

SENATE

Minutes of the meeting held at 14:00 on 10 MARCH 2021, via Zoom.

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); Prof Simon Banham; Dr Cathryn Charnell-White; Dr Hazel Davey; Mr Prysor Davies; Dr Sarah Davies; Prof Iain Donnison; Dr Rebecca Edwards; Dr Gwion Evans; Dr Patrick Finney; Dr Sarah Higgins; Dr Aloysius Igboekwu; Dr Ffion Jones; Mr Morgan Lewis, UMCA President; Mr Chris Loftus; Dr Alex Mangold; Dr Louise Marshall; Prof Robert Meyrick; Mr David Moyle; Mr Nathaniel Pidcock, AberSU President; Prof Eleri Pryse; Prof Phillipp Schofield; Ms Chloe Wilkinson-Silk, AberSU Academic Affairs Officer (until minute 36); Dr Victoria Wright; and Prof Reyer Zwiggelaar, Head of the Graduate School.

Non-voting members: Dr Guy Baron; Prof Simon Cox; Dr Andrew Davies; Prof Andrew Evans; Prof Nigel Holt; Dr Thomas Jansen; Prof Helen Roberts, Director of Research Excellence and Impact; Dr Anoush Simon; 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; and Ms Emma Williams, Academic Registrar.

Apologies for absence had been received from Ms Rachael Davey; Mr Penri James, Chair of AU Branch of the CCC; Mr John Morgan; and Dr Sarah Wydall.

28. MATTERS RAISED BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

1. Welcome

Prof Simon Banham had been elected as alternate member for the Theatre, Film and Television Studies department. He would be serving on the Senate while Dr Ffion Jones is on leave.

2. Condolences

Sympathies were expressed following the death of:

1. John Corfield, former Head Gardener;
2. Morton Davies, former Senior Lecturer in the Department of Mathematics; and
3. Tun Dr Mohamed Salleh Abas, Honorary Fellow.

29. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

30. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RECEIVED

Minutes of the meetings held on 18 November 2020, and 05 February 2021 (SEN2021-039).

RESOLVED

That the minutes be confirmed as correct records, subject to a minor correction in the list of those members present on 05 February 2021 [**ACTION:** University Secretary].

31. 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 (SEN2021-040).

NOTED

1. Covid-19: Special Circumstances and the Window of Opportunity (minute 19.3.8)

While the decision to which this action related had been superseded by the decisions taken by Senate during its special meeting on 05 February 2021, an analysis would nevertheless be produced to the next Academic Board, and subsequently reported to Senate, on student outcomes at the end of semester one compared to similar results for previous years.

2. The other updates provided in the decisions log.

32. DECISIONS TAKEN BETWEEN MEETINGS

RECEIVED

Report by the University Secretary (SEN2021-041).

NOTED

The report detailed instances since the last Senate meeting where matters had been approved by the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Senate, namely:

1. an amendment to regulations, to require that students provide emergency contact information; and
2. the final regulations for the national MA Education (Wales) course.

33. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to report.

34. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

RECEIVED

Report by the Vice-Chancellor (SEN2021-042).

NOTED

1. The report consisted of three key parts: a highlight report; a planning and student enrolment report; and a communications report.
2. The University's submission for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 was due at the end of the month. This had been a seven-year effort, with the pace of work increasing dramatically over recent weeks. Departments were thanked for their contributions, and were asked to respond to any last-minute queries from the REF team with minimal delay, to ensure submission by the deadline.
3. At the request of Council, the Vice-Chancellor was reviewing progress against the 2018–23 Strategic Plan. While there had generally been good progress against strategic objectives, the Covid-19 pandemic had resulted in some momentum being lost in efforts to increase research activity. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research, Knowledge Exchange, and Innovation) was therefore developing proposals to boost research to both recover from the effects of the pandemic and to increase activity beyond pre-pandemic levels.
4. Associate Lecturers and Graduate Teaching Assistants had already been appointed this term under the initiative to boost research, with the intention that the provision of additional support for teaching would allow more time for research to be undertaken. There were also proposals for signature chair-level appointments as part of the institution's 150th anniversary in 2022.
5. Members welcomed proposals to build up research activity within the institution, and emphasised the importance of balancing support for early career researchers against appointing those already established to new chair-level positions.
6. 69 per cent students of third-year undergraduate students had responded to the annual National Student Survey (NSS) to date. This was considered a remarkable level of engagement in view of the current circumstances.
7. There had been increases in undergraduate applications from the UK and international students for September 2021 entry across all departments. These increases would compensate for the decrease in applications from the European Union, who would no longer qualify for the same fee levels as UK domiciled applicants from the next academic year onwards. The focus was now turning to converting the increased number of applications received to firm acceptances.
8. A definitive decision had not yet been made regarding the graduation ceremonies for this year. Should the summer ceremonies not go ahead, other options for potential celebratory events later in the year would be considered.

