



SENATE

Minutes of the meeting held at 14:00 on 17 NOVEMBER 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); Prof Hazel Davey; Mr Prysor Davies; Prof Iain Donnison; Ms Mared Edwards, UMCA President; Dr Gwion Evans; Dr Patrick Finney; Dr Gabor Gelleri, Dr Sarah Higgins; Dr Aloysius Igboekwu; Mr Penri James, Chair of AU Branch of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol; Dr Alex Mangold; Ms Elizabeth Manners, AberSU Academic Affairs Officer; Dr Louise Marshall; Prof Robert Meyrick; Mr John Morgan; Mr David Moyle; Dr Heather Norris; Ms Sabina O'Donoghue, AberSU President; Prof Eleri Pryse; Prof Phillipp Schofield.

Non-voting members: Prof Simon Cox; Dr Andrew Davies; and Dr Anoush Simon.

In attendance: Mrs Kim Bradick, Deputy Registrar, Assurance and Enhancement; Mrs Jean Jones, Head of the Vice-Chancellor's Office; Dr Emyr Roberts; Chair of Council; and Ms Emma Williams, Academic Registrar.

Apologies for absence had been received from Prof Simon Banham; Dr Cathryn Charnell-White, Ms Rachael Davey, Prof Sarah Davies, Mr Tim Davies, Dr Rebecca Edwards, Prof Andrew Evans, Prof Nigel Holt, Dr Thomas Jansen, Prof Emyr Lewis, Prof Helen Roberts, Prof Andrew Thomas, Dr Sarah Wydall and Prof Reyer Zwiiggelaar.

14. MATTERS RAISED BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

1. Welcome

1. Dr Emyr Roberts, Chair of Council, who was attending as an observer. On behalf of the Council Dr Roberts thanked all staff for their work during the Covid crisis.
2. Mrs Kim Bradick, Deputy Registrar, Assurance and Enhancement, who was taking the minutes.

2. Resignation

Chris Loftus, Computer Science; as no replacement nomination had been received from the Department of Computer Science, Dr Thomas Jansen would sit as a full member until 31 July 2022.

3. Condolences

Sympathies were expressed following the deaths of:

1. Peter Kingswood, Department of Music.

2. John Savidge, Bot/Microbiology

4. Congratulations

To Dr Anwen Elias who had been appointed Commissioner to the new Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales.

15. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

16. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RECEIVED

Minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2021 (SEN2122-021).

RESOLVED

That the minutes be confirmed as a correct record.

17. 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 (SEN2122-022).

NOTED

The updates provided in the decisions log. In relation to the transfer of the IEC, a paper to recommend a change to the Ordinances would be presented to the next meeting of Council.

18. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to report.

19. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

RECEIVED

Report by the Vice-Chancellor (SEN2122-023).

NOTED

1. The report consisted of three key parts: a highlight report; a planning and student enrolment report; and a communications report.
2. It had been an exceptionally quiet year for confirmation and clearing which had led to lower student numbers overall and an associated income shortfall. All budgets would be reviewed to identify savings as well as opportunities to secure additional income.
3. Provisional dates for graduation ceremonies in 2022 had been published. The expectation was that physical ceremonies would be held in an extended graduation period between Friday 08/07/2022 and Saturday 16/07/2022. It would be open to the

2020, 2021 and the 2022 cohorts, as well as any deferrals from the 2019 cohort; graduates eligible to attend from previous cohorts would be contacted shortly to ascertain their intentions.

