

THE SENATE

Minutes of the one hundred and thirtieth meeting of the Senate held on Thursday 28th June 2001 at Walton Hall.

Present: The Vice-Chancellor in the Chair and 166 Senate members.
(An attendance list is kept in the Central Secretariat, Room WH114, Walton Hall for consultation by Senate members).

11.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

11.1 Noted: that Minute 8.1(d) should read: "...Life Sciences Sub-Committee of the ~~Validation Board~~ **Research Degrees Committee**". (*Old text in ~~strikethrough~~ new text in **bold***)

11.2 Resolved: to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 15th March 2001, subject to the above amendment.

12.0 MATTERS ARISING

12.1 Noted: arising from Minute 2.1, **Amendment to the Charter**, that the Special Resolution to amend statutes 3 and 5 of the Charter, to broaden the constituency from which Chairs of Joint Committees might be selected by Council, had been approved by Her Majesty's Privy Council.

12.2 arising from Minute 6.1, **Ordinances**, that Ordinances XVII and XVIII to accompany statute 21 on procedures with regard to discipline and dismissal, redundancy, removal from office for incapacity on medical grounds, appeals and grievance procedures for academic staff, had been approved by the Council at its meeting on 15th May 2001.

13.0 ACADEMIC BOARD

13.1 Noted: that the provisional decisions taken by the Academic Board at its meeting on 15th February 2001, and by the Validation Board at its meeting on 1st February 2001, circulated to members of the Senate in Bulletin Volume 19 Number 1, had been deemed to have been approved by the Senate. Since confirmed decisions formed part of the formal record of the Senate and this issue of the Bulletin had been designated **S/130/1**.

13.2 that the provisional decisions taken by the Academic Board at its meeting on 17th May 2001, had been promulgated in Bulletin Volume 19, Number 2. The non-placet period closed at 12 noon on Friday 15th June 2001.

14.0 REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

Re: Valedictory Lecture

14.1 Reported: that to mark his departure from the University, the Vice-Chancellor would be giving a valedictory lecture at 3.00 p.m. in the Berrill Lecture Theatre, followed by a reception and presentation. All Senate members and University staff were invited to attend.

Re: United States Open University

- 14.2 that on 1st June 2001 the United States Open University had received accreditation from the United States Distance Education and Training Council. Accreditation had been achieved in record time, and thanks were due to USOU staff and UKOU staff who had worked towards this. The next step was to achieve Middle States accreditation.

Re: Human Resource Strategy

- 14.3 that the Open University's Human Resource Strategy document had been submitted to HEFCE on time. Senate would have the opportunity to comment on the document at the October 2001 meeting.

Re: Research Assessment Exercise

- 14.4 that the Research Assessment submission had been delivered to the appropriate authorities. 550 colleagues had been declared, including the Vice-Chancellor and all the Pro-Vice-Chancellors. This was a 20% increase in the number of research-active staff declared compared with the previous submission in 1996. It appeared that the number of research-active staff declared by other HEIs had remained approximately the same, and therefore it was likely that the Open University would improve its performance in this Research Assessment Exercise.

Re: Infrastructure Funding

- 14.5 that Professor Kevin Burton had secured a grant of nearly £1M, and a further £4.2M grant had been secured for new buildings to accommodate the Planetary and Space Sciences Research Institute.

Re: National Teaching Fellowship

- 14.6 that Margaret Johnson from the London region had been awarded a National Teaching Fellowship from the Institute of Learning and Teaching, which carried with it £50,000 to be spent on activities to enhance teaching.

Re: Rosie Thomson Award

- 14.7 that the OUBS Rosie Thomson award to assist the personal development of female staff members in OUBS, had itself won an 'Opportunity Now' award. This award recognised schemes that promoted the professional development of women.

Re: New Vice-Chancellor

- 14.8 that the interviews for a new Vice-Chancellor would take place shortly. A special Council Meeting was being convened on 18th July 2001 to ratify the recommended appointment, and an announcement would be made following that meeting.

Re: Subject Review

- 14.9 that the disciplines of Politics and Religious Studies had both attained excellence in recent subject reviews. The Vice-Chancellor congratulated the staff involved for achieving these results.