35. QUALITY ENHANCEMENT REVIEW (WALES)

RECEIVED

Report by Deputy Registrar Dr Alan Macmillan (SEN2021-043).

NOTED

1. The next external Quality Enhancement Review of the University was scheduled to be undertaken by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) during April 2022. A working party had therefore been established to lead on preparations from the University's perspective.
2. Following discussions at a national level between HEFCW, the QAA and universities in Wales, a revised scope and schedule for Quality Enhancement Reviews had been agreed for the remainder of the review cycle in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The revised scope would focus solely on quality assurance, with the intention that quality enhancement be reviewed separately in future. The QAA had also indicated that their intention was to confirm the outcome of the previous Quality Enhancement Review at the University, rather than undertake a re-test.
3. The revised approach would likely have implications for the University's approach. Fewer staff were expected to be involved in this scaled-down process, and less paperwork submitted in advance of the Review.

36. WORKLOAD ALLOCATION AND MANAGEMENT MODEL

RECEIVED

Report by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Earth and Life Sciences) (SEN2021-044).

NOTED

1. The current Workload Allocation and Management Model (WAMM) had been in place since 2016 and needed to be revised to reflect the new faculty structures introduced in 2018. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Earth and Life Sciences) had therefore led a review of the current WAMM.
2. A range of tariffs were being proposed to undertake activities in administrative, leadership, research and teaching activities. These tariffs were based on: the number of students, number of credits, nature of the role, or size of the relevant academic area.
3. Some members queried the accuracy of the student numbers and academic staffing data for their department, which was being used to identify the applicable WAMM tariffs. It was agreed that the accuracy of the data would need to be reviewed. However, the Vice-Chancellor stated that the academic staffing complement of each department was broadly appropriate for their respective student numbers.
4. Members felt that basing WAMM tariffs on the size of a department would not result in an accurate reflection of the amount of time required since the smaller departments often required academic colleagues to assume a greater administrative burden.
5. Other concerns were raised about the revised WAMM being proposed, including: the need to recognise preparation time for teaching and examinations; and providing sufficient time for research, especially for those staff members whose research interests may not necessarily align with their teaching areas. It was also felt that the revised WAMM would provide less scope for departmental discretion, which Heads of Department had previously relied upon to make the current WAMM workable.
6. Members recognised that the WAMM should be an important tool for treating staff equally, although it would be difficult to find a solution which would please everyone,

and it was accepted that there was a general tendency for academic staff to work in excess of the 1650 hours allocated through the WAMM.

RESOLVED

7. That the current WAMM be retained pending further consultation, and the production of a revised iteration of the WAMM being developed for consideration by Senate [**ACTION:** Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Earth and Life Sciences)].

37. REPORT FROM THE ACADEMIC BOARD

RECEIVED

Report by Deputy Registrar Kim Bradick (SEN2021-045).

NOTED

1. The report summarised the main items discussed during the Academic Board meeting held on 25 February 2021. The report was discussed by Senate members.
2. Academic Regulations: Distance Learning time limits
 1. Minor amendments had been proposed to the Registration Period and Time Limits section of the Postgraduate Taught Award Regulations and associated Progressions Rules for Postgraduate Taught schemes, as set out in the Examination Conventions. The regulations currently referred to five-year schemes but in recent years, two- and three-year distance learning programmes had been approved.
 2. The wording of the proposed revisions to these regulations were set out in the report.

RESOLVED

3. To approve the proposed amendments to the Academic Regulations on Distance Learning time limits [**ACTION:** Deputy Registrar Kim Bradick].
3. Unacceptable Academic Practice (UAP) Regulations
 1. In December 2020, the Postgraduate Steering Group had considered UAP in research training modules and had recommended that the UAP regulations be amended to address the fact that the existing regulation did not operate effectively in UAP cases involving postgraduate research students on taught modules.
 2. The proposed amendments were set out in the report.

RESOLVED

3. To approve the proposed amendments to the UAP regulations [**ACTION:** Deputy Registrar Kim Bradick].
4. Student Discipline

1. During the year there had been several reports of students breaching Covid-19 restrictions. It had therefore been recommended that the nature of what heads of departments could be asked to investigate should be clarified, and that Faculty Managers be included under the list of staff who could conduct Category 1 Investigations.
2. The proposed amendments to paragraph 23 of the Academic Quality Handbook (AQH) to effect this recommendation were set out in the report.

