



SENATE

Minutes of the meeting held at 14:00 on 23 JUNE 2021, via Zoom.

Voting members: Prof Elizabeth Treasure, Vice-Chancellor; Prof Neil Glasser, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Earth and Life Sciences); Prof 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 Cathryn Charnell-White; Prof Hazel Davey; Mr Prysor Davies; Prof Sarah Davies; Prof Iain Donnison; Dr Rebecca Edwards (until minute 54); Dr Gwion Evans; Dr Patrick Finney; Dr Aloysius Igboekwu; Mr Penri James, Chair of AU Branch of the CCC; Mr Chris Loftus; Dr Alex Mangold; Mr John Morgan; Mr David Moyle; Prof Eleri Pryse; Prof Phillipp Schofield; Dr Victoria Wright; Dr Sarah Wydall (until minute 53); and Prof Reyer Zwiggelaar, Head of the Graduate School.

Non-voting members: Dr Guy Baron; Prof Simon Cox; Dr Andrew Davies; Prof Andrew Evans; Dr Thomas Jansen; Prof Helen Roberts, Director of Research Excellence and Impact; Dr Anoush Simon (until minute 57.4); and Prof Andrew Thomas.

In attendance: Mr Tim Davies, Director of Information Services; Mrs Jean Jones, Head of the Vice-Chancellor's Office; Mr Geraint Pugh, University Secretary; Ms Emma Williams, Academic Registrar; and Dr Rhodri Llwyd Morgan, Director of Welsh Language and External Engagement (for minutes 50 and 51).

Apologies for absence had been received from Prof Simon Banham; Dr Sarah Higgins; Mr Morgan Lewis, UMCA President; Dr Louise Marshall; Mr Nathaniel Pidcock, AberSU President; and Ms Chloe Wilkinson-Silk, AberSU Academic Affairs Officer.

44. MATTERS RAISED BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

1. Condolences

Sympathies were expressed following the deaths of:

1. Geoffrey Brown, former Lecturer in the Department of Education;
2. John Dawes, Honorary Fellow;
3. Sallie Jones, who worked on the Advanced Media Production project;
4. Leontia Slay, former Marine Biologist and member of the Zoology Department;
5. Miles Spink, who worked at the International English Centre;
6. Christoffer Svendsen, postgraduate student in the Department of Mathematics; and
7. Emeritus Professor Dennis Thomas, formerly of the School of Management and Business.

2. Congratulations

1. Members congratulated fellow Senate members who had been successful in the recent academic promotions process:
 1. Prof Hazel Davey;
 2. Prof Sarah Davies; and
 3. Dr Sarah Wydall.
2. Prof Neil Glasser was congratulated on becoming a Fellow of the Learned Society of Wales.

45. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

46. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RECEIVED

Minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2021 (SEN2021-058).

RESOLVED

That the minutes be confirmed as a correct record.

47. 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 (SEN2021-059).

NOTED

The updates provided in the decisions log.

48. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to report.

49. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

RECEIVED

Report by the Vice-Chancellor (SEN2021-060).

NOTED

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

2. On 17 June 2021, the Resources and Performance Committee had considered the draft institutional budget for 2021–22. To agree a break-even budget, as requested by Council, the University would need to forego investment in initiatives to boost research activity. The Vice-Chancellor expressed her disappointment with this situation as both a balanced budget and growth in research were important strategic objectives. The draft budget would now go to Council for approval on 09 July 2021, on the understanding that every effort is made during the coming academic year to identify funding towards initiatives to support and boost research activity.
3. Applications for September 2021 entry were the highest they had been since 2015, and the University was also experiencing an increase in the number of firm acceptances. However, there remained a risk that a large proportion of international applicants would not enrol due to the current pandemic. The University continued to work with counterparts in the sector on a common approach to welcoming students from ‘red list’ countries wishing to study in the UK.
4. A list of academic colleagues who had been successful in the recent academic promotions process had been appended to the report. The Vice-Chancellor advised that Prof Anwen Jones had also been promoted to a personal chair and offered congratulations. However, the seniority of her role as a member of the University Executive meant that it would not have been appropriate to consider her for academic promotion alongside the other applications. The Vice-Chancellor had established a parallel process with the involvement of external assessors.

50. INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY REFRESH

RECEIVED

Report by the Vice-Chancellor (SEN2021-061).

NOTED

1. At Council’s request, the Vice-Chancellor had been reviewing the 2018–23 Institutional Strategy with a view to identifying the next steps to take the University towards the ambitions set out in that Strategy.
2. The resulting report set out a vision of what the University might look like in 2030, and outlined the key actions which would be required over the next two or three years towards achieving this vision. This report had been presented to Council on 19 March 2021, and feedback was now being sought from Senate on the proposed strategic priorities.
3. The proposals set out in the Vice-Chancellor’s report were discussed by members, who provided constructive feedback including:
 1. That the refreshed Strategy proposes more initiatives to support becoming a ‘green’ institution, in addition to the steps proposed to achieve carbon neutrality;
 2. Better emphasising the University’s ambitions to invest in infrastructure, with particular reference to digital initiatives (whilst recognising that a Digital Strategy for the institution is currently being considered by Council, and that there are environmental considerations associated with a digital-first approach);

3. Enhancing the elements of the vision for 2030 with respect to community relations, including ways in which the University can encourage greater interaction with the region;
 4. Clarifying how, as a research-led institution, we integrate research into our teaching activity; and
 5. Incorporating equality and diversity ambitions into the vision for 2030, such as how our student and staff will be increasingly representative.
4. The Vice-Chancellor thanked members for their feedback, and advised that the intention was to present a revised iteration of the document to Council during autumn 2021 for formal approval.

RESOLVED

5. That Senate members consult with colleagues in their departments on the proposed Institutional Strategy Refresh report as circulated to members, with any further feedback sent to the Vice-Chancellor's Office by mid-August 2021 [**ACTION:** Senate members].

51. 150TH ANNIVERSARY

RECEIVED

Report by the Director of Welsh Language and External Engagement (SEN2021-062).

NOTED

1. The University would be celebrating its 150th anniversary in 2022. The report set out the celebratory events being planned for 2022–23, efforts work to publish an anniversary volume, branding initiatives, and key milestones for the 150th Anniversary Project.
2. The Arts Centre would also be celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2022, and events to mark that occasion were being incorporated into the main 150th celebrations. As one of the first subjects to be taught at the University in 1872, the Mathematics department was also a key part of the 150th anniversary.
3. Members were invited to provide feedback on the proposed schedule of events for 2022–23, which would also hopefully include the reopening of the refurbished Old College should that project progress as planned.
4. The proposals for the 150th anniversary would now be refined, prior to a wider consultation with staff and students. However, it was recognised that the University's plans would need to be finalised as soon as possible so that the schedule of events could be publicised and dates earmarked in diaries.

52. WORKLOAD ALLOCATION AND MANAGEMENT MODEL

RECEIVED

Report by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Earth and Life Sciences) (SEN2021-063).

NOTED

1. Following to the debate at the previous Senate meeting on proposals to revise the Workload Allocation and Management Model (WAMM), the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Earth and Life Sciences) had led a further consultation exercise with Heads of Academic Departments. A revised iteration of the WAMM was now presented for consideration by Senate.
2. The revised iteration of the WAMM was less detailed than the previous version proposed. Indeed, members felt that the current proposal was, in effect, an enhanced version of the original WAMM, with the ability for departments to have flexible tariffs formalised in the policy.
3. Members welcomed the amended version, which now recognised the different sizes of academic departments and the various roles they may have within. Changes to the remit of the WAMM Review Group were also welcomed since the previous perceived bias towards teaching had been addressed.
4. The timing of when departments would complete the WAMM each year was considered. It was recognised that it is often difficult to complete the WAMM until the student intake is known in the autumn, and that this process may not always run in tandem with the annual Effective Contribution Scheme reviews.
5. The number of nominal annualised working hours assigned to activity in the WAMM was queried, particularly in the context of the University wishing to provide sufficient time for academic staff to undertake research, as outlined in the institution's proposed vision for 2030. This would need to be further considered by the WAMM Review Group.

