Minutes
Meeting of the Senate

Date: 18 June 2014
Present: The Vice-Chancellor, in the Chair
Mr Ashman, Professor Ayscough, Dr Ballai, Dr Beck, Professor Bermel, Professor Biggins, Dr Blackett, Professor Brandist, Professor Buck, Professor Bulmer, Professor Campbell, Ms Chapman, Mr Cho, Dr Cotter, Professor Crowther, Dr Cruise, Professor Dobson, Professor Fitzmaurice, Professor Flint, Professor Gillet, Professor Gray, Ms Green, Professor Grundy, Dr Harvey, Ms Henry, Dr Hernandez, Professor Hervey, Dr Hinchliff, Professor Hounslow, Dr Howell, Professor Jenkins, Professor Keefe, Dr Kitchen, Professor Labbe, Dr Lamb, Professor Lange, Ms Lee, Mr Lewis, Professor Marsh, Mr McAuley, Ms McClean, Dr Miller, Miss Morgan, Professor Newman, Dr North, Dr Oakley, Professor Oglethorpe, Miss Pattacini, Professor Peat, Dr Perraton, Dr Perrault, Mr Rae, Mr Rapier, Professor Ryan, Professor Saul, Professor Shoemaker, Dr Simons, Dr Slatter, Mr Stern, Professor Stevenson, Mr Sykes, Dr Timmers, Professor Valentine, Professor Walters, Mr Ward, Professor White, Professor N Williams, Professor Williamson, Dr Winter

Secretary: Registrar and Secretary
In attendance: Mrs Arnold, Mrs Barker, Mrs Birch, Mr Gilbert, Mr Gower, Ms Lee, Mr Rabone, Dr Sexton, Dr Strike, Mr Swinn, Miss Vinnicombe, Ms Wray
Apologies: The Senate received apologies from 30 members.

WELCOME
The Vice-Chancellor welcomed the Students’ Union Officers-elect, who were attending as observers.

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

Professor David Chappell, Professor of Mathematical Economics (and Head of Department from 1999 to 2002) in the Department of Economics, and a member of staff from 1979 to 2006, aged 73.

Stephen James Ruff, former undergraduate and postgraduate student in the Department of Civil & Structural Engineering, who passed away October 2010, aged 42.

Emeritus Professor Eric Sainsbury, Professor of Social Administration in the Department of Sociological Studies, and a member of staff from 1961 to 1987, aged 88.
Emeritus Professor John Westergaard, Professor of Sociology in the Department of Sociological Studies, and a member of staff from 1975 to 1986, and Deputy Dean and Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences from 1982 to 1986, aged 86.

Stuart Gerald Wheeldon, former undergraduate student in the Institute of Lifelong Learning, who passed away February 2014, aged 66.

Sir John Wood, Emeritus Professor of Law, and a member of staff from 1958, aged 82.

Members stood in memory.

1. **VICE-CHANCELLOR’S REPORT**

The Senate received a presentation from the Vice-Chancellor in which attention was drawn to the following points:

(a) **The External Environment, Funding:**
   - There was continued uncertainty over HE funding ahead of the forthcoming General Election, in May 2015, due to differing stances over home and EU undergraduate tuition fees across the political spectrum. The University was contributing to the debate in a number of ways, including with the Students’ Union, in order to develop the understanding of those beyond the sector about the implications of any reduced fee, for example from £9k to £6k, on the University’s students and staff and the wider community.
   - Increasing access to PGT education was a key concern due to the significant impact it could have on social mobility and the sustainability of the UK’s knowledge base. It was also a focus for BIS given a 10% fall in student numbers since 2012. The University was at the forefront of efforts to arrest this decline through its lead role in the HEFCE-funded Postgraduate Support Scheme project, which was demonstrating that there remained a continued appetite for PGT education and routes to professions through a range of measures, for example by securing alumni funding for scholarships. It was noted that the use of full-time and part-time PGR studentships in the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health had been successful in providing opportunities for greater numbers of research students.

(b) **The External Environment, New Models and Pathways:** The University was leading the development and delivery of apprentice education linked to advanced manufacturing through the AMRC-TC, which was attracting significant inward regional investment. Sustained national and international interest meant that considerations of how to grow and broaden this activity required care in order that such expansion was aligned with the University’s own priorities and expertise. With respect to professional technician education, HEFCE Catalyst funding was enabling the University to pioneer new progression pathways for technical staff in response to an anticipated national shortage of highly skilled professional staff.