RESOLVED

3. To approve the proposed amendments to paragraph 23 of the AQH [**ACTION:** Deputy Registrar Kim Bradick].
5. Annual Report on Complaints, Appeals and Final Reviews

The Academic Board had received a summary of complaints, appeals and final reviews considered in 2020, and this was replicated in the report. A summary of matters considered by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) was also included.
6. Unacceptable Academic Practice 2019–20

The Academic Board had received a summary of matters considered under UAP regulations during 2019–20. While the number of suspected cases investigated had decreased in comparison to the previous year, there had been a slight increase in the number of cases confirmed.

38. COLLABORATIVE PROVISION BOARD

1. Report from Collaborative Provision Board

RECEIVED

Report by Deputy Registrar Judith Shepherd (SEN2021-046).

NOTED

The report summarised the main items discussed during the Collaborative Provision Board meeting held on 23 February 2021.

2. Partner Performance Evaluation Reports on Franchise Agreements with Coleg Cambria and Coleg Gwent

RECEIVED

Composite report by Academic Partnerships Manager Laura McSweeney, and Academic Partnerships Manager Annamarie Arden; incorporating Partner Performance Evaluation reports on franchise agreements with Coleg Cambria and Coleg Gwent (SEN2021-047).

NOTED

1. The franchise with Coleg Cambria had been signed in October 2016 for a five-year term, expiring in October 2021. An updated Memorandum of Agreement had been signed in December 2017.

2. The franchise with Coleg Gwent had been signed in November 2017 and would expire on 31 July 2021 in relation to Equine Studies. The original franchise also covered a FdSc in Agriculture, although this had not recruited and had therefore been suspended.
3. To ensure ongoing suitability of both Coleg Cambria and Coleg Gwent as partner organisations, Partner Performance Evaluations (PPE) had been conducted and reported to the Collaborative Provision Board. The PPE panels were recommending that business cases be developed for the renewal of these franchises.
4. The process within the University was for the University Executive to consider the business cases (the financial aspects), and for Senate to consider the academic case (standards and quality assurance) for franchise partnership arrangements.

RESOLVED

5. To approve the renewal of the franchise agreements with Coleg Cambria and Coleg Gwent from the academic assurance perspective, after expiry of current contractual agreements [**ACTION:** Deputy Registrar Judith Shepherd].

39. REPORT FROM RECRUITMENT AND MARKETING BOARD

RECEIVED

Report by Deputy Registrar Sarah Whitehead (SEN2021-048).

NOTED

1. The report summarised the main items discussed during the Recruitment and Marketing Board meeting held on 02 March 2021. The report was discussed by Senate members.

2. Undergraduate Admissions Cycle Update

While final A Level results would now be released to students on 10 August 2021, students in Wales had been advised that they would be advised of their provisional A Level results in June.

40. REPORT FROM RESEARCH COMMITTEE

RECEIVED

Report by the REF and Research Monitoring Team (SEN2021-049).

NOTED

1. The report summarised the main items discussed during the Research Committee meeting held on 02 December 2020.
2. The Committee meeting which was due to be held in February 2021 had been postponed due to the impending REF submission deadline. Discussions at the rescheduled meeting would be reported at the next Senate meeting.

41. UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

1. Terms of Reference

RECEIVED

Report by the Research Ethics and Integrity Officer (SEN2021-050).

NOTED

1. The current terms of reference of the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) had last been revised in February 2019, and were therefore now scheduled for review. Minor amendments were being proposed, as set out in the report.
2. Between April 2021 and April 2022, the Director of Research Excellence and Impact would chair UREC meetings on a temporary basis on behalf of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research, Knowledge Exchange, and Innovation). The proposed amendments to the terms of reference therefore addressed this temporary revision.

RESOLVED

3. To approve the proposed revisions to UREC's terms of reference [**ACTION:** Research Ethics and Integrity Officer].

42. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

RECEIVED

Members received reports on the following for information:

1. Report from the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol (SEN2021-051);
2. Research Grants (SEN2021-052); and
3. Summary Corporate Risk Register (SEN2021-053).

NOTED

4. The contents of the reports presented for information.

43. COMMITTEE MINUTES

RECEIVED

A report comprising the following (SEN2021-054):

1. Academic Board (25 February 2021);
2. Recruitment and Marketing Board (10 February 2021);
3. Collaborative Provision Board (10 November 2020, and 23 February 2021);
4. Research Committee (10 December 2020); and
5. Council (26 November 2020 and 14 January 2021).

NOTED

6. Academic Board: Past Examination questions (minute 60)

Members were advised that the advice on the reuse of examination papers and questions was intended to provide guiding principles, and not to direct academics to reuse questions in a specific way.

7. The reports other received from the committees.