

THE SENATE



Minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2011

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 D. Peters Corbett, Professor D.J. Richardson and Professor N. Ward), Heads of Schools (Professor J.D. Charmley, Professor D. Edwards, Professor V. Lattimer and Professor D. Zizzo), Academic Representatives (Mrs H. Bell, Dr T. Blumenschein, Professor J. Collier, Mr I. Farr, Professor C. Osborne, Dr M. Pfeil, Professor V. Rayward Smith, Dr S. Russell, Professor C. Wadlow and Dr R. Warren), Dean of Students (Dr A. Grant), and the Student Representatives except for business marked ** (Ms R. Handforth and Mr D. Youmans).

With: The Registrar and Secretary (Mr B. J. Summers), the Deputy Registrar and Secretary (Mr R. Evans), the Head of the Learning, Teaching and Quality Office (Ms A. Rhodes) and the Committee Clerk (Mrs R. Phillips).

In Attendance: The Director of Taught Programmes (Professor G. Moore)

Apologies: The Dean of the Faculty of Health (Professor I. Harvey), the Director of Information Services (Mr J. Colam-French), Academic Representative (Dr S. Connolly, Dr Y. Lebeau and Dr S. Stevens) and Mr D. Palmer (City College Norwich).

36. MINUTES

Confirmed
the Minutes of the meetings held on 19 January 2011 and 23 February 2011.

37. THE COUNCIL

Reported
that the Council, at its meeting on 7 March 2011, considered the report of the Senate from its meeting on 23 February 2011 (Minute **60) and approved the recommendations it contained.

38. STATEMENTS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

Reported that
(1) The terms of office of the following members of staff were finishing on 31 July, 2011; The Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Knowledge Transfer) (Professor T. Davies); Academic Representatives: Dr S Connolly, Dr J Cross, Dr M McLaughlin, Dr M Pfeil, Professor V Rayward-Smith, Dr S Russell, Professor S Stevens and Professor C Wadlow; Representatives of the Union of UEA Students: The Academic Officer (Ms Rachel Handforth) and The Community and Student Rights Officer (Mr D Youmans).

The Chair thanked all the outgoing members for their services to Senate and wished them well for the future.

- (2) The impending retirement of the Deputy Registrar and Secretary, Mr R Evans, on 31 July, 2011. The Chair thanked Mr Evans for his long and outstanding service to the University over many years and wished him well in his forthcoming retirement;
- (3) Professor Sir Steve Smith, President of UniversitiesUK had been knighted in the recent Queen's Birthday honours;
- (4) the Fudan Tyndall Centre (of which UEA was a part) had been successfully launched in China. The Centre had high-level support within the Chinese Government, likewise in the UK. The event had been attended by Professor Trevor Davies, who would be spending time at the new Centre from August 2011, and by the Deans of Health and of Social Sciences. It was encouraging that the President of Fudan University was keen to extend collaborative links across all areas of UEA. The Chair envisaged fruitful opportunities which it would be part of Professor Davies' role to nurture.

39. HE LANDSCAPE: FUNDING, FEES AND UEA DEGREES

Considered

- (1) an oral report from the Vice-Chancellor
- (2) presentation on leagues tables from Dr Garrick Fincham

RESOLVED

to commend to Council the budget for 2011-12 and outline financial plan for the next five years.

(With regard to the Vice-Chancellor's report.

Members noted:

- (i) the budget forecasts for the next five years which had previously been presented at the recent Policy Half Day. The projected cash flows reflected the key features of what was currently being done to higher education. As predicted, next session (2011-12) was particularly affected by the reductions in the teaching and capital grants prior to the commencement of the new fees regime;
- (ii) the focus in the past three years had been on ensuring that there was a 'cushion' of £3m to avoid having to re-negotiate covenants with the University's bankers. In 2011-12, this cushion would reduce exceptionally to £2.8m but improve thereafter;
- (ii) having a year-end cash balance of at least £20m was prudent in view of uncertainties such as those arising from FMH contracts and unexpected events such as the impact of the 'ash cloud';
- (iii) borrowing in the early year of the plan was in order to replace unacceptable teaching space and to accommodate the expansion of the number of academic staff;