(c) **The External Environment, Teaching and Research:** The removal of the cap on home and EU undergraduate student places was an opportunity for student recruitment but a rounded view was required in the context of there being fewer 18 year olds in the population and changes to A level qualifications. The simultaneous rise in the uptake of BTECs had implications for the whole sector. In particular, the commercial nature of these qualifications had severe implications for quality assurance and control. The
trend for research funding to be directed at an increasingly narrow range of institutions and priority areas could be expected to continue, involving greater direction from BIS. Although the research budget had been ring-fenced, its scope might be eroded and there was significant debate about particular areas of funding that should remain protected.

(d) Celebrating Success:

- Congratulations were extended to the University Library and the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health (MDH) Managers Group, who had won Times Higher Education Leadership and Management awards for ‘Outstanding Library Team’ and ‘Outstanding Departmental Administration Team’ respectively, reaffirming the University’s place as a centre of excellence and building on its number one ranking for student experience;
- The 2014 Staff Survey had been a great success having achieved a notably increased response rate (72%) compared to the previous exercise in 2012. The University compared favourably with others in the sector, with 94% of staff proud to work for the institution. Ongoing detailed analysis of the results would look to identify specific areas to further enhancement.

The Chief Financial Officer provided an overview of key headlines from the financial forecasts, as follows:

(e) Financial Forecasts, 2013/14 Out-turn: A positive outcome was expected, following growth in income and expenditure of c.12% that reflected successful outcomes in teaching and research. This would be the fifth consecutive year in which growth had outstripped CPI. Generating good operating surpluses during this period had placed the University on secure financial footing.

(f) Financial Forecasts, Forecast and Budget 2014/15: Change and volatility in the sector was reflected by a more cautious financial forecast for the next academic year, although planned income growth of under 5% was closer to longer-term trends. This would be third year of a maximum home/EU UG fee of £9k/year but inflationary increases in many areas of expenditure were creating additional pressure on resource, however, early agreement of the 2014 sector pay settlement provided welcome certainty and achieving the target operating surplus of 2% would be a satisfactory outcome. Nevertheless, in the current climate it would be necessary to apply certain constraints to planned growth so that expenditure remained affordable and the University’s financial position remained secure.

(g) Financial Forecasts to 2017/18: In the current climate it was reasonable to assume a reduced rate of growth over five years (23%) compared to recent trends. Growth in expenditure was largely the result of pay and pensions costs and other increases outstripping underlying volume and inflation growth. The forecasts nevertheless achieved Council’s strategic goal of a 4.5% operating surplus by 2017/18 whilst providing the means by which the University could achieve its strategic aims and objectives.

2. DEVELOPING THE NEXT STRATEGIC PLAN

The Senate received a presentation in which the Vice-Chancellor provided an update on the development of the next University Strategic Plan. A programme of staff engagement had been instituted to help identify key areas for focus, taking
into account external perceptions of the University and expected financial constraints. It was essential for the new Strategy to accurately reflect the University’s principles and mission in a positive way that sought to maximise opportunity and mitigate risk. Previous discussions had taken place with Council and UEB, as well as Senate, and emerging themes would be discussed in a range of staff fora, which members were encouraged to contribute. Alternatively, colleagues could submit suggestions to the Strategy Development Group that was Chaired by Jackie Labbe and included Senate and Students’ Union representation. The views of alumni and external stakeholders, such as research councils and policy makers, would also be important sources of information to underpin the new Strategy. Staff would continue to receive regular updates in due course.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 MARCH 2014

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2014, having been circulated, were approved subject to the insertion of the following wording (in italics) at Minute 8(g), Future Plans for Part-Time Undergraduate Education:

*These were subject to detailed discussion, and a vote was requested. Rather than proceed to a vote, the Chair preferred to seek further discussion with a view to reaching a consensus. Following this further discussion and subject to the points below….*

Senate recognised that a significant amount of work had gone in to progressing the issues raised during that discussion and Senate would have the opportunity to comment further on the substantive matters later in the meeting (see below, Minute 6).

4. MATTERS ARISING ON THE MINUTES

It was clarified that there were no Standing Orders for Senate or other University committees in the University’s Regulations or elsewhere that dealt specifically with voting procedures. The regulations of Senate did not refer to voting and, in such circumstances, a request for a vote was at the discretion of the Chair.

5. 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.