20. PREPARING AU FOR REF2027

RECEIVED

Report by Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation) and Dr Helen Roberts (SEN2122-024)

NOTED

1. REF was a major exercise with multi-year consequences for finances and league position. It was essential that AU maximized its return through effective preparation. The paper identified current assumptions about the future of the REF which would shape planning; outlined key principles in preparing for REF, including a focus on quality as well as quantity and building on what worked in preparing REF2021, and identified key actions with regard to staffing.
2. The current best guess was that the submission date would be in December 2026 for assessment in 2027 (hence REF2027), though there were already indications that this might slip to 2028. Attention was drawn to the most significant differences that were being anticipated: all published items to be Open Access; a greater use of metrics; stronger encouragement for interdisciplinary research and open data requirements introduced.
3. The key principles were that AU's REF Strategy needed to ensure a sufficient quantity of material (outputs, ICS etc) to meet REF submission requirements and also to maximize the quality of the submission and data return. In order to achieve this AU needed to ensure that it had the staff to deliver and support high quality research; the support mechanisms and the underpinning environment to enable staff to realise their research potential; the mechanisms to monitor and reward research quality, as well as quantity, on an ongoing basis and set clear expectations for research performance.
4. Senate members raised issues such as focussed additional resourcing, particularly in the context of other HEIs channelling extra funding into research post pandemic with an eye to the next REF; sustainability and how this could be managed at a unit of assessment level; the WAMM; the particular challenges facing small departments, and a request to identify what activities might be stopped or scaled back to allow more time for research.
5. It was reported that data was currently being collected on roles and tariff hours which would feed into the WAMM; the WAMM in itself could not create time for research but it could drive changes to behaviour. There was a need to concentrate research time to be able to use it wisely and a modular approach to blocking time would be trialled with E&CW. The university's digital strategy would address some of the procedure issues and the Faculty Managers were due to report shortly on a review they were undertaking to identify what processes might be streamlined. It was noted that, particularly for small departments, the support structures of the faculty helped with managing operational issues through economies of scale.

21. DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICIES AND INITIATIVES AT AU 2021

RECEIVED

Report by the Diversity and Inclusion Manager (SEN2122-025)

NOTED

1. In 2020, the University Executive and Council approved the Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024. The evidence base indicated that it was under-represented particularly in the areas of gender equality of senior academics, and ethnicity across the student and staff body. These areas were now the focus of the plan. The paper set out some of the work and achievements since the plan's approval providing updates on the Race Access and Success collaborative project, the annual return to Stonewall and Athena Swan.
2. The Executive Group had approved signing up to Zero Racism Cymru, which called on all organisations and individuals to promote racial harmony and equity, and had provisionally approved, subject to detailed costings, to apply for University of Sanctuary status - this initiative supported the development of universities engaged in activities intended to welcome forced migrants who were seeking or had sought international protection in the UK.
3. It was recommended that the IRHA definition of anti-Semitism and the All Party Parliamentary Group working definition of Islamophobia be adopted; updates to policies would need to be brought back to Senate in 2022.

RESOLVED

4. To welcome the direction of travel proposed in the paper.
5. To adopt the IRHA and Islamophobia definitions with full policy documents coming back to Senate in January 2022. (**ACTION:** Prof Neil Glasser)

22. RESEARCH COMMITTEE

RECEIVED

Report by the Research Impact Team (SEN2122-026)

NOTED: Senate's attention was drawn to two items:

1. Item 4.1 Quarterly Research Applications & Award Data - As the end of year accounts are being finalised, draft research finance data was provided. This showed an improving picture with over 234 applications worth £53.8 million submitted to 71 funding bodies. There were also £15.2 million new awards from 80 projects.
2. Item 4.5.2 UKRI Open Access Policy - From April 2022 all research articles would have to have immediate Open Access without any embargo period and in 2024 long-form publications would have to be Open Access within 12 months of publication. All universities, including AU, were facing increased Open Access costs. The full costs and how UKRI Open Access requirements would be supported were not yet known.

23. ACADEMIC BOARD

1. Report from the Academic Board

RECEIVED

Report by Kim Bradick, Deputy Registrar (Assurance and Enhancement), in relation to the Academic Board meeting held 3 November 2021 (SEN2122-027).

NOTED

1. The report summarised the main items discussed during the Academic Board meeting held on 3 November 2021.
2. In the case of the Vet School it was clarified that the rule that new teaching material should not be released for a particular semester during periods reserved for revision and assessments did not apply where teaching continued through the end of semester one revision and assessment period.

