ramnatsing, AberSU President; Prof Phillipp Schofield; Miss Chloe Wilkinson-Silk, AberSU Academic Affairs Officer; Dr Victoria Wright; and Prof Reyer Zwiggelaar, Head of the Graduate School.

Non-voting members: Prof Simon Cox; and Prof Andrew Evans.

In attendance: Mrs Jean Jones, Head of the Vice-Chancellor's Office; Mr Geraint Pugh, University Secretary; Ms Emma Williams, Academic Registrar; and Dr Anel Marais.

Apologies for absence had been received from Simon Banham; Dr Cathryn Charnell-White; Tim Davies, Director of Information Services; Prof Nigel Holt; Dr Cerys Jones, Chair of AU Branch of the CCC; Dr Louise Marshall; Prof Robert Meyrick; Dr Anoush Simon; and Dr Sarah Wydall.

### 1. MATTERS RAISED BY THE CHAIR

#### 1. Welcome

The following were attending Senate, either as newly-elected representatives of their departments, or in new roles:

1. Prof Colin McInnes, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation);
2. Prysor Davies, Education;
3. Dr Sarah Davies, Geography and Earth Sciences;
4. Dr Rebecca Edwards, as a non-academic staff member;
5. Dr Patrick Finney, International Politics;
6. Tomos Ifan, UMCA President, as a student member;
7. Dr Aloysius Igboekwu, Business;

8. Chris Loftus, Computer Science;
9. Dr Alex Mangold, Modern Languages;
10. David Moyle, as a non-academic staff member;
11. Dhan Ramnatsing, Aberystwyth University Students Union (AberSU) President, as a student member; and
12. Chloe Wilkinson-Silk, AberSU Academic Affairs Officer, as a student member.

## 2. Condolences

Sympathies were expressed following the deaths of:

1. Alun Eirug Davies, former Deputy Librarian;
2. Anna Evans, who had been working with the Arts Centre on community projects;
3. David Hides, former Head of Plant Breeding at Gogerddan;
4. Prof William Jeremy Jones, former Head of the Chemistry department;
5. Dr C Roy Lewis, former Head of the Geography department; and
6. David Metcalfe, former member of staff in the Finance Office.

## 3. Away Day

Senate had held an away day that morning, immediately before the formal meeting. The away day had focused on developments at the University and the wider higher education context. The production of a Research Strategy, preparations for the Research Excellence Framework, and the Academic Board's priorities for the current academic year had also been discussed. Copies of all presentations would be made available on SharePoint for future reference (**ACTION:** University Secretary).

## 2. **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

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

## 3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

RECEIVED

Minutes of the meetings held on 12 June 2019 (SEN1920-003).

**RESOLVED**

That the minutes be confirmed as correct records.

## 4. **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 (SEN1920-004).

NOTED

The update provided in the decisions log.

## **5. CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence to report.

## **6. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT**

RECEIVED

Report by the Vice-Chancellor (SEN1920-005).

NOTED

1. The report consisted of four key parts: a highlight report; a planning and student enrolment report; a communications report; and a report on research grants.
2. Colleagues in departments were congratulated by the Vice-Chancellor on another excellent performance in the National Student Survey (NSS) 2019, which had been published on 03 July 2019. Overall satisfaction amongst students at the University now stood at 91 per cent. This was a remarkable achievement during a challenging period when the institution had been delivering the Sustainability Implementation Plan (SIP).
3. The University had also been named Welsh University of the Year for 2020 by The Times / The Sunday Times Good University Guide. In that particular league table, the University had also climbed three places to 45<sup>th</sup> position. Colleagues were again congratulated on this achievement.
4. With the UK Government's interest in the Augar review of 'Post-18 review of education and funding' now diminishing, members queried the status of the expected benefits for universities in Wales as a result of the Welsh Government implementing the recommendations of the Diamond 'Review of higher education funding and student finance arrangements'. Members were advised that the status of the expected 'Diamond Dividend' remained uncertain.

## **7. VETERINARY MEDICINE**

RECEIVED

Report by Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience) (SEN1920-006).

NOTED

1. The report provided an update on the development of a joint bachelor's degree in Veterinary Science (BVetSci) between the University and the Royal Veterinary College (RVC). A copy of this report would be presented to Council on 11 October 2019, alongside the latest business plan for the development.
2. In accordance with the University's Academic Quality Handbook, a site visit had been undertaken at the RVC's campuses in February 2019 to review the suitability of the

facilities to deliver the final three (clinical) years of the joint undergraduate degree. A copy of this site visit report was included in the papers for Senate to consider. The RVC would soon undertake their own site visit at Aberystwyth University to satisfy their own quality assurance processes.

3. Some minor aspects to be addressed had been identified during the February 2019 site visit. These had since been resolved, which would enable progression to the next stage of the validation process.
4. Discussions were underway with RVC with respect to the development of the bespoke regulations required given the programme's status as a joint degree. These would be presented to Senate for approval in due course, and were expected to draw on the RVC's existing provisions given their experience in delivering such programmes.
5. Those enrolled on the joint degree would be recognised as students of both Aberystwyth University and the RVC, with support provided by the relevant Students' Union according to where individuals happen to be studying at that point of their course. However, it was recognised that the Students' Union may wish to seek clarity from British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS) as to their ability to play competitive sport for either institution.

