

## SENATE

### Minutes of the meeting held at 14:00 on 18 NOVEMBER 2020, via Zoom.

Voting members: Prof Elizabeth Treasure, Vice-Chancellor; Prof Neil Glasser, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Earth and Life Sciences) (from minute 17); Dr Anwen Jones, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences); Prof Qiang Shen, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Business and Physical Sciences); Professor Tim Woods, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience); Dr Cathryn Charnell-White; Dr Hazel Davey; Mr Prysor Davies; Dr Sarah Davies; Prof Iain Donnison (from minute 19); Dr Rebecca Edwards; Dr Gwion Evans (from minute 20); Dr Sarah Higgins; Dr Aloysius Igboekwu; Mr Penri James, Chair of AU Branch of the CCC (from minute 19); Dr Ffion Jones; Mr Morgan Lewis, UMCA President; Mr Chris Loftus; Dr Alex Mangold; Dr Louise Marshall; Prof Robert Meyrick (from minute 19.4); Mr John Morgan; Mr David Moyle; Mr Nathaniel Pidcock, AberSU President; Prof Eleri Pryse; Prof Phillipp Schofield; Ms 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; Dr Andrew Davies; Prof Andrew Evans; Dr Thomas Jansen (from minute 17); Prof Helen Roberts, Director of Research Excellence and Impact; Dr Anoush Simon; and Prof Andrew Thomas (from minute 20).

In attendance: Mr Tim Davies, Director of Information Services; Mr Geraint Pugh, University Secretary; and Ms Emma Williams, Academic Registrar.

Apologies for absence had been received from Prof Simon Banham; Dr Guy Baron; Prof Colin McInnes, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation); Dr Patrick Finney; and Dr Sarah Wydall.

### 13. MATTERS RAISED BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

#### 1. Condolences

Sympathies were expressed following the deaths of:

1. Prof Peter Borsay, Emeritus Professor of History and Welsh History;
2. Prof D Q Bowen, former Director of the Institute of Earth Studies; and
3. Michael Lowe, former Lecturer in Information Studies.

### 14. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

### 15. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RECEIVED

Minutes of the meetings held on 30 September 2020 (SEN2021-018).

**RESOLVED**

That the minutes be confirmed as a correct record, subject to a minor typographical amendment (**ACTION:** University Secretary).

**16. 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 (SEN2021-019).

NOTED

The updates provided in the decisions log.

**17. CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence to report.

**18. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT**

RECEIVED

Report by the Vice-Chancellor (SEN2021-020).

NOTED

1. The report consisted of three key parts: a highlight report; a planning and student enrolment report; and a communications report.
2. Staff members had been invited to complete a second 'pulse' online survey between 29 October and 05 November 2020. There had been a 24 per cent increase in responses compared to the previous survey in May. A summary of the results had been circulated to staff earlier during the day.
3. Despite some encouraging results, the survey highlighted the very real challenges faced by academic colleagues as the impact of the pandemic has stretched into a period of several months. Members were also reminded that the University was not expecting the same level of research outputs this year, and that the focus was to provide as much face-to-face teaching as possible – something which some other institutions were not able to offer this year.
4. The University Executive was now exploring additional ways of providing further support to colleagues. The student numbers for the year meant that the institution was able to offer some additional resources, and Heads of Departments had been invited the previous day to submit requests for additional staff to help relieve some of the additional workload being faced by colleagues.

**19. REPORT FROM THE ACADEMIC BOARD**

RECEIVED

Report by Deputy Registrar Kim Bradick (SEN2021-021).

**NOTED**

1. The report summarised the main items discussed during the Academic Board meeting held on 11 November 2020. The report was discussed by Senate members.

2. QAA Quality Enhancement Review 2021–22

Under HEFCW's Quality Assessment Framework, institutions are required to commission an external quality assurance review at least every six years. The University was therefore discussing potential dates for a review during spring 2022, in consultation with the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for Higher Education and HEFCW. A working group would be established in early 2021 to lead on the development of the documentation which would need to be submitted to the QAA in advance of the site visit.

3. Covid-19: Special Circumstances and the Window of Opportunity

1. An emergency 'no detriment' policy had been agreed by Senate in spring 2020 to ensure that students were not disadvantaged by the changes to teaching and assessment arrangements in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
2. In light of the steps taken over the summer to ensure that teaching and assessment arrangements for 2020–21 reflect current circumstances, the Academic Board had concluded that there was no need to retain an emergency 'no detriment' policy allowing uncapped resits for students.
3. Nevertheless, the Academic Board had proposed that students should continue to be able to request consideration under 'Special Circumstances' arrangements without needing to provide evidence. Extension request processes would continue as normal, but with a similar relaxation in evidence requirements.
4. The Academic Board was also proposing that, to mitigate against individual students with 'Special Circumstances' underperforming, the rules governing the 1 per cent 'Window of Opportunity' be again extended to 2 per cent. This would mean that any results within 2.5 per cent of a borderline would be reviewed.
5. The Student Members expressed concern that by not allowing students who had claimed 'Special Circumstances' to resit modules they had already passed, those students would be disadvantaged by not having the opportunity to obtain a result which reflects their usual performance.
6. The proposals as recommended by the Academic Board were debated by members, who recognised that that the University needed to balance between supporting students and maintaining academic standards (including the quality of those awards which are accredited externally). The importance of retaining an element of flexibility was also highlighted, in case further mitigating measures are required later in the academic year.