- (iv) it was anticipated that there would be much closer scrutiny by students as to what they perceived their fees were being spent on by the University. There was also an urgency to 'raise the game' if there were to be significant shifts in the market at a time when the University had less financial room for manoeuvre;
- (vi) the White Paper on higher education was imminent. At this stage, however, the exact rules of operation regarding student numbers were unclear. It was rumoured that the Government was seeking ways of removing the cap on Home/EU student numbers but in so doing would have to meet Treasury concerns about the impact on loans/fees. Thus it was anticipated that other ways of securing movement in the system would be introduced. At present, it was possible that a 'carrot' would be to allow Universities with high admissions criteria/high-achieving intakes (at AAB or above) to recruit as many such students as they could with these results profiles, with the 'stick' of losing numbers if the target were not met. This approach could cream off the best students from others, with some universities being in the 'squeezed middle'. It was therefore imperative that the University continue to be on an upward trajectory as the safest ground was to be attractive to strong applicants. The latest figures for advance registration at Open Days were encouraging but caution should be exercised; some market research indicated that whilst 17 year olds (ie the first cohort to pay the higher fees) were still keen, this could not be assumed of their teachers or parents;
- vii) the situation with regard to fees for postgraduate taught courses and the likely response of prospective students remained unclear. The position with regard to the Government's inclusion of international students in immigration statistics was unchanged but the HE sector would continue to make robust representation on this point to find ways of lifting international students out of the equation. One approach would be to push the economic imperative and the contributions to the economy made by international students;

With regard to the presentation on league tables

- viii) the principal league tables were those published by the Guardian, The Times' 'Good University ' Guide and the Complete Guide. An analysis had been made of the various input and output measures employed by each Guide and the relationships between them;
- ix) in terms of input measures, the University had made progress over the last few years, with a rise in entry requirements; an increased focus on the National Student Survey; more favourable Staff:Student ratios; and average spend per student (although this had dipped slightly this year);
- x) with regard to output, the number of 'good' honours degrees (1sts and 2.1s) had a particularly significant impact as did graduate job prospects and completion rates, . The University had been working to improve these although the latest league table showed a drop in the University's comparative position – partly arising from the fact that every other University was also trying to improve its position. It was also pointed out that the input and output data did not necessarily reflect the same cohorts. It was confirmed that the 'good honours'

rate included international as well as Home/EU students with the possibility acknowledged that those institutions with significant numbers of international students might or might not do as well as an institution with a significant proportion of Home/EU students;

- xi) the strategic objective that the University be in the 'top twenty' institutions – indeed, the top fifteen - remained for the reasons outlined in the Vice-Chancellor's report above;
- xii) the league tables did not demonstrate where an institution had added value (ie an institution could be taking progressively better students in a progressively better institution but still have a worse outcome over all.)

40 RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK

Considered

the latest REF submission guidance. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. SEN10D027)

(In their consideration, members' attention was drawn by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) elect to the following key points in his presentation:

- (i) that the half-way mark had been reached for preparations for the next REF;
- (ii) that some Schools had not yet completed the interim internal 'REF' which included external assessment;
- (iii) the information before the Senate showed interim ratings for a School, compared with the last RAE and also individual positions. A Grade Point Average (GPA) score of at least 2.75 (with ET suggesting a target of 3 or above) was the threshold for inclusion in the REF return. It was understood that the REF panels were expecting Universities to self-police and not return 2* or 1* submissions – although it was acknowledged that there would be a percentage (c10%) where there was a wrong call either way;
- (iv) detailed guidelines were anticipated during the late summer;
- (v) it was expected that where an individual was not first author, his/her contribution should be made clear (ie the position in the author list was not that important);
- (vi) the weighting to be used for assessing 'impact' of research was 20%; outputs: 65%; and environment: 15%. 'Impact' had to be demonstrated between 1 January 2008 and 31 July 2013. The underpinning case studies (one case study plus one per 10fte to be submitted, a minimum of two per area) had to have been published up to fifteen years before the assessment period although this could be five years longer for some Units of Assessment (UoA). It was suggested that case study presentations to Heads of School/Research Directors might be useful;

- (vii) the strategy was to place the University in the top twenty in the REF league table. (RAE 2008 placed the University 35th with GPA of 2.58). Any lower than this would leave the University regarded as non-research focussed;
- (viii) ET had identified a number of principles to facilitate a clear, communicated strategy for the REF. These principles included: maximising the GPA score for the institution as a whole and not maximise the volume of QR earned; submitting only staff who are judged to meet the REF submission threshold (minimum of 3332 across the four submitted pieces); having a hierarchy of decision-making to decide on submissions, rising from the School Research Directors, Head of Schools, Associate Deans, Deans of Faculties, PVC(REE), and the Vice-Chancellor; staff to be submitted to the UoA to which they are likely to be most favourably judged; and REF UoAs in no way prejudice the internal organisation of the University;
- ix) if, as a result of a tactical decision of the University, a member of ATR staff who met the REF submission threshold was not returned in the REF, this would not have any adverse outcomes for the individual;
- x) there were differing experiences of the ease with which research plans could be in-putted into the new database and printed out. It was acknowledged that there had been some problems but colleagues were encouraged to persevere;
- xi) the timescale for submitting (annual) research plans was discussed. It was agreed that the deadline should remain as intended (February.)

*41. HONORARY DEGREES AND APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

This minute is confidential and appears as a separate sheet.