#### **RESOLVED**

6. To approve the site visit report, and endorse the current activities leading to the joint degree validation event in October 2019 (**ACTION:** Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience)).

#### **8. REPORT FROM THE ACADEMIC BOARD**

##### RECEIVED

Report by Deputy Registrar Kim Bradick (SEN1920-007).

##### NOTED

1. The report summarised the main items discussed during the Academic Board meeting held on 17 September 2019. The report was discussed in detail by Senate members.
2. Members welcomed the inclusion of this report on the Senate agenda, which would become a standing report for future meetings. This development came as a result of a recommendations in the recent AdvanceHE review of Governance Effectiveness at the University, and would enable Council members – via the reporting that body receives from the Senate – to have a better awareness of key academic matters.
3. Similar standing reports would be included on Senate agendas for the academic governing body's other committees.
4. Accessibility Legislation update

##### RECEIVED

Report on Digital Accessibility Legislation (SEN1920-010).

##### NOTED

1. The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 had come into force on 23 September 2018. Most existing websites have until 2020 to comply, and all apps have until 2021 to comply. The report set out the steps being taken at the University in response to these Regulations.
2. Members were advised that the legislation applies both to the University's public website, as well as well as virtual learning environments such as Blackboard. The University's Web Accessibility Legislation Group was working to ensure that colleagues are aware of the requirements, and in doing so was taking account of the requirements introduced by the Welsh Language Standards.

5. Academic Board and sub-committee Terms of Reference

RECEIVED

Report by Deputy Registrar Kim Braddick, incorporating proposed revisions to terms of reference (SEN1920-008).

NOTED

Revisions were proposed to the terms of reference of some committees to reflect recent changes to the Quality Code; and there were proposals to update the membership of some committees, primarily to account for the deletion of some committees and the redistribution of responsibilities to others.

**RESOLVED**

To approve the proposed revisions to the Terms of Reference for the Academic Board and its sub-committees, subject to revising job titles which had changed during recent restructures (**ACTION:** Deputy Registrar Kim Braddick).

6. Academic Year dates

RECEIVED

Report by Deputy Registrar Kim Braddick (SEN1920-009).

NOTED

1. Two options had been proposed for the 2021–22 session dates by the Academic Board – one starting on 20 September 2021, and the other a week later, on 27 September 2021. The dates of the supplementary exam period for 2021 had already been fixed, as had the dates for graduation 2022 (which were determined by the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show dates). The two options therefore offered either an earlier start to the academic session, or an earlier resumption following the Christmas vacation with a reduction in the time available to mark exams.
2. There were advantages and disadvantages to both options. These were discussed by members. It was also noted that some students have deadlines or even earlier start dates which could overlap with a proposed start for the main cohort on 20 September. Those who may be affected by an earlier start would include PGCE students, postgraduate taught students needing to submit their dissertations, and those returning from a year abroad.

## **RESOLVED**

3. To approve in principle a 2021–22 session start date on 20 September 2021, subject to the Academic Registry addressing concerns about potential implications for specific cohorts of students (**ACTION:** Deputy Registrar Kim Braddick).

## **9. REPORT FROM THE COLLABORATIVE PROVISION BOARD**

RECEIVED

Report by Deputy Registrar Judith Shepherd (SEN1920-011).

NOTED

The report summarised the main items discussed during the Collaborative Provision Board meeting held on 20 September 2019. The report was discussed in detail by Senate members.

## **10. SENATE ANNUAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW: SURVEY RESPONSES**

RECEIVED

Report by the University Secretary (SEN1920-012).

NOTED

1. Between 04 and 28 June 2019, Senate members had been invited to complete a self-assessment questionnaire on the effectiveness of the academic governing body during the 2018–19 academic year. Members were thanked for the constructive responses received, as set out in the report. These were discussed by members.
2. Members were broadly content with the induction offered to new members. However, providing opportunities for informal discussion was considered valuable. Members were advised that the Council at times receives informal briefing sessions on emerging issues, and that such sessions could be helpful for Senate members in advance of meetings of the academic governing body.

## **RESOLVED**

3. To develop a schedule of informal briefings for Senate members, to be held immediately before future meetings of the academic governing body (**ACTION:** University Secretary).

## **11. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

RECEIVED

Members received reports on the following for information:

1. Academic Prizes awarded during 2018-19 (SEN1920-014);
2. Research Grants (SEN1920-015); and
3. Summary Corporate Risk Register (SEN1920-016).

NOTED

4. Report from the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol

A report had not been provided to the University Secretary for consideration by Senate. Should a report be received, it would be made available to members via SharePoint.

5. The contents of the reports presented for information.

**12. COMMITTEE MINUTES**

RECEIVED

A report comprising the following (SEN1920-017):

1. Academic Board (17 September 2019);
2. Collaborative Provision Board (20 September 2019);
3. Research Board (20 May; and 12 September 2019); and
4. Council (28 June 2019).

NOTED

7. The reports received from the committees.

**13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS, MEETING REVIEW AND FUTURE BUSINESS**

1. Council Away Day

Senate members had been invited to attend the Vice-Chancellor's presentation at the Council away day on 10 October 2019. This followed a recommendation in the AdvanceHE Governance Effectiveness Review which encouraged the University to increase the interaction between Council and Senate. All Senate members were encouraged to attend.