



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

University  
Secretary's  
Office.

## **Minutes Meeting of the Senate**

**Date:** 23 October 2019

**Present:** The President & Vice-Chancellor in the Chair  
Dr P Ali, Mr A Alshreef, Professor K Ayscough, Professor W Baird, Professor P Bath, Professor S Beck, Professor S Bhaumik, Mr D Boufidis, Professor J Brazier, Professor G Brown, Professor C Buck, Mrs A Cantrell, Dr J Crockford, Professor P Crowther, Professor S Fitzmaurice, Professor J Flint, Professor G Gee, Professor J Harrison, Mrs A Hidalgo-Kingston, Professor A Hindmoor, Mrs A Horn, Professor R Horn, Professor M J Hounslow, Professor N Hughes, Professor R F W Jackson, Dr J Jones, Dr J Kirby, Ms P Kirk, Dr W Kitchen, Professor J Litster, Professor L Maltby, Professor T Moore, Professor W Morgan, Dr N Murgatroyd, Ms C Murphy, Mr D Newberry, Dr S D North, Professor A Pacey, Professor G Panoutsos, Professor D Petley, Mr C Porter, Dr S Pukallus, Dr L Robson, Dr S Rushton, Mr R Simpson, Professor N Sims, Professor D Sinclair, Dr S Staniland, Professor C H Tan, Mr J Verity, Professor M Vincent, Professor G Waller, Dr T Walther, Professor M Williamson.

**Secretary:** Dr T Strike

**In attendance:** Mr M Borland, Mrs K Clements, Miss A Davison, Dr E Smith, Ms E Titterington-Giles, Dr S Want, Mr L Wild.

**Apologies:** The Senate received apologies from 20 members.

### **WELCOME**

The President & Vice-Chancellor (P&VC) welcomed members to the first meeting of Senate under its new composition, including six representatives from the Students' Union, and Dr Sarah Want and Ms Emma Titterington-Giles who were both in attendance.

### **DEATHS**

The Senate noted with regret the following deaths, which had occurred since the last meeting:

Emeritus Professor Bill Anderson, Head of the Department of Civil and Structural Engineering from 1996 to 2001, and a member of staff from the early 1970's.

Adam Benaissa, undergraduate student in the Department of Physics and Astronomy. Aged 21.

Samuel Brookes, undergraduate student in the Department of Politics and International Relations. Aged 24.

Sandra Harding, a member of staff within the Department of Biomedical Science, from 1997 until her retirement in 2013.

Loretta Jennings, postgraduate student in the School of Education. Aged 62.

Mathilde Le Toquin, undergraduate student in the Department of Biomedical Science. Aged 21.

Professor John Page, Professor of Building Science, and a member of staff from 1960 to 1984. Aged 94.

Anthony Sampson, a member of staff within the Department of Economics from 1966 to 1989. Aged 77.

Dr Christine Sprigg, lecturer in Occupational Psychology, and a member of staff from 1995 to 1998 and 2002 to 2019.

Kathleen Sutherland-Cash, postgraduate student in the School of Education. Aged 50.

Members stood in memory.

## 1. **President & Vice-Chancellor's Report**

The President & Vice-Chancellor (P&VC) presented the report and provided updates:

- (a) P&VC's Report: Senate currently received the Report to the preceding Council meeting. In future, a Report would be specifically produced for Senate, which would enable more timely content to be included.
- (b) Augar Report: Government was understood to be considering the recommendations, but it was unclear whether there would be a focus on specific elements.
- (c) Post-study work visas for international students: The return of the two year post-study work visa was welcome and it was anticipated to have an immediate effect on the International Strategy, for example, work had been undertaken in India following the announcement.
- (d) Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) Report: An EHRC report presented the findings of its inquiry into racial harassment in publicly funded universities in England, Scotland and Wales. The University had adopted a Race Equality Strategy and Action Plan in the spring of 2019.
- (e) Contextual admissions: The Office for Students (OfS) had suggested that universities should take much greater account of the context in which exam results were achieved. The University of Sheffield used contextual admissions where it was appropriate to do so.
- (f) Cyber security: There has recently been some high profile cases within the sector. The University was undertaking work, led by the Director of IT, to assess preparedness.
- (g) Student recruitment: Home undergraduate numbers had fallen marginally below target, associated widening participation targets were met, whilst overseas undergraduate numbers exceeded the target. Overall, a positive outcome was deemed to have been achieved.
- (h) Programme Level Approach (PLA): Student engagement continued and agreed priorities for 2019-20 included: strengthen programme content and

assessment in relation to employability; to work on developing an inclusive curriculum; and embedding sustainable development.

- (i) Research: Overall, there had been a slight increase in the research order book compared with the same time last year, although there had been a reduction in some significant areas. The first four research flagships (Sustainable Food; Neuroscience; Energy; and Healthy Lifespan) had successfully 'soft launched' at the end of April.

During discussion, it was clarified in relation to mental health for staff, that in addition to the two goals listed in the report all of the five main goals of the Mentally Healthy Universities Pilot Programme applied to staff, and that the focus was on prevention and early intervention. Regarding external partners, discussions with Nanjing were continuing and following discussions with a European university it was anticipated that a future public announcement would be made.

## **2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 June 2019**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2019, having been circulated, were approved as an accurate record.

## **3. Matters Arising on the Minutes**

Further to the item on the University Strategy 2020-2025, a Vision Green Paper had been produced. Members of Senate were encouraged to engage with the conversations process and as senior members of the University to encourage other colleagues to engage.

