



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

University  
Secretary's  
Office.

## **Minutes Meeting of the Senate**

**Date:** 11 December 2019

**Present:** The President & Vice-Chancellor in the Chair  
Dr P Ali, Professor K Ayscough, Professor W Baird, Professor P Bath, Professor S Beck, Professor S Bhaumik, Professor A Bingham, Dr L Bingham, Mr D Boufidis, Professor J Brazier, Professor G Brown, Mrs A Cantrell, Professor P Crowther, Professor J Derrick, Professor N Dibben, Professor S Fitzmaurice, Professor J Flint, Professor G Gee, Professor J Grasby, Professor R Hand, Professor J Harrison, Professor A Hindmoor, Professor R Horn, Professor M J Hounslow, Professor N Hughes, Dr S Keegan-Phipps, Dr J Kirby, Ms P Kirk, Dr W Kitchen, Professor G Leggett, Ms M Li, Professor T Moore, Professor W Morgan, Dr N Murgatroyd, Ms C Murphy, Mr D Newberry, Dr S D North, Mrs Z Ollerenshaw, Professor A Pacey, Professor G Panoutsos, Mr C Porter, Dr S Pukallus, Dr S Rushton, Mr R Simpson, Professor N Sims, Professor D Sinclair, Dr S Staniland, Mr R Sykes, Professor C H Tan, Professor G Valentine, Mr J Verity, Professor M Vincent, Professor G Waller, Dr T Walther, Professor C Watkins, Professor M Williamson, Dr L Wilson.

**Secretary:** Dr T Strike

**In attendance:** Mr M Borland, Ms S Bridgeford, Mrs K Clements, Mr A Colley, Miss A Davison, Mrs H Dingle, Mrs V Jackson, Ms L Knowles, Dr E Smith.

**Apologies:** The Senate received apologies from 21 members.

### **WELCOME**

The President & Vice-Chancellor (P&VC) welcomed members to the meeting and Ms Susan Bridgeford, Mrs Helen Dingle, Mrs Vicki Jackson and Ms Louise Knowles who were in attendance.

### **DEATHS**

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

Dr Michael Dietrich, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Economics from 1992 to 2013.

Members stood in memory.

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

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

- (a) Vision: A total of 32 events had been held with 1090 staff attending. There was one further event to go and the task of analysing the ideas and contributions had begun. Engagement with a large number of students had been led by the Students' Union.
- (b) Industrial Action: This had been a difficult period for the university community and the P&VC expressed thanks to all colleagues for their constructive behaviour during the industrial action.

During discussion, it was clarified that contributions to the Vision work should be submitted before Christmas and further ideas after then could be sent in via email. In terms of engaging staff who were viewed as harder to reach a specific event had arranged for staff from Estates and Facilities Management.

The involvement of the Students' Union in developing the University's Value for Money Strategy would be welcomed. Any potential additional support required for overseas PGR students would inform the Planning Round process. A Task and Finish Group on International student support had been established.

## 2. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 October 2019**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2019, having been circulated, were approved as an accurate record.

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

There were no matters arising.

## 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. **Student Mental Health and Wellbeing**

Senate received and noted a presentation, which covered the Mental Health Strategy, the Wellbeing Service model, existing and planned activity, including activity in partnership with the NHS. Attention was drawn to a significant increase in demand for services and that the work went beyond education and was a key part of the student experience.

During discussion, a range of activities in relation to staff mental health were identified, including the Academic Workload Group, a group looking at staff stress that reported into Health and Safety, and Human Resources activity in relation to support for different groups of staff.

It was recognised that there could be cultural barriers for international students and focus groups were taking place to better understand the barriers and work to increase the diversity of staff was ongoing. It was suggested that summer courses

for international students could be a period of high pressure. Ten additional staff were being recruited and it was planned that the offer within each Faculty would be described in more detail in the spring.

## **6. Financial Results 2018-19**

Senate received and noted a presentation, which included information on underlying income growth, underlying expenditure growth, underlying surplus as a percentage of income, cash from operations, total surplus, capital grants, capital investment, pensions, net assets and reserves.

During discussion, it was outlined that the changes to employer contributions to USS were known and had been factored in the forecast. The Financial Strategy targeted a level of surplus, which effectively drove the level of cash generation that enabled the University to fund its ambitions. The target underlying surplus as a proportion of income was 1.8%.

