

SENATE

Minutes of the meeting held at 14:00 on 15 NOVEMBER 2023, in the Main Hall, International Politics Building.

Voting members: Professor Elizabeth Treasure, Vice-Chancellor; Dr Otar Akanyeti; Dr Stephen Atherton; Mr Tom Bates; Dr Hanna Binks; Professor Hazel Davey; Dr Sarah Davies; Professor Iain Donnison; Professor Andrew Evans; Dr Patrick Finney, Acting Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences); Mr Jonathan Fry, Chair of AU Branch of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol; Miss Elain Gwynedd, UMCA President; Professor Angela Hatton, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation); Professor Mererid Hopwood; Dr Aloysius Igboekwu; Dr Ffion Jones; Dr Alex Mangold; Professor Louise Marshall; Dr Julie Mathias; Dr Rhodri Llwyd Morgan, Director of Welsh Language, Culture and External Engagement; Ms Jen Phipps; Dr Alexander Pitchford; Professor Phillipp Schofield; Dr Alistair Shepherd; Prof Qiang Shen, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Business and Physical Sciences); Miss Anna Simpkins, AberSU Academic Affairs Officer; Professor Tim Woods, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience); and Prof Reyer Zwiggelaar, Head of the Graduate School.

Non-voting members: Professor Iain Barber; Professor Simon Cox; Dr Thomas Jansen; Professor Helen Roberts, Director of Research Excellence and Impact; Dr Anoush Simon; Dr Steve Thompson; and Dr Lucy Trotter.

In attendance: Mrs Jean Jones, Head of the Vice-Chancellor's Office; Mr Trevor Pearce, Interim Academic Registrar; Dr Gwawr Taylor, University Secretary; Dr Gethin Rhys, Deputy Registrar.

Apologies for absence had been received from Professor Anwen Jones, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences); Professor Neil Glasser, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Earth and Life Sciences); Dr Kim Knowles; Mr Bayanda Vundamina, SU President.

15. MATTERS RAISED BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

Senate Strategy Morning

Senate had held a successful Strategy Morning prior to the formal meeting. Copies of all presentations had been made available on SharePoint for future reference.

16. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

17. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RECEIVED

Minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2023 (SEN2223-017).

RESOLVED

That the minutes be confirmed as a correct record.

18. 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 (SEN2324-018).

NOTED

The updates provided in the decisions log.

1. Recruitment & Marketing: A full discussion had taken place at the Senate away day on the morning of 15 November, and the action was closed.
2. Student Fees: updated guidance on debt would be made available to students online, and the action was closed.

19. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

RECEIVED

Vice-Chancellor's Report (SEN2324-019)

NOTED

1. The report consisted of three key parts: a highlight report; a planning and student recruitment report; and a communications report.
2. A revised in-year budget would be presented for approval by Council on 27 November 2023. The University was on target to identify savings within the year, which would go hand-in-hand with a renewed effort to boost recruitment.
3. The successful 2023 Festival of Research: The Pursuit of Peace, which had featured a wide range of activities during the first week of November.
4. The University's continuing interaction with the Mid Wales Growth Deal.

20. RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

20.1 Annual Report on Research Ethics

RECEIVED

Report by Lisa Fisher, Research Ethics and Integrity Officer (SEN2324-020)

NOTED

1. The report provided an update on the work undertaken by the University Research Ethics Committee and the Research Ethics Panel. It also outlined a summary of all research ethics activities within the academic year 2022/23.

2. Two investigations into alleged research misconduct (dating from the 2021/22 session) had been completed during 2022/23 in accordance with the Policy on Research Misconduct.
3. The development of new online modules in Research Ethics and Integrity for all research-active staff and students.

20.2 Annual Integrity Statement

RECEIVED

Report from Lisa Fisher, Research Ethics and Integrity Officer (SEN2324-021).

NOTED

1. The Statement had been prepared for annual publication in compliance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity. It covered the period from 1 August 2022 to 31 July 2023 and summarised the University's status relative to the expectations of the Concordat. It outlined the actions and activities undertaken, and the framework in place in support of fostering a culture of research integrity. It also provided a summary of investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken by the University.