6. DEVELOPMENT OF PART-TIME UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

Senate received and noted an update report and two related presentations on matters associated with the development of new part-time and non-traditional programmes, together with a progress report on specific matters regarding students on existing programmes in the Department for Lifelong Learning (DfLL). This followed Senate’s request for additional information and assurance at its previous meeting.

(a) **Existing Students:** It was noted that an action plan had been prepared based on discussions at a series of meetings with DfLL students and the Students’ Union and upon which significant and timely progress had been made. Oversight and monitoring would continue through a Quality Assurance Group, Chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Learning and Teaching, with
ongoing regular dialogue with students. Clarification was provided that the use of Programme Directors was consistent with the approach of other departments; what was essential was the commitment to continue the provision of subject-specialist teaching.

(b) **Future Provision:** Senate received an overview of the various progression pathways and exit routes that would be possible through an expanding range of subject areas, including the Foundation Programme, CertHEs and direct entry to PT degrees. Students would receive information and advice at the point of application and entry with ongoing specialist support provided by DfLL staff as well as other academic departments throughout the period of study. Innovations in technologically enhanced and blended learning meant that it would be possible to study in the evening; although current demand indicated that this option was declining this would be monitored and should there be sufficient demand the delivery option would be reviewed. The University will adapt to future change resulting from HE funding rules and economic recovery.

This new and innovative curriculum model had been designed with input from across the University, including DfLL staff, FDLTs and departmental staff and professional services through an Advisory Group Chaired by Professor Ryan and in consultation with Faculties. It was commended as significantly enhancing opportunities for those NTLs who wanted to undertake a world class, Russell Group education. It would enhance and integrate curricula with the full range of services available across the University whilst retaining the additional specialist support that was important to NTLs’ prospects of success.

DfLL would retain its identity as an academic department and this would be enhanced by its relocation to more suitable and visible accommodation. Departments would continue to be engaged in curriculum design as part of the more integrated, partnership based approach to delivering opportunities for NTL students.

On behalf of Senate, the Vice-Chancellor thanked all students and staff for their dedication and effort to what was an important initiative in an area of HE that was particularly challenging in the current environment but to which the University remained committed.

7. **FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES: SHEFFIELD METHODS INSTITUTE**

Senate considered and agreed to recommend to Council for approval a proposal to establish the Sheffield Methods Institute (SMI) as a new academic department in the Faculty of Social Sciences. The SMI would provide the organisational base for the Sheffield Q-Step Centre, from which the University could deliver a five year project to deliver undergraduate quantitative methods training funded by the ESRC, Nuffield Foundation and HEFCE and one of only 15 such centres in the UK. It would also facilitate innovative methodological approaches to developing new interdisciplinary degrees, work across the faculty to underpin its research priorities and, in conjunction with the Sheffield Doctoral Training Centre, support the integration of methods training across undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

Whilst recognising the different nature of the department, it was noted that further consideration should be given to the consistency of proposed reporting arrangements and that the Director of SMI might reasonably be expected to sit on the Faculty Executive Board. Further clarification was provided that the absence of
any links to other departments with expertise in statistics, such as ScHARR or SoMAS, was due to conditions of funding but this would not preclude the establishment of cross-faculty links in future, with particular opportunities for research collaboration noted.

REPORTS FROM STATUTORY BODIES

8. REPORT ON THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE COUNCIL  
(Meetings held on 29 April 2014)

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

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES OF THE SENATE

9. REPORT OF THE LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE  
(Meeting held on 21 May 2014)

Senate received and approved the Report of the Learning and Teaching Committee including:

(a) Blackboard Managed Hosting Service: Senate approved the migration for one year in the first instance of the University's virtual learning services to the Blackboard Managed Hosting Service. It was clarified that the contract with Blackboard safeguarded the University's ownership of the data and protected its confidentiality and privacy. Privacy, security and confidentiality were critical concerns when considering any contract with an external supplier.

(b) Audio Recording of Lectures: Senate endorsed the adoption of a policy allowing all students to make their own recordings of lectures, in the case of students with a disability initially, which had been drafted in response to departmental feedback about enhancing support for students with a disability. Students would be informed of the new policy by updates to Student handbooks in the first instance and guidance will be made available to staff.

Secretary’s Note: Subsequent discussions have revealed issues around performance rights and the protection of personal data in cases where students make their own recording of lectures. Pending further investigations into how the University can facilitate greater access to lecture recordings, this policy will state that only disabled students will be permitted to make recordings of lectures if they are not provided by the lecturer.