42. SENATE MEMBERSHIP

Reported

that the terms of office of the following Senate members would expire on 31 July 2011:

Academic Representatives from each Faculty

Dr M. McLaughlin (HUM)
Dr J. Cross (FOH)
Dr M. Pfeil (FOH)
Professor V. Rayward Smith (SCI)
Dr S. Stevens (SCI)
Dr S. Connolly (SSF)
Dr S. Russell (SSF)
Mr C. Wadlow (SSF)

Considered

the recommendation that the following members be approved:

SEN10M004

SEN-M6
15.06.2011
Min. 42

Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Academic Representatives:
Dr Anne Haour (2014)

Faculty of Health

Academic Representatives:
Professor David Crossman (2014)
Dr Tracey Sach (2014)

Faculty of Science

Academic Representatives:
Professor Karen Heywood (2014)
Dr. Mark Blyth (2014)

Faculty of Social Sciences

Academic Representatives:
Professor Ann Mcdonald (2012)
Dr. Oliver Springate-Baginski (2014)
Dr. Lu Zu (2014)

Chair of the Senate Discipline Committee

Endorsed

the recommendation of the Learning and Teaching Committee that the term of office of Professor Nigel Norris (EDU), Chair of the Senate Discipline Committee be extended to 31 July, 2013.

43. REPORT FROM THE ASSEMBLY

Received

a report from the Assembly meeting from its meeting on 8 June 2011. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. SEN10D037).

(In response to a question arising from concerns about superfluous activities, the Vice-Chancellor agreed to discuss with the Human Resources Division whether there was any potential to reduce the number of meetings (currently at least three) under the academic promotions procedures.)

44. REPORT ON EXTERNAL EXAMINERS' REPORTS 2007/08 – 2009/10

Endorsed

the report from the Learning and Teaching Committee. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. SEN10D029)

(Members noted that arrangement would be made to make the report publicly available via the Learning, Teaching and Quality Office's website).

45. REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE
ON 27 APRIL 2011

Endorsed

a report on the features of the new academic model agreed by the Committee (item 3 of the report refers) with the proviso that the Senate consider in due course the detailed regulatory framework. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. SEN10D030)

(In their discussion, members:

- (i) noted that at the meeting of the Learning and Teaching Committee held on 27 April, 2011, the Committee had considered an overview report on the features of the new academic model following consultation with Schools and with the Union of UEA Students;
- (ii) further noted that the report before Senate was intended fully to update Senate on current progress. They were assured that full details of the regulations would be presented to Senate for approval in due course;
- (iii) considered the merits of harmonising degree weightings between years two and three across all subject areas in the ratio 40:60, to take account of progression and exit velocity. It was reported by the School of Economics that in a recent review of degree outcomes, a move from an equal weighting to 40:60 resulted in very little change. There was some concern that a reduced weighting in year two might adversely impact on students' engagement, although it was acknowledged that there were other means by which to engender engagement and a view that a poor result in year two might galvanise students into striving for improvement. Further, a 'flat' structure might lead to lack of motivation if there was no possibility of gaining a first; a higher final year weighting might in fact make a first a more achievable outcome;
- (iv) were aware that there were residual concerns about the proposal that every module should be passed and marking at the pass/fail boundary. A particular request was that the new framework should allow a review of a student who was at a pass/fail boundary. It was suggested that this might be possible at the point before a provisional pass became a confirmed one. It was acknowledged that there was no desire to have a completely rigid system but that, at the same time, the new regulatory framework should be simpler, fair and transparent;
- (v) were informed that work on amending the Student Information System was unlikely to take place until the regulations had been approved. Work was currently under way on drafting new regulations in the light of the endorsed principles with a view to circulation for comment by the end of the session. It was recognised that the new regulations would undoubtedly undergo several iterations.)

SEN10M004

SEN-M8
15.06.2011
Min. 46

46. UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS POLICY

Endorsed

changes to the University Research Ethics Policy. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. SEN10D031)

47. LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE

Received

a round-up report of the meetings of the Committee held on 17 March and 18 May, 2011. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. SEN10D033)

48. ITEMS FOR REPORT

Received

the following items for report. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. SEN10D034)

- (1) Dean of Science Appointment
- (2) Heads of School Appointments – (BIO, CHE, FTV, MED, PHA, PHI & SWP)
- (3) Union of UEA Students – Election 2011/12 Results.

49. DATES OF MEETINGS IN 2011/12

Reported

that the dates of the Senate meetings had been confirmed as:

Wednesday 9 November 2011 – 2pm
Wednesday 18 January 2012 (if nec) - 2pm
Wednesday 22 February 2012 – 2pm
Wednesday 13 June 2012 – 2pm

**50. PROMOTIONS COMMITTEE

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