RESOLVED

6. To approve the revised WAMM as proposed, subject to minor amendments to reflect the feedback received from Senate members during the discussion [**ACTION:** Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Earth and Life Sciences)].

53. STUDENT CHARTER

RECEIVED

Report by the University Secretary (SEN2021-064).

NOTED

1. HEFCW requires that Universities and Students' Unions agree a Student Charter, which should serve as a high-level partnership document which is applicable to the diverse body of students, and which provides signposts and links to more detailed information, such as regulations, student support, and course information. The University's Student Charter is published on the institution's website.
2. The Funding Council expects that institutions review their Student Charters on an annual basis, in consultation with representatives from the Students' Union.
3. The University's Student Charter had been reviewed and revised in August 2020, in response to additional guidance received from HEFCW. The provisions of the Charter had been reviewed more recently in consultation with the Students' Union, and no revisions were deemed necessary for the 2021–22 academic year.

RESOLVED

4. To retain the Student Charter as currently worded for the 2021–22 academic year [ACTION: University Secretary].

54. REPORT FROM THE ACADEMIC BOARD

RECEIVED

Report by Deputy Registrar Kim Bradick (SEN2021-065).

NOTED

1. The report summarised the main items discussed during the Academic Board meeting held on 8 June 2021. The report was discussed by Senate members.
2. Options around the operation of Exam Boards post-pandemic
 1. The Academic Board had approved a proposal that Examination Boards be conducted online in future following the successful operation of Boards online using Microsoft Teams during the pandemic.
 2. However, it was also recognised that there may be times when it would be appropriate for an external examiner to visit the University in person – for example: to examine live performance, or to build relations within the University when undertaking the role of external examiner for the first time. In such instances, departments could request in-person Examination Boards, with an expectation that reasonable requests would not be refused.
 3. Members welcomed the flexibility which this new development would provide, including the potential to appoint individuals as external examiners who would not normally be able to travel to Aberystwyth in person, thereby helping to improve diversity.
3. Special Circumstances and Extensions
 1. When Senate had considered assessment arrangements for the current session, a return to the use of Special Circumstances forms had been left open for the supplementary assessment period.
 2. Following consultation with departments, the Academic Board was recommending reverting to the pre-Covid Special Circumstances and Extensions policies, requiring students to submit Special Circumstances Forms and requests for extensions, with evidence, for the supplementary assessment period and thereafter.
 3. At the same time, the list of acceptable evidence would be broadened, and guidance updated to reflect the need to manage the processes electronically.

RESOLVED

4. To approve the return to pre-Covid Special Circumstances and Extensions policies for the supplementary period and thereafter, with the website updated and

appropriate communications issued to students [**ACTION:** Deputy Registrar Kim Bradick].

4. Addition to Unacceptable Academic Practice Regulations

1. Following discussions with the University's Academic Integrity Officer, the Academic Board had recommended that Senate approve the following amendments to the Unacceptable Academic Practice regulations:
 1. retaining the option for online panels post Covid-19;
 2. a change in the penalties to remove the disparity to students on courses where all credits must be passed;
 3. to permit a reduced penalty for first offences in certain instances; and
 4. to allow TII reports to be accepted for cases investigated by departmental Chair of Exam Boards.

RESOLVED

2. To approve the proposed amendments to the Unacceptable Academic Practice regulations [**ACTION:** Deputy Registrar Kim Bradick].

5. Degree Outcomes Statement

RECIEVED

Report by Deputy Registrar Kim Bradick (SEN2021-066).