## **4. Matters Requiring Approval**

Senate received and noted a summary of the matters within the Reports from Committees of the Senate and Other Matters sections of the Agenda for which Senate's formal approval was sought.

## **5. Annual Academic Assurance Report**

Senate considered a draft of the Annual Academic Assurance Report for submission to Council. This was the first year that the Report had been produced by the Senate Academic Assurance Committee for Senate.

During discussion, it was set out that the Committee had arranged to have a discussion with the Chair of the Learning and Teaching Committee regarding professional accreditation and any potential contradictions with University regulations. It was suggested that the attainment gap was a potential topic that could be added to the Committee's work programme. It was acknowledged that the Committee's activity to date had mainly focussed on undergraduate students and on learning and teaching, but activities for 2019/20 included research topics. The Committee planned to examine grade inflation at a more granular level at its November meeting.

Senate agreed that the Report be submitted for consideration and approval at Council's meeting on 25 November 2019, subject to the inclusion of an additional sentence in section 1.7.1 to reflect that at its meeting on 19 June 2019, Senate

endorsed review arrangements for new and continuing PGR programmes that had been put forward by the Research and Innovation Committee.

## **6. Knowledge Exchange Framework**

Senate received a presentation on Knowledge Exchange (KE) covering; a definition; its increasing importance; the KE Framework (KEF); the University's ambition; KEF roadmap; KE support; and next steps.

During discussion, it was clarified that the majority of the data requirements for the KEF was included in existing data returns. The returns comprised a wide range of collaborations, including overseas collaborations. A metric in relation to outreach was anticipated to change as it currently only took account of public engagement activity which took place in university venues. There was not a formal link between the KEF and the Civic University Agreement. It was anticipated that the KEF would drive the allocation of the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF). A change in culture would not necessarily be required, rather there would be a need to ensure that existing relevant activity was captured for the KEF. A consultation and the outcomes from the recent pilots would shape the final version of the KEF.

## **7. Semester Dates Consultation Proposal**

Senate received and considered a proposal, following its request at its June 2019 meeting for a consultation on semester dates from 2024/25, for report back to Senate prior to making a recommendation to Council.

During discussion, it was noted that given the academic year would potentially affect all activity undertaken at the University a consultation on semester dates would need to include a broad range of perspectives alongside the student perspective. This would include the staff perspective, an equality and diversity perspective, for example to include student carers, commuter students, students working part-time, and the perspective of staff and students with childcare requirements.

Senate agreed to the establishment of a Senate Task and Finish Group to lead a review on the academic year, taking into account a broad range of perspectives, and linking in to the Programme Level Approach.

## **REPORTS FROM STATUTORY BODIES**

### **8. Report on the Proceedings of the Council** (Meeting held on 8 July 2019)

Senate received and noted the Report on the Proceedings of the Council.

## **REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES OF THE SENATE**

### **9. Report of the Research Ethics Committee**

(Meeting held on 4 September 2019)

Senate received and approved the Report, including recent complaints and breaches of the Ethics Policy Governing Research Involving Human Participants, Personal Data and Human Tissue; feedback on events held in 2018/19; projects funded by the Committee in 2018-19; the option for ethics reviewers to approve an ethics application with 'suggested amendments' be removed. No changes to the Committee's Terms of Reference were proposed and new members were welcomed.

### **10. Report of the Senate Academic Assurance Committee**

(Meeting held on 24 September 2019)

Senate received and approved the Report. During discussion, it was suggested that the Committee included some research-focused themes in 2019/20. The Committee would consider this suggestion at its next meeting. In relation to BME attainment gaps, it was clarified that the Committee aimed to try and avoid exploring issues which were already being reviewed by other internal groups or committees, and there was currently significant work being undertaken regarding BME attainment gaps.

### **11. Report of the Senate Budget Committee**

(Meetings held on 11 July and 3 October 2019)

Senate received and approved the Report. Attention was drawn to the summary of the key points from the Committee's meetings with individual Faculty Vice-Presidents during March and April 2019, and specifically to: the challenges associated with cross-subsidy; an appetite for growth in parts of the University; a shared responsibility for the overall financial position of the institution was evident; the institutional appetite with regard to borrowing; a more holistic view of capital developments, more closely aligned to Academic Strategy. No changes to the Terms of Reference were proposed and attention was drawn to a vacancy for a member of Senate, elected by Senate.

During discussion, it was noted that a presentation of the 2018/19 Financial Results could be considered as part of a briefing session for members of Senate. The possibility of SBC conducting a similar series of meetings with individual Heads of Department was raised, but it was believed that would be beyond the Committee's terms of reference and it would also require a significant time input from the Committee. In relation to the Process for Budget Allocation (PBA), the Committee was of the view that it could be timely to assess how the PBA was functioning.

### **12. Supplementary Report of the Senate Nominations Committee**

(Meeting held on 29 May 2019)

Senate received and approved the supplementary report, including that the Terms of Reference of the Committee be amended to introduce a quorum of at least three members.

**OTHER MATTERS**

**13. Returning Officers Report**

Senate received and noted the report.

**14. Report on Action Taken**

A Report on action taken since the last meeting of the Senate was received and noted.

**15. Major Research Grants and Contracts**

A Report listing major research grants and contracts awarded since the last meeting of the Senate was received and noted.

**16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Senate agreed that its future meetings would take place in Lecture Theatre F02, Firth Court.

Members of Senate were thanked for their use of the microphones during the meeting.

These Minutes were confirmed at a meeting

held on 11 December 2019

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