RESOLVED

2. To approve the Annual Integrity Statement for publication on the University's website. [**ACTION:** Professor Angela Hatton, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation)]

21. ACADEMIC BOARD

21.1 Report from Academic Board

RECEIVED

1. Report by Deputy Registrar Kim Bradick (SEN2324-022).

NOTED

2. A guidance paper on Student Retention had been circulated to departments in September, and Academic Board would continue to maintain close oversight of student withdrawal levels. A case study undertaken through the Learning Analytics project had highlighted the effectiveness of timely intervention.
3. Academic Board would assume regular oversight of high profile provision which involved critical accreditation requirements. These would include Initial Teacher Education, Healthcare and Veterinary Science.

21.2 Quality Assurance Statement

RECEIVED

1. Annual Statement from Deputy Registrar Kim Bradick (SEN2324-23)

NOTED

2. The purpose of the annual Quality Assurance Statement was to provide the University's governing body, Council, with the appropriate evidence to be able to assure itself 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. Council, as the Governing Body, was required to report to HEFCW annually. However, assurance and enhancement of learning and teaching happened throughout the academic year and was not confined to annual processes. The report would be presented to the November meeting of Council.
3. The risk management of quality assurance would continue to require close attention, particularly in relation to the impact of industrial action.

RESOLVED

4. To commend the Quality Assurance Statement, subject to minor corrections, and refer to Council for final approval and submission to HEFCW. [**ACTION:** University Secretary]
5. To formally thank the Deputy Registrar (Assurance & Enhancement) for preparing the Annual Statement.

21.3 External Examiners' Reports

RECEIVED

1. Report from Deputy Registrar Kim Bradick (SEN2324-024)

NOTED

2. External Examiners had confirmed their overall satisfaction with the academic standards of awards, and that student performance was comparable with the standards of similar programmes in other UK HEIs with which they were familiar. They were also content that Examination Boards had been conducted fairly and in accordance with the University's Examination Conventions. In relation to programme specifications, External Examiners had confirmed that the content, structure and learning outcomes at Aberystwyth University were appropriate to those set out in the national subject benchmarks, and that the range of assessment methods used were effective in measuring the learning outcomes of the schemes of study.
3. While the feasibility of any changes to the timing of examination boards were as yet unclear, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (LTSE) would investigate and write to the External Examiners concerned.
4. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (LTSE) would write to two External Examiners who had expressed concerns in relation to the impact of the Marking & Assessment Boycott.

RESOLVED

5. To welcome the assurance of quality and standards by External Examiners.
6. To request updates on the responses to specific concerns raised by External Examiners in relation to examination boards and the Marking & Assessment Boycott. [**ACTION:** Pro Vice-Chancellor, Learning Teaching & Student Experience]

22. STUDENT UNION RELATIONSHIP AGREEMENT

RECEIVED

Report by Gwawr Taylor, University Secretary (SEN2324-025)

NOTED

1. HEFCW required that Universities and Students' Unions enter into a Relationship Agreement, which should be endorsed by the institution's Governing Body, reviewed annually in time for the new academic year, and signed by the incoming Student Officers. The Relationship Agreement for 2023–24 had been reviewed by the University Secretary, the SU President, and the SU Chief Executive. Other than to update signatures, no changes were being proposed to the current Relationship Agreement.

RESOLVED

2. To retain the current Relationship Agreement for the forthcoming academic year. [ACTION: University Secretary]

23. HONORARY AWARDS

RECEIVED

Report by Gwawr Taylor, University Secretary (SEN2324-026)

NOTED

1. On 31 October 2023, the Honorary Awards Group had met to consider nominations for Honorary Awards of Aberystwyth University. The report set out the proposed shortlist, and members were asked to respect the confidential nature of this paper. The University would not correspond with those being recommended for an Honorary Award until their names had been approved by Council. Furthermore, the names of those to be conferred with an Honorary Award would not be publicised until the summer of 2024.

RESOLVED

2. To refer the nominations for Honorary Awards to Council for approval. [ACTION: University Secretary]

24. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

RECEIVED

Members received reports on the following for information:

1. Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol (SEN2324-027)
2. Research Grants (SEN2324-028)
3. Corporate Risk Register (SEN2324-029)

NOTED

4. To welcome the increased number of registrations for the Language Skills Certificate.
5. To welcome the continued capture of research grants following a successful year in 2022/23.

25. COMMITTEE MINUTES

RECEIVED

A report (SEN2324-030):

1. Academic Board (1 November 2023)

NOTED

2. The report received from Academic Board.

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

Farwell

This had been Professor Elizabeth Treasure's last meeting of Senate before retiring as Vice-Chancellor at the end of December 2023. Senate extended its thanks to Professor Treasure for her leadership through challenging times, during which the University had strengthened its position and reputation, and also its best wishes on her retirement.

November 2023