NOTED

1. All Universities are required to publish Degree Outcome Statements. The University had approved its first Degree Outcome Statement during spring 2020, providing data in relation to 2018–19. The Degree Outcome Statement had since been revised to reflect the data for 2019–20.
2. There had been an overall increase in firsts and upper seconds of 13 per cent over the previous 4 years, and which had resulted in an equivalent fall in the other grades. This increase could be attributed to many factors, including the response to the Covid-19 pandemic which had led to fewer exams, more continuous assessments, and an increase in student resitting modules to obtain better results.
3. There was no requirement for institutions to publish revised Degree Outcome Statements on an annual basis. Other institutions in the sector did not intend to publish revised Statements this year owing to the way in which the measures put in place last year in response to the pandemic had skewed the results. The University would adopt the same approach.

6. Office of the Independent Adjudicator Annual Statement

RECEIVED

Report by Deputy Registrar Kim Bradick, incorporating the Annual Statement for 2019 (SEN2021-067).

NOTED

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) had now published its Annual Statements to higher education providers for the calendar year ended 31 December 2020. A copy of the University's Annual Statement was appended to the report, and would be presented to Council for information.

7. AberSU's Annual Submission

RECEIVED

Annual Submission report by AberSU (SEN2021-068).

NOTED

1. AberSU had prepared their Annual Submission report, which included a series of appendices to evidence feedback collated from a variety of sources by AberSU throughout the year to gather the student view. These appendices had been made available separately on SharePoint (at SEN2021-080).
2. Although the report had been drafted by AberSU's Academic Affairs Officer, it reflected inputs from all key stakeholders within the Students' Union.
3. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience) commended the report, and would prepare a formal response on behalf of the University, which would be published in the papers for the July 2021 meeting of the Academic Board.

55. COLLABORATIVE PROVISION BOARD

1. Report from Collaborative Provision Board

RECEIVED

Report by Deputy Registrar Judith Shepherd (SEN2021-069).

NOTED

The report summarised the main items discussed during the Collaborative Provision Board meetings held on 29 April and 10 June 2021.

2. Annual report on Partnership Activities

RECEIVED

Composite report by Deputy Registrar Judith Shepherd; the Head of International Recruitment and Development; the Head of Global Opportunities; and the Head of the International English Centre (SEN2021-070).

NOTED

1. The Annual Report set out the status of current partnerships between the University and other providers, those partnerships which had been ceased during the previous year, and those which were currently under development. The Report also included annual reports on the activities of the International Recruitment and Development, Global Opportunities, and International English Centre activities during 2020–21.
2. The report was welcomed by members, and a copy would be submitted to the next Council meeting for information.

3. Terms of Reference

RECEIVED

Report by Deputy Registrar Judith Shepherd (SEN2021-071)

NOTED

The Collaborative Provision Board had recommended revisions to its terms of reference to include two additional roles in the Board's membership, and to clarify the activities for which the Board had responsibility to oversee on behalf of Senate.

RESOLVED

To approve the revised terms of reference for the Collaborative Provision Board [**ACTION:** Deputy Registrar Judith Shepherd].

56. REPORT FROM RECRUITMENT AND MARKETING BOARD

RECEIVED

Report by Deputy Registrar Sarah Whitehead (SEN2021-072).

NOTED

1. The report summarised the main items discussed during the Recruitment and Marketing Board meeting held on 09 June 2021. The report was discussed by Senate members.

2. Confirmation and Clearing

Members were advised that, since results would be published on 10 August 2021 – a Tuesday – Online Confirmation meeting for departmental Admissions Tutors to review applicants whose results fall below the threshold agreed for central acceptance would need to be held on the Sunday (08 August 2021).

3. Terms of Reference

The Recruitment and Marketing Board had recommended a minor revision to its terms of reference to include Deputy Registrar Judith Shepherd as a member.

RESOLVED

To approve the revised terms of reference for the Recruitment and Marketing Board [**ACTION:** Deputy Registrar Sarah Whitehead].

57. REPORT FROM RESEARCH COMMITTEE

RECEIVED

Report by the REF and Research Monitoring Team (SEN2021-073).

NOTED

1. The report summarised the main items discussed during the Research Committee meetings held on 11 March, and 11 June 2021.

2. Rural Futures Hub

Rural Futures Hub were being developed to demonstrate the University's shared interdisciplinary themes, enable interdisciplinary engagement, and address local and global challenges. Members were advised that, while Interdisciplinary Research Centres had existed for most of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) period, creating a smaller number of hubs would strengthen the University's position externally.