**RESOLVED**

7. To approve the Academic Board's recommendation that the provision put in place for the operation of the 2 per cent 'Window of Opportunity' during the

summer of 2020 be retained for 2020–21 (**ACTION:** Deputy Registrar Kim Bradick).

8. That the results at the end of the semester 1 marking period would be analysed, and appropriate action proposed should outcomes be out of kilter with results in normal circumstances (**ACTION:** Academic Registrar).

4. External Examiner Reports 2019–20

1. A summary of the key issues raised in the External Examiner Reports for the previous session had been included in the report from the Academic Board. The External Examiner Reports had also been considered in detail by Faculty Academic Affairs Committees.
2. Overall, the examiners had confirmed that standards were consistent with those in other universities, subject benchmarks had been met, and that the University's regulations had been adhered to in examination boards. External examiners had also commended the dedication of both academic and Registry staff, and also the departmental responses to Covid–19 pandemic in providing academic support for students and conducting the assessment and examination processes remotely.

5. Quality Assurance Statements

RECEIVED

Report by Deputy Registrar Kim Bradick (SEN2021-022).

NOTED

1. The Quality Assurance Framework for Wales places greater emphasis on the role of governing bodies for providing assurances about quality and standards matters. The University's Council was therefore required to agree and submit Annual Quality Assurance Statements to HEFCW during December 2020.
2. The purpose of Deputy Registrar's report was to provide the University's Council with the appropriate evidence to be able to confirm to HEFCW that it is satisfied that the University has and continues to meet its obligations in respect of a series of statements in relation to quality assurance.
3. Members were reminded that while the auditing of quality assurance processes takes place during the autumn committee cycle, the assurance and enhancement of learning and teaching happens throughout the academic year and is not confined to annual processes.

**RESOLVED**

4. To recommend that Council agrees the Quality Assurance Statements (**ACTION:** University Secretary).

6. Revised start date for September 2021

RECEIVED

Report by Deputy Registrar Kim Bradick (SEN2021-023).

NOTED

1. Following the announcement that A Level results would be published a week later in 2021, the University had reviewed the intended start date of the academic year in September 2021. It was proposed to delay the start of term by a week to enable the relevant processes to be completed in time.
2. While Senate members were generally supportive of this proposal, members had differing views on how a week could be trimmed from the remainder of the 2021–22 academic year to enable graduation to still be held the week before the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show in 2022.
3. Three options were set out in the report, and these were debated by members. It was recognised that all options would have implications for various departments. However, it was felt that colleagues would not favour losing a week of Christmas or Easter vacation.

RESOLVED

4. That the dates of the 2021–22 academic year be amended as per option 3 of the Deputy Registrar's report (**ACTION:** Deputy Registrar Kim Bradick).

**20. REPORT FROM RECRUITMENT AND MARKETING BOARD**

RECEIVED

Report by Deputy Registrar Sarah Whitehead (SEN2021-025).

NOTED

1. The report summarised the main items discussed during the Recruitment and Marketing Board meeting held on 21 October 2020. The report was discussed by Senate members.
2. Recruitment and Marketing Board Terms of Reference

NOTED

1. During the Recruitment and Marketing Board's meeting, members had recommended that Senate amend the Board's membership. The proposed revisions were set out in the report.

RESOLVED

2. To approve the proposed revisions to the Recruitment and Marketing Board's terms of reference (**ACTION:** Deputy Registrar Sarah Whitehead).

**21. REPORT FROM RESEARCH COMMITTEE**

RECEIVED

Report by the Research Impact Team (SEN2021-026).

NOTED

The report summarised the main items discussed during the Research Committee meetings held on 29 September 2020. The report was discussed by Senate members.

## 22. UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

RECEIVED

Report by the University Secretary (SEN2021-027).

NOTED

1. The report summarised the main items discussed during the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) meetings held on 20 October 2020. The report was discussed by Senate members.
2. Annual Research Integrity Statement for 2019–20

RECEIVED

Report by the Research Ethics and Integrity Officer, incorporating a draft Annual Research Integrity Statement for 2019–20 (SEN2021-028).

NOTED

1. To comply with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, the University was required to produce a short Annual Research Integrity Statement and seek its approval from the academic governing body prior to its publication on the institution's website.
2. The Annual Statement outlined the actions and activities undertaken, and framework in place in support of fostering a culture of research integrity. It also confirmed that there had been no research misconduct investigations during the period in question.

**RESOLVED**

3. To approve the draft Annual Research Integrity Statement for 2019–20 for publication (**ACTION:** Research Development Manager).
3. Annual Report on Research Ethics

RECEIVED

Report by the Research Ethics and Integrity Officer (SEN2021-029).

NOTED

1. The Annual Report related to the 2019–20 academic year, and provided an update on the work undertaken by UREC and the Research Ethics Panel during that period. All research ethics activities within that year were also summarised.
2. A copy of the report had been considered by the Governance and Compliance Committee on 12 November 2020.

## 23. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

RECEIVED

Members received reports on the following for information:

1. Report from the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol (SEN2021-030);
2. Research Grants (SEN2021-031); and
3. Summary Corporate Risk Register (SEN2021-032).

NOTED

4. The contents of the reports presented for information.

## **24. COMMITTEE MINUTES**

RECEIVED

A report comprising the following (SEN2021-033):

1. Academic Board (11 November 2020);
2. Recruitment and Marketing Board (21 October 2020);
3. Research Committee (29 September 2020);
4. University Research Ethics Committee (20 October 2020); and
5. Council (22 September 2020).

NOTED

6. The reports received from the committees.