

THE SENATE



Minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2009

Present: The Vice-Chancellor (Professor E.D.J. Acton) (in the Chair), the Pro-Vice-Chancellors (Professor T.D. Davies and Professor T.B. Ward), the Deans of Faculty (Professor J. Cook, Professor D.J. Richardson and Professor N. Ward), Heads of Schools (Professor J.D. Charmley and Dr B. Lankford), Academic Representatives (Ms H. Bell, Dr S. Connolly, Dr J. Cross, Professor M. Jancovich, Dr A. Mueller, Professor C. Osborne, Dr M. Pfeil, Professor V. Rayward-Smith and Dr S. Stevens), Director of Information Services (Mr J. Colam-French), Dean of Students (Dr A. Grant), Mr D. Palmer (City College Norwich) and a representative from the Students' Union (Mr T. Sutton) (except for business marked **).

With: Dr Richard Harvey (for minute 4), the Academic Registrar (Mr R. Evans), the Senior Assistant Registrar (Mrs L. Williams), the Head of the Learning, Teaching and Quality Office (Ms A. Rhodes) and the Committee Clerk (Mrs R Phillips).

Apologies: Dr N. Cooper, Professor I. Harvey, Professor N. Pandit, Dr J. Robinson, Mr D. Sheppard, the Registrar & Secretary (Mr B. Summers) and Professor C. Wadlow.

1. MINUTES

Confirmed
the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2009.

2. THE COUNCIL

Reported
that the Council, at its meeting on 29 June 2009, considered the report of the Senate from its meeting on 17 June 2009 (Minute *78) and approved the recommendations it contained.

3. STATEMENTS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

(1) the Vice-Chancellor welcomed new members of Senate:

Dr J. Robinson (Acting Head of the School of Nursing and Midwifery) until the new appointee took up post; Professor M. Jancovich and Professor C. Osborne (academic representatives of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities and Mrs H. Bell (academic representative of the Faculty of Health);

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- (2) the following grants and distinctions were announced, albeit they did not represent an exhaustive list:

Faculty of Arts and Humanities

- (i) a Philip Leverhulme prize to Dr P. Warde (History) for research into the energy history of Europe;
- (ii) the award of a British Academy Fellowship to Professor J. Mack (World Art Studies and Museology)

Faculty of Health

- (i) £927K from the Medical Research Council/NIHR to Professor V. Pomeroy (Allied Health Professions) for an Efficiency and Mechanism Evaluation Clinical Trial;
- (ii) £650K from the BBSRC/DRINC to Dr C. Kay et al, of which £291K, accrues to the University;
- (iii) £360K from the ESRC/Wellcome Trust UK CRC Public Health Research Centre of Excellence Award to a joint project team in Environmental Sciences and the HSS Research Institute. (The Centre as a whole is hosted by the University of Cambridge);

Faculty of Science

- (i) the award of a Professorial Fellowship by the EPSRC to Dr S. Stevens (Mathematics);
- (ii) the award of a Royal Society Fellowship to Professor A. Watson (Environmental Sciences);
- (iii) the award of an ESRC Fellowship to Professor I. Bateman (Environmental Sciences)

Faculty of Social Sciences / Arts and Humanities

- (i) confirmation of Phase 2 funding of £4.5m from the ESRC's ECI fund for the ESRC Centre for Competition Policy (Director: Professor C. Waddams);
- (ii) £500k (plus matched funding from partners) to Professor N. Tzokas (NBS) and Professor N. Ward (SSF) from the HEFCE Economic Challenge Investment Fund

Low Carbon Innovation Centre

The Centre had been awarded £8m by ERDF in its role as agent and manager. Attention was also drawn to the proposed development of an eco-town at Rackheath, Norwich which had recently been given an 'A' rating for planning purposes by the relevant Council. The School of Environmental Sciences was linked to this project.

The Vice-Chancellor congratulated, on behalf of Senate, all winners of awards/distinctions.