3. Wales Innovation Network

1. Universities in Wales would formally launch the Wales Innovation Network (WIN) the following day (24 June 2021) in response to Prof Graeme Reid's 2020 report which had recommended the creation of a new initiative to tap into the diversity of Wales' research and innovation capacity through collaboration.
2. Pro Vice-Chancellors in Wales with responsibility for research were currently developing the detail of WIN's proposed activities, but the intention was to support innovation and collaboration.

4. Terms of Reference

The Research Committee had recommended that it and its related Task Group be renamed as the Research and Innovation Committee, and the Research and Innovation Task Group respectively. It was also suggested that the remit of the Task Group be broadened to include implementation of the institutional Research and Innovation Strategy.

RESOLVED

To approve the proposed revisions to the terms of reference of the Committee and Task Group [**ACTION:** REF and Research Monitoring Team].

5. Research Concordat Action Plan

1. During 2020, the University had signed the Concordat for Researcher Development, which had committed the institution to providing 10 days' researcher training per year. An Action Plan had now been developed which outlined timeframes and approaches to delivering these 10 days, with due reference to the WAMM.
2. Members welcomed this development, and considered the ways in which the Action Plan could be implemented. The roles of both the professoriate and Principal Investigators in this respect were highlighted.

3. The proposed Action Plan should be seen as a document which is revised as required. The Steering Group established in relation to the Researcher Concordat would monitor progress against the Action Plan, and would tweak the Plan as appropriate over time.

RESOLVED

4. To approve the proposed Research Concordat Action Plan [**ACTION:** REF and Research Monitoring Team].

58. GOVERNANCE MATTERS

1. Outcome of Senate self-effectiveness questionnaire

RECEIVED

Report by the University Secretary (SEN2021-074).

NOTED

1. Between 24 May and 04 June 2021, Senate members had been invited to complete a questionnaire to provide constructive feedback on the academic governing body's operation during the current academic year. The results were set out in the report, and discussed by members during the meeting.
2. The overall response rate had decreased significantly compared to the previous year and this was disappointing.
3. In response to the feedback received as part of the questionnaire, the University Secretary would review the length of papers for future Senate meetings, as well as take steps to increase the prominence of research-related matters on the agenda [**ACTION:** University Secretary].

2. Outcome of elections to Senate

RECEIVED

Report by the University Secretary (SEN2021-075)

NOTED

1. Three Senate members were coming to the end of their current terms as academic departmental representatives. Elections had therefore been held to elect or re-elect individuals to represent these departments from the period 01 September 2021.
2. The processes followed for these elections, as well as the names of the individuals elected, were set out in the report.

59. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

RECEIVED

Members received reports on the following for information:

1. Report from the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol (SEN2021-076);
2. Research Grants (SEN2021-077); and
3. Summary Corporate Risk Register (SEN2021-078).

NOTED

4. The contents of the reports presented for information.

60. COMMITTEE MINUTES

RECEIVED

A report comprising the following (SEN2021-079):

1. Academic Board (08 June 2021);
2. Recruitment and Marketing Board (09 June 2021);
3. Collaborative Provision Board (29 April; and 10 June 2021);
4. Research Committee (29 March; and 11 June 2021); and
5. Council (14 May 2021).

NOTED

6. The reports received from the committees.

61. ANY OTHER BUSINESS, MEETING REVIEW, AND FUTURE BUSINESS

1. Farewell

This would have been the final meeting of the Senate for the following student representatives – all would be reaching the end of their terms as AberSU sabbatical officers on 30 June 2021, and were thanked for their contribution to Senate over the past year:

1. Moc Lewis, UMCA President;
2. Nate Pidcock, AberSU President; and
3. Chloe Wilkinson-Silk, AberSU Academic Affairs Officer.

2. Senate Away Day

Senate's next meeting would be the body's away day on 29 September 2021. Where restrictions allow, the intention would be to hold this event in person.