(c) Policy on Legible Handwriting for Assessed Work: Senate approved a policy for managing illegible handwriting in assessed work, whereby students would be required to attend a session in order for their illegible examination script to be transcribed. Its purpose was to address individual situations where illegible handwriting had not been identified earlier, for example through mock examinations. It would not apply in cases where alternative examination arrangements were in place, such as temporary disability or injury.

It was noted that illegible handwriting could suggest an underlying problem bordering on a disability and it was essential that, once identified, students were referred to the Disability and Dyslexia Service as soon as possible. The University had clear processes to support students with additional requirements and the use of the new policy should therefore be regarded as
a one-off, with tailored arrangements to be made for individual students in subsequent assessments. Departments would be encouraged to arrange for transcription to occur during examination and teaching periods so that students who were not resident locally were not disadvantaged. Further consideration could be given in future to examinations taking place overseas, but the current policy aimed to address particular concerns reported by departments regarding examinations held in Sheffield. It was noted that any resource implications for departments were likely to be minimal given the anticipated small number of cases. Given the risk, Senate agreed that use of the policy should be monitored.

(d) Recruitment and Admissions MI Enhancement Project: Senate endorsed the priorities of the MI View User Group for 2014-15. However, clarification was sought over the governance and reporting arrangements around the Group and its remit, with further discussion to take place between the relevant departments involved with the project.

(e) Amendments to the General Regulations: Senate approved a number of amendments to the General Regulations. With respect to the requirement to submit theses electronically, via Turnitin, clarification was provided that Turnitin operated a robust privacy policy and satisfied the Safe Harbor framework that has been endorsed by the Information Commissioner’s Office.

(f) Collaborative Developments: Senate approved a number of new and amended collaborative developments involving partnerships at local, national and international level.

(h) Programmes Approved by Faculties: Senate approved a number of new, discontinued and significantly amended programmes that had been approved by Faculties between 5 February and 12 May 2014.

10. REPORT OF THE RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
(Meeting held on 14 May 2014)

Senate received and approved the Report of the Research Ethics Committee, including:

(i) Senate endorsed a recommendation to hold further conferences on a biennial basis. This followed the success of ‘Research Ethics into the Digital Age’, which had received overwhelmingly positive feedback and received strong support from the University;

(ii) The Committee’s online ethics review system was being taken up by an increasing number of departments, having been widely endorsed. On behalf of the Committee, Professor Newman thanked Professor Bath, Epigenysis and colleagues in Research and Innovation Services for their efforts in developing and implementing the system, which was expected to have been rolled out to all departments by the end of 2014/15.

11. RESEARCH AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE
(Meeting held on 7 May 2014)

Senate received and approved the Report of the Research and Innovation Committee, including:
(i) Senate approved the establishment of the Sheffield Institute of Biblical Studies (SIIBS) as a new University Research Centre. This followed Senate’s decision in March to reorganise the University’s Biblical Studies provision and reflected the interdisciplinary nature of this research, which would not be limited to a single Faculty;

(ii) Senate approved a change of name from the Centre for Development and Biomedical Genetics to the Bateson Centre, which was necessary due to changes in the Centre’s funding and a shift in focus towards lifecourse biology.

12. REPORT OF THE SENATE BUDGET COMMITTEE
(Meetings held on 27 March and 5 June 2014)

Senate received and approved the Report of the Senate Budget Committee (SBC) including a report on its recent series of meetings with the Registrar and Secretary and Professional Services Directors to discuss how different departments manage their budgets, with particular reference to the student experience. Senate endorsed the following recommendations, as set out in the report:

(i) that the University gives urgent consideration to the continued sustainability of service provision by Student Services, the Library (not least with respect to its content budget) and CICS, given cost-neutral budget setting;

(ii) that the University considers removing the financial burden of statutory compliance from individual Professional Services departments. This should be a Shared Cost;

(iii) that the University considers the implications of flat-lined Professional Services budgets on promotion prospects for staff and for the retention of valued staff.

Further discussion would be required in order to identify an appropriate and effective response that took account of the iterative and consultative nature of budget setting processes. It was agreed that the outcome of those discussions should be reported to Senate.

Senate noted and endorsed an additional statement that had been approved by the SBC and agreed to record the text (Appendix 1). It appraised SBC’s activities to date and included a number of matters related to ways by which to enhance its role and powers, which required consideration by Senate and the Chair. On behalf of Senate, the Vice-Chancellor thanked Professor Jenkins for his diligent and enthusiastic Chairmanship of SBC, which provided valuable financial analysis to and on behalf of Senate, including to UEB.