- (3) Senate's endorsement of the appointment with immediate effect of Professor J. Charmley as the Senate's representative on the Planning and Resources Committee, vice Professor T. Ward (now ex-officio member as Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic)) was sought and obtained;
- (4) Report on UEA London. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. SEN09D001)

The Vice-Chancellor reported that he had approved the recommendations of the Learning and Teaching Committee regarding the institutional approval of UEA London (including INTO UEA London) from 18 January, 2010 as set out in the report. In addition, the Vice-Chancellor had agreed that the course proposals which the Learning and Teaching Committee had approved for INTO UEA London and UEA London might proceed to immediate advertisement without further qualification.

Senate was also informed that an agreement for a twenty year lease of the building had been signed and that fitting out of the first three floors was proceeding with a view to taking formal possession on 16 November, 2009. City University, which was also developing 'INTO City' courses, was renting space in the building for a period of four years.

The IT infrastructure was being installed and, despite a few challenges, there was optimism that a January start remained feasible. Negotiations were still under way regarding options for additional library provision for Master's students. Students would have access to the UEA Library including its 'e'-resources, and to City University library (but not to its CASS Business Library). In addition, students SCOUNL card would permit limited access to other University libraries.

INTO UEA London programmes would commence from January, 2010, whilst the MBA in Strategic Carbon Management would operate from April, 2010 and the MA in Creative Entrepreneurship from September, 2010. Also under consideration was undergraduate provision, starting from the second year, from September, 2011.

The formal launch of UEA London was envisaged for in September with familiarisation visits for Heads of Schools and others in the interim.

CONFIRMED

4. RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS

Considered

an oral report from Dr Richard Harvey on the 2009 entry round and the wider recruitment and admissions picture. (A copy of the confidential presentation is filed in the Minute Book, ref. SEN09D011).

(The presentation contained comparative data about applications, offers and enrolments for the sessions 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09. The data were further divided into Home/EU and International, undergraduate and postgraduate taught applications and compared with target numbers.

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Looking back to 2008, undergraduate numbers remained healthy despite the Higher Education Funding Council for England's block on additional student numbers; the figures for Home/EU postgraduate taught were a concern. The push to raise entry grades continued; and the number of prospective students attending the most recent Open Day were such that serious consideration should be given to holding a fourth Open Day. Other observations included a decrease in the number of enrolments at UEA amongst Chinese students and national decline in the number from Taiwan, perhaps reflecting the economic effects of recession. Progression of INTO UEA students to the University had not yet met predictions and possibly, in terms of the lower conversion rate of offer to acceptance by international students, the impact of new visa arrangements by the UK Borders Agency were being seen.

There was a clear decrease in the number of requests for approval to admit students with grades lower than three 'C's at 'A' level or equivalent from fifty-five for the 2008 entry to six for entry in 2009. Over all, it appeared that the University had benefited, in terms of applications, from the current unfavourable economic conditions, from exchange rates which were more favourable on the whole, for international students and possibly as a result of greater promotion of UEA. Conversely, some negative impact might be discerned in the new arrangements required by the UK Borders Agency and UEA's lower position in some league tables (e.g. Times Higher Education's).

Looking forward to the '09-10 recruitment round, the continued upward pressure on entry grades should continue, advantage should be taken of favourable exchange rates (and thus an apparent fee 'decrease' for international students) and the aim should remain to reduce further the number of courses entering clearing. Strategic aims would be to push outreach activities to bridge any 'demographic deficit' including greater engagement with gifted and talented schemes, to continue to develop corporate marketing and communication plans, including a 'traffic-light' system to test progress, and to prioritise recruitment of postgraduate research students.

In discussion, members agreed that an increase in postgraduate research students was important but that the main challenge was not in attracting applications but in securing funding for both home and international students. It was understood that the Russell Group of Universities had increased the value of its support via scholarships/studentships and further information should be sought about this approach. There was some concern about possible increased costs of supervision of postgraduate international students although there were differing views on this point. It was also acknowledged that the quality of the student experience should be improved and that training continue to be made available for all postgraduate research students whether they qualified for 'Roberts' funding or not. Postgraduate research students remained a key part of the University's strategic vision and would be taken into account as part of the next Research Excellence Framework. One possibility in terms of increasing numbers would be to consider steering applicants to the full categories of research groups and to review the range of staff permitted to act as primary supervisor. Other actions that could be taken included refinement of web pages, careful management of responses (and response times) to emails and incentivising pgr recruitment (for example by doubling the points for them). It was noted that an offer of a place might be sufficient to lever a scholarship from a sponsor.

