

## THE SENATE

### Minutes

This paper presents the confirmed Minutes of the last meeting of the Senate held by correspondence from Tuesday 7 July 2020 to 21 July 2020 inclusive.

The Senate approved these Minutes as a correct record at its meeting on Wednesday 14 October 2020.

Dave Hall  
University Secretary

Becky Sexton  
Working Secretary to the Senate  
Email: [becky.sexton@open.ac.uk](mailto:becky.sexton@open.ac.uk)  
Tel: 01908 653351

## THE SENATE

Minutes of the meeting of the Senate held by correspondence from Tuesday 7 July 2020 to 21 July 2020 inclusive.

**PRESENT:** Claire Baines, Julia Barkans, Nicholas Barratt, Leonor Barroca, John Baxter, Tim Blackman, Nicholas Braithwaite, Robert Brignall, Cath Brown, Jovan Byford, Anna Comas-Quinn, Maria Crisu, John D'Arcy, Deborah Drake, Gary Elliot-Cirigottis, Josie Fraser, Helen Fraser, Ian Fribbance, Jim Gillen, Tyrrell Golding, Catherine Halliwell, Janet Haresnape, Kevin Hetherington, Kristina Hultgren, Selena Killick, Alison Kingan, Devendra Kodwani, Tracy Lawson, Rachael Luck, Liz Marr, Cinnomen McGuigan, Elaine Moohan, Toby O'Neil, Rob Parker, Tim Parry, Alison Penn, David Rothery, Hayley Ryder, Toby Scott-Hughes, Sylvie Serpell, Kate Signorini, Mark Slaymaker, Barbara Tarling, Elodie Vialleton, Verina Waights, Linda Walker, Elaine Walker, John Wolffe, Rukhsana Malik.

**APOLOGIES:** Caitlin Adams, William Brown, Stephen Burnley, Diane Butler, Fary Cachelin, Louise Casella, Frances Chetwynd, Caroline Clarke, Sarah Crafter, Chris Edwards, Simon Green, Karen Hagan, Jim Hague, Jon Hall, Richard Heffernan, Carol Howells, David Johnson, Billy Khokhar, David Knight, Susan Kotschi, Gemma Maldar, Karen Olsson-Francis, Mike Phillips, Rory Powell, Magnus Ramage, Kristen Reid, Andy Rixon, Eileen Scanlon, Derek Sheills, Matt Staples, Susan Stewart, Christopher Turner, Nicola Watson, Jackie Watts, Denise Whitelock, Jeremy Wilcock.

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### 1 ANNUAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW S-2020-04-01

1.1 Members considered the Senate Annual Effectiveness Review 2020 (AER).

1.2 It was clarified that the anonymous qualitative commentary submitted in the survey would be made available to the Academic Governance Review implementation workstream groups. It was also noted the AER process will be reviewed before the 2021 process takes place and the option to include the survey comments as an appendix to the report will be one of the changes considered.

**Action: Governance Team/AGR implementation group**

1.3 The key issue raised within the Senate AER discussion was that of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), in relation to the diversity of the Senate Membership, changes that could be made to Senate to increase accessibility and the suggestion of an EDI standing item on the Senate agenda.

1.4 It was noted that there were plans in place to better understand the current profile of the academic governance committees, which had started with the collection of equality data from all governance bodies within the 2020 AER process. The Academic Governance Review also has diversity woven throughout each workstream. It was explained that the wider issue of the membership and composition of Senate would be considered by the Senate workstream of the Academic Governance Review implementation.

**Action: Governance Team/Senate Workstream**

- 1.5 It was suggested that there had been a missed opportunity to increase representation on the Senate with the most recent Senate election. It was explained that for the recent election, working within the current agreed Senate constitution and election procedures, the messaging was reviewed and amended in consultation with the Senior Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Manager and staff representative groups were engaged with, to positively encourage nominations from staff with protected characteristics and from diverse backgrounds. It was noted that the desire for a different approach to future Senate election processes would be communicated to the Operational Improvements workstream of the Academic Governance Review and proposals would be presented to Senate at a future meeting.

**Action: Governance Team/ Operational Improvements workstream**

- 1.6 Senate Members highlighted the issue of the format of meetings, in terms of accessibility, enabling members from diverse groups to attend and also encouraging participation within meetings for those who are less comfortable contributing in person. Suggestions included the use of text 'forum meetings' before or after the meetings, Senate workshops and building on the use of Microsoft Teams. Different papers/topics with various levels of complexity could be dealt with using different approaches. Several members suggested a 'blended senate' option, using the formats suggested, alongside a face to face meeting.

- 1.7 The scheduling of the Senate meeting was raised in terms of the time of day impacting on those with caring responsibilities, or other needs, such as travel to campus. It was explained that the format of Senate meetings and the issues identified would be considered as part of the work on the conduct of meetings and the induction for new members. These suggestions and those received within the AER survey will all be fed back to the Workstream.

**Action: Governance Team/ Operational Improvements workstream**

- 1.8 Further detail was requested for the comments on 'suggestions for improvement of the effectiveness of the Senate' (question eight) and 'the effectiveness of the academic governance structure as a whole' (question nine).

- 1.9 It was explained that the main themes from question eight had been represented in the overall themes of the report, as they reflected earlier feedback within the survey. For example, respondents mentioned the length/frequency/timings of meetings, the potential use of workshops/forums, the length of papers and the format of meetings. There were also comments regarding having a clear role for Senate and where academic decisions are taken, which was again highlighted within the correspondence meeting. Membership issues were again raised in question eight (size/ representation/ diversity), including Senate members' understanding their own roles (reducing operational questions and avoiding repetition of questions/comments etc). There were suggestions regarding 'buddying' for new members, which the Governance Team is looking to implement for this intake of new Senate members.

**Action: Governance Team**

- 1.10 Within question nine of the survey, several members responded that the Academic Governance Review was due to address the issues they could identify. The majority of other responses related to the structure of academic governance at the OU, the need for streamlining and improving delegation between committees and better understanding of the delegations and relationships between the sub-committees.

- 1.11 A question was raised regarding the progress of the Academic Governance Review recommendations. It was explained that an update was presented to the Senate in June (S-2020-03-07) on the progress of the implementation of the AGR. The Academic Governance Advisory Group agreed that as a result of the pandemic and operational

constraints, the pragmatic approach would be to delay the invitation of Senate members to participate in workstreams until after the Senate elections in July in order for new Senate members to have the opportunity to participate in the implementation of the recommendations.

**2 HONORARY DEGREES NOMINATIONS**

**S-2020-04-02**

The Senate:

- a) **noted** the updated arrangements for conferment of Honorary Degrees at ceremonies being held in 2020.
- b) **approved en bloc** the updated list of nominations recommended by the Honorary Degrees Committee for the award of Honorary Degrees at ceremonies in 2021 and beyond.

**3 DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS**

Wednesday 14 October 2020  
Wednesday 27 January 2021  
Wednesday 21 April 2021 (Council members in attendance)  
Wednesday 23 June 2021

Dave Hall  
University Secretary

Becky Sexton  
Working Secretary to the Senate  
Email: [becky.sexton@open.ac.uk](mailto:becky.sexton@open.ac.uk)  
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