Re: Senate Elections

- 14.10 that elections by the Senate for representatives to serve on University Boards and Committees from 1st September 2001 would close on Friday 6th July at 12.00 noon. Volunteers were being sought to fill remaining vacancies.

15.0 SENATE QUESTIONS

- 15.1 Received: a question from the floor of Senate on the timetable for implementation of plans to restructure Learning and Teaching Services and on consultation arrangements.
- 15.2 Noted: in a reply from the Chair, that the changes arose from the Learning and Teaching Strategy, which Senate had considered at a previous meeting (S/125/Minutes 27.0-27.4). Learning and Teaching Services staff would be meeting on 17th July 2001 to hear the outcome of the review of LTS which would include changes to the way staff were deployed. Consultation meetings with staff would take place on the implementation of these changes. It was not appropriate for Senate to discuss Personnel issues.
- 15.3 Received: supplementary questions from the floor on whether central academic units would be consulted about the changes in Learning and Teaching Services, and whether a decision to restructure would be taken prior to the consultation process.
- 15.4 Noted: in a reply from the Chair, that central academic units would be consulted in July, during the designated time for the consultation process.
- 15.5 Received: a further supplementary question from the floor, noting the importance accorded to staff in the values paper, and requesting reassurance that Senate would be given an opportunity to discuss any proposed plans for restructuring Learning and Teaching Services before they were implemented.
- 15.6 Noted: in a reply from the Chair, that it was not the business of Senate to discuss Personnel issues. Consultation would take place in the appropriate fora.

16.0 HONORARY AWARDS

(S/130/2 Strictly Confidential and Restricted – tabled)

- 16.1 Received: for final approval, under procedures agreed by the Senate, the recommended lists of nominations for the award of the honorary degrees of D. Univ and M. Univ and the award of the title of Emeritus Professor, to be conferred in 2002.
- 16.2 Noted: that in accordance with procedures agreed by the Senate, the lists were put to the Senate for approval *en bloc* and there was no discussion of the lists.
- 16.3 Resolved: to approve the lists of nominations for the award of honorary degrees and the title Emeritus Professor in 2002.

17.0 SENATE AGENDA COMMITTEE

(S/130/3)

- 17.1 Noted: in an introduction by the Vice-Chancellor, that the items on the agenda in this meeting had been brought to Senate in order that Senate could review and reflect upon major issues concerning the OU. The October 2001 meeting would conclude this process.
- 17.2 in an introduction by the Chair of the Senate Agenda Committee, that Senate was a special body in the Open University, which had a capacity to reflect upon issues concerning the University, and also to draw connections between those issues, for every different part of the University community was represented among its membership. Senate members were asked to construct links between issues, identify sources of conflict and sources of optimism. They were also asked to review past and present performance in the areas covered by the papers presented at the meeting, and to suggest ways forward. It was posited that Senate had a critical role to play in making the Open University into a learning organisation. It was explained to members that the Open University Philosophy and Values paper would be considered at the beginning of the review process and also revisited again at

the end, in order that insights gained during the review process could be brought to a discussion of the OU's core values.

18.0 OPEN UNIVERSITY PHILOSOPHY AND VALUES (S/130/4)

18.1 Noted: in an introduction by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Strategy, Planning and Partnerships) that in 1992 when the first strategic plan was presented to Senate, Senate requested that the plan be based upon a statement of values. The statement of values was subsequently developed and incorporated into the strategic plan. Individual members of the Open University were bound together by the organisation's values. They were necessarily values in which all members of staff had to believe and to which they were committed. Openness was one value which made the Open University special. Senate members were asked to consider the revised statement of values and to assess whether the statement incorporated appropriate values, whether the values were well expressed, whether any values had been omitted from the statement. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor requested e-mail comments from Senate members. [e-mail: PVC-Strategy@open.ac.uk].

18.2 the following views in the course of the discussion:

Re: Welcome

- a) that Senate welcomed the opportunity to revisit the Open University's philosophy and values. Individuals who worked for the Open University were committed to the values of the institution. Students and Associate Lecturers endorsed the paper.

Re: The Purpose of a Statement of Values

- b) that the Open University should not attempt to define itself by means of its relationship with others, rather a statement of values should proceed from the core identity of the institution.
- c) that the