13. REPORT OF THE SENATE NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE
(Meeting held on 22 May 2014)

Senate received and approved the Report of the Senate Nominations Committee, including the appointment and reappointment of Senate representatives of representatives of Senate on Senate sub-committees and other bodies. Clarification was provided that nominations could be proposed by departments or individual members of staff and the Committee welcomed any expressions of interest given the importance of supporting opportunities for staff to contribute to University governance. A range of communication tools had been engaged successfully in raising the number of nominations received by the Committee and it was hoped that this trend would continue.
REPORTS FROM JOINT COMMITTEES OF SENATE AND COUNCIL

14. REPORT OF THE HONORARY DEGREES COMMITTEE  
(Meeting held on 13 March 2014)

Senate received and noted the Report of the Honorary Degrees Committee.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL

15. REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE  
(Meeting held on 20 March 2014)

Senate received and noted the Report of the Finance Committee.

16. REPORT OF THE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE  
(Meeting held on 7 February 2014)

Senate received and noted the Report of the Health and Safety Committee.

17. REPORT OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
(Meeting held on 6 March 2014)

Senate received and noted the Report of the Human Resources Committee.

OTHER MATTERS

18. RECOMMENDATION TO CHANGE THE NAME OF ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT

Senate agreed to recommend to Council for approval a change of departmental name from the Department of Town and Regional Planning to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning from 1 September 2015. This change would recognise the diversity of interests and expertise within the department that ranged from local to international in scale as well as the diversity of its staff and students themselves. The department would celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2015 and represented a unique opportunity to maximise the benefit from the change in name.

19. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MILITARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Senate received and noted the Annual Report of the Military Education Committee.

20. QUARTERLY FINANCIAL RESULTS SUMMARY

A report summarising the Quarterly Financial Results for the period ended 31 January 2014 was received and noted.
21. REPORT ON ACTION TAKEN

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

22. MAJOR RESEARCH GRANTS AND CONTRACTS

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

23. DATES OF MEETINGS OF SENATE IN 2014-15

Senate received and noted the dates of Senate meetings to be held during 2014/15.

These Minutes were confirmed at a meeting held on 1 October 2014

......................................................... Chairman
Appendix 1

Senate Budget Committee

Additional remarks

Reviewing the activities of Senate Budget Committee since May 2012, when I took over as Chair, I am satisfied that in some respects progress has been made:

- The Committee’s terms of reference have been revised and approved by Senate, allowing the Committee more scope to inquire into budgetary processes across the University, and to inform Senate about these processes.
- The information dissemination side of the Committee’s work has been begun, by setting up web pages on which documents about particular aspects of the University’s budgetary processes have been, and will continue to be, published.

In each of these respects, the Committee’s objective is to increase the transparency of University budgetary processes and, allowing for commercial sensitivities, the availability of budgetary information to University staff. In particular, the Committee’s role is to provide information to members of Senate, so that they can ask informed questions themselves. The Committee’s role is not regulatory, nor do we think that it should be.

The Committee can easily continue in this vein, but the limits of the present terms of reference have been reached. If this happens, the strong likelihood is that the Committee will increasingly resemble, and may be seen to resemble, a token gesture in the direction of greater transparency without meaningful transparency being achieved. We do not believe that this is a recipe for good financial governance.

In this spirit we suggest that Senate, and the Chair of Senate, should consider whether the Committee’s terms of reference need further revision, and, if so, how the terms of reference should be changed. There are a number of issues that we think Senate, and the Chair of Senate, should consider.

First, the relationship of the Committee to UEB is, according to the current terms of reference, advisory. This is as it should be. However, does SBC’s independence from UEB, as a Committee of Senate, need to be made explicit?

Second, should the Committee’s terms of reference be revised to allow access to a wider range of information? This is a matter of what Senate wishes the Committee to do on its behalf. For example, should the Committee have routine access to academic and professional services departmental financial information? Should the Committee be able to scrutinise budget-setting processes within Faculties and the outcomes of those processes?

Third, should SBC have a more general role in monitoring the opportunities for transparent financial governance - i.e. budgetary scrutiny - within the University? Is Senate satisfied with the current budgetary checks and balance, and with SBC’s role within this system? And, indeed, is Senate satisfied with its own role in these checks and balances?

Finally, the Committee is also concerned that its present positioning, so late on the Senate agenda running order, can only discourage proper discussion.