On behalf of Senate, the P&VC thanked Mrs Dingle who was retiring as Chief Financial Officer at the end of the calendar year for her service to the University.

## **REPORTS FROM STATUTORY BODIES**

### **7. Report on the Proceedings of the Council** (Meeting held on 14 October 2019)

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

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

### **8. Report of the Research Ethics Committee** (Meeting held on 13 November 2019)

Senate received and approved the Report. Attention was drawn to the development of a light-touch process for auditing ESCR-funded research projects, the inclusion of data collection tools as part of ethics applications, and the annual report of ethics reviews had seen an increase in applications to 4218 from 3652 the previous year.

During discussion, it was clarified that the committee were conscious of the need to keep the audit workload to a minimum and a survey of 10% of the projects was planned to gain a deeper understanding of the projects and where the risks might lie. The committee would be reluctant to select just one project for a physical check of original documentation. The audit work would be undertaken by a sub-group of the Research Ethics Committee. It was recognised that there would be a benefit in socialising the work. A document outlining the procedure would be proposed to Senate in the New Year. In relation to data collection tools and concerns expressed by 6 of the 32 responding departments, members of Senate provided examples of existing departmental approaches, including a qualitative approach used by the Department of Music.

### **9. Report of the Senate Academic Assurance Committee** (Meeting held on 19 November 2019)

Senate received and approved the Report. Attention was drawn to requests that Council had made, during consideration of Senate's Annual Academic Assurance

Report at its November meeting, to Senate. This included a request that more detailed information be provided to Council in future years and a joint Council and Senate Committee should meet annually to consider the Senate report in advance of the November Council meeting. It was noted that this was the first annual academic assurance report Council had received under the revised academic assurance arrangements following the Senate Effectiveness Review, and it was viewed as positive that Council was looking to Senate to provide assurance, rather than Council seek to undertake the work itself.

## **10. Report of the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee** (Meeting held on 10 October 2019)

Senate received the Report and approved the following:

- (a) The revised Dual and Interdisciplinary Programmes Policy, produced by the PLA Task and Finish Group.
- (b) New, significantly amended, and discontinued programmes, and title changes and new exit routes approved by Faculties between 14 May and 23 September 2019.

Attention was drawn to the revised annual reflection process for 2019/20, which aimed to reduce the burden for departments. It was planned that the process would be refined in response to feedback. Regarding the University's Access and Participation Plan, the University as a high tariff provider, along with other Russell Group institutions, is subject to enhanced monitoring in relation to access. An Access & Participation Strategy Group would be established to coordinate the delivery of the Plan.

During discussion, it was identified that the proposed Dual and Interdisciplinary Programmes Policy risked conflating dual programmes and interdisciplinary programmes and it was agreed this would be reviewed and clarified if necessary. The 2019 National Student Survey results showed that 'Assessment & Feedback' had reached the highest level for 5 years, which was believed to reflect work with students at the department level. It was clarified that the process for the proposed new, significantly amended, and discontinued programmes was driven by departments with proposals made to the Learning and Teaching Committee for a recommendation to Senate on approval.

## **11. Report of the Senate Nominations Committee** (Business by Chair's action)

Senate received and approved the supplementary report, including the appointment of Professor Sumon Bhaumik (Management School) to the Senate Research & Innovation Committee.

Dr Janine Kirby was congratulated on her promotion to Professor, which meant that she was no longer eligible for the position of non-Professorial representative of the Senate on Council. The call for nominations for this vacancy would be circulated to members of Senate shortly.

## **12. Report of the Senate Research and Innovation Committee** (Meeting held on 14 November 2019)

Senate received and approved the report, including proposed amendments to the Committee's Terms of Reference, as set out in the Report. The summary of

previously approved changes to the Good Research and Innovation Practices (GRIP) Policy were noted. It was outlined that there would be further changes to the Committee's Terms of Reference proposed to Senate alongside proposed changes to the Learning and Teaching Committee's Terms of Reference. This would be to reflect changes to governance arrangements for PGR quality assurance, previously endorsed in principle by Senate in June 2019. Additional work would be undertaken regarding the Research Excellence Framework and potential gender bias.

## **OTHER MATTERS**

### **13. Quarterly Financial Results**

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.

These Minutes were confirmed at a meeting

held on 18 March 2020

..... Chairman