2. Quality Assurance Statement

RECEIVED

Report by Kim Bradick, Deputy Registrar (Assurance and Enhancement) (SEN2122-028).

NOTED

1. The purpose of the report was to provide the Council with the appropriate evidence to be able to confirm to HEFCW that it was satisfied that the University had met, and continued to meet, its obligations in respect of a series of statements in relation to quality assurance (see end of document for full statements). The document reported on activity in 2020/21 in the context of Covid-19. Senate members were invited to send comments to the Deputy Registrar ahead of the report being finalised to go forward to the next meeting of Council.
2. Attention was drawn to the risk matrix on pages 4-8; Partnerships, External Examiners and Process and Structure had been taken down a level, however the areas of Good Honours (in the context of grade inflation); Department Reviews (which had only just restarted after a period of suspension due to Covid) and Appeals and Complaints (which had increased in both volume and complexity) had been raised a level to indicate a higher level of risk. The HEFCW Triennial Report had suggested the university look at its commentary on the Student Voice and this had been addressed under the Student Voice heading. The section on Partnerships provided a summary of a more detailed annual report which had previously been submitted to Council.
3. Comments were noted in relation to the operation of PPC and the withdrawal of low recruiting schemes. The Terms of Reference for PPC were under review and would clarify the relationship between it and the FAACs. Similarly the relationship with the WMSC needed clarification for withdrawal of Welsh medium provision, and the associated language impact assessment, including CCC subject grant implications; it was noted that there was WM representation at PPC.
4. The SU Academic Affairs Representative confirmed that the SU had no comments to add, and confirmed that they had been involved in Academic Board and various sub committees where the issues in the report had been considered in detail. The Chair of Council noted that the discussion gave considerable assurance to Council that the report had been considered in detail by Senate.

RESOLVED

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

3. External Examiner Reports 2020-21

RECEIVED

Report by Kim Bradick, Deputy Registrar (Assurance and Enhancement) (SEN2122-029).

NOTED

1. An extract of the key issues raised in the External Examiner Reports for the previous session had been included as a separate report. 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.
4. Annual Monitoring of Taught Schemes and NSS Action Plans 2020-2021

RECEIVED

Report by Kim Bradick, Deputy Registrar (Assurance and Enhancement) (SEN2122-030).

NOTED

An extract from Academic Board minutes provided an overview of the key issues from the Annual Monitoring exercise and NSS Action Plans. Thanks were extended to all departments in undertaking the exercise, and particularly to the Associate Deans (LTSE) for putting together the summary reports in a very tight timescale. The timing of the reporting cycle would be reviewed again.

24. RECRUITMENT AND MARKETING BOARD

1. Report from the Recruitment and Marketing Board

RECEIVED

Report by Sarah Whitehead, Deputy Registrar (Admissions) (SEN2122-031).

NOTED

1. The report summarised the main items discussed during the Recruitment and Marketing Board meeting held on 13 October 2021. The report was discussed by Senate members.
2. The Terms of Reference and the procedure for considering applicants with criminal convictions had both been reviewed and updated.

25. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

RECEIVED

Members received reports on the following for information:

1. Report from the *Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol* (SEN2122-032);
2. Research Grants (SEN2122-033); and
3. Summary Corporate Risk Register (SEN2122-034).

NOTED

4. The contents of the other reports presented for information.

26. COMMITTEE MINUTES

RECEIVED

1. A report comprising the following minutes (SEN2122-035):
 1. Research Committee (10 September 2021);
 2. Academic Board (3 November 2021);
 3. Recruitment and Marketing Board (13 October 2021); and
 4. Council (21 September 2021); and

NOTED

2. The reports received from the committees.

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

NOTED

That a special meeting of Senate would be scheduled for 12 January 2022 to consider the University's Self Evaluative Analysis document ahead of submission to the QAA for the Quality Enhancement Review, which was taking place in the spring.