The Senate expressed its thanks to the Director of Admissions.)

5. PRESENTATION REGARDING REF

Considered

a presentation by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research, Enterprise and Engagement).

(The presentation focussed on the likely arrangements for the next Research Excellence Framework. Attention was drawn to the following features:

- (i) REF Panels: there would fewer panels and submissions to more than one panel would not be permitted. This would have implications for UEA Schools such as Pharmacy, Nursing and Midwifery and Allied Health Professions. Peer review remained a principle but would be informed by metrics in some cases. The criteria for the award of grades (1* to 4*) would be redefined. The maximum number of publications per member of staff returned had still to be decided (three or four). It was noted that the definition of research had been extended to 'a process of research into new insights effectively shared'.
- (ii) structure: the outputs of research would count 60% towards the REF grade; impact would contribute 25% and environment 15%. Debate was continuing concerning the contribution that 'impact' should make. It could also contribute to the environment category. There was an apparent downgrading of conventional metrics which were subsumed into environment. Further work was needed at UEA on 'impact'. Concerns included its relative under-development for use in funding decisions, time lags between the research and its impact, and attribution of impact to specific research (the guidance referred to "demonstratable contributions to exploitation of research created by the Unit of Assessment");
- (iii) conventional metrics: actions to be considered included increasing the number of postgraduate research students by sixty-five in each of the next two years – perhaps supported by studentships. High impact journals should be targeted;
- (iv) 'Impact' Pilots: twenty-nine Higher Education Institutions were participating in a pilot study of 'impact' including UEA. The subject areas involved were Clinical Medicine, Earth Systems, Environmental Sciences, Physics and Socialwork. UEA would take part in the pilots looking at Environmental Sciences and Social Work. This would be a useful opportunity to experiment and learn;
- (v) timescale for pilots : submission in March, 2010; feedback in July, 2010; REF: definitive guidance issued in December, 2010; assessment period 01.02.2008 – 31.07.2012; submissions: November, 2012; results: December, 2013; and amount of funding announced July 2014;
- (vi) environment: factors to be taken into account included resources allocated; management (including training of postgraduate research students and early career researchers, graduate schools, adherence to the Code of Practice) and engagement (for example, arrangements to support staff working with the users of research and

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the public, support for collaborative and interdisciplinary research (such as the Norwich Research Park (NRP)) and the contribution of intermediaries);

- (vii) interdisciplinary research: the REF would encourage and reward interdisciplinary research with credit given to research which contributed to real-world problems – such as sustainable development and low carbon economy. In this respect, UEA already had a number of 'impact' vehicles such as the NRP, the Overseas Development Group, CUE East, Virtual Past, the Tyndall Centre and the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts. It was important that these collective efforts were carried through to individual work. A new development, with publicity in February, 2010, was the NRP Enterprise Centre which would operate as a single point of access for the full NRP offering;
- (viii) challenges and opportunities: challenges included ensuring that excellent research was threaded through the 'impact' vehicles listed above and into the UEA research story; encouraging staff to nurture impact stories and develop new ones; and using the pilots as an opportunity to test (for) impact. The University would undertake an external review of its research position early in 2010 as had happened during the last Research Assessment Exercise, albeit with a lighter touch. In early 2012, a final decision would be taken on who would be returned, externally moderated. It was important to avoid drift. Deans would attend meetings of the Research Executive along with Associate Deans (Research) when the REF was discussed. Faculties would be asked to report on the progress of staff who had not been returned in the last exercise and on Schools' progress against REF metric targets. Priorities included : continuing to lobby with particular regard to 'impact'; maximising the absolute volume of 3* and 4* research; integrating REF plans with ATR staff research plans and vice-versa; and making early decisions with regard to the alignment of Units of Assessment and UEA Schools;
- (ix) in discussion, it was suggested that there should be a confirmatory review prior to the final submission, to ensure no slippage. Ways of giving time to researchers should be explored since there were only two research creation years prior to the publication year. Academic publishing in the arts was becoming more difficult because of the current difficult business environment and there were significant time lags between acceptance of an article/book for publication and its actual publication. It was unclear what the significant date for REF purposes was: acceptance or actual publication. Consideration should be given to proleptic appointments. There was considerable concern about the 'impact' factor, ranging from whether each Unit of Assessment (UoA) would take the same approach or not. Senate supported the principle that each UoA should decide what constituted high impact, whether any distinction was to be made between soft and hard impacts, whether the percentage would reduce (e.g. to 20%) and whether or not the view of each Panel regarding impact could be challenged by other Panels;
- (x) the Senate thanked the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research, Enterprise and Engagement) for his presentation.)

6. DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION AND SKILLS : REPORT : HIGHER AMBITIONS : THE FUTURE OF UNIVERSITIES IN A KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

Received

a tabled extract from the above report together with a time-line of key developments. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. SEN09D012).

Considered

the executive summary of the above report. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. SEN09D002)

Senators could also consult the full report at :

<http://www.bis.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/publications/Higher-Ambitions.pdf>

and also the Report of the HEFCE sub-committee for Teaching, Quality and the Student Experience.

http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2009/09_40/

(In their consideration, members noted that 'Higher Ambitions' had been influenced by the recent report of the Select Committee on Students and Universities released by the former Department of Industry, Universities and Skills. 'Higher Ambitions' contained six major themes including widening participation; Universities' contribution to economic growth, focussing on skills and on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM subjects) and explicit employability strategies; greater concentration of research funding; provision of more information to prospective students and others about degree programmes including contact time, class sizes and career outcomes; Universities' community role; and maintenance of excellence.

It was timely, therefore, to take stock of the range of provision of degree programmes in the light of the above. The Learning and Teaching Committee of Senate had already drawn Heads' attention to the likely developments. One possible outcome was that the core 'T' funding might be moderated by the Quality Assurance Agency (or its successor). The University should be in a position to meet this possibility and also to use the provision of information to prospective and current students to its competitive advantage.

There was discussion about how and what the University should communicate to (prospective) students to make clear the University's expectations of them in terms of effort and engagement. Schools were likely to be doing things that were not currently reported and would now need to do so. As well as contact time, private preparation and feedback were important. However, it was recognised that increased contact hours might not be the most appropriate approach but that they were likely to become a proxy for good value and thus lend themselves to league tables. A more consumerist attitude on the part of students was anticipated especially if the fees cap was removed or set higher. Other issues to be considered included the amount of and relationship between formative and summatively assessed work and formal assessment periods as well as staff:student ratios.

The view that the University should align with the '94 Group in these matters received support.)

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7. HONORARY DEGREES AND APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

Considered
the recommendations in the report from the Honorary Degrees and Appointments Committee regarding Official Academic Dress Regulations. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. SEN09D003)

RESOLVED

8. LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE

Considered
the recommendation in the report from the Learning and Teaching Committee regarding Semester dates for 2011-2012. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. SEN09D004)

RESOLVED

9. THE SENATE 2009/10

Received

(1) the Senate – Membership. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. SEN09D005)

(2) the Senate - Standing Orders (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. SEN09D006)

10. RESERVED AREAS OF BUSINESS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Received

statements of the University's policies on reserved areas of business and confidentiality. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. SEN09D007)

11. LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE

Received

a report. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. SEN09D008)

12. ITEMS FOR REPORT

Received

a report. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. SEN09D009)

- (1) Research Grants and Contracts
- (2) Promotion to Chairs
- (3) Senate Committees: Student Membership

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Reported

that the next meeting of the Senate was scheduled for Wednesday 20 January, 2010. This was an 'if necessary' meeting.

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**14. THE COUNCIL

This is a confidential and reserved minute and is attached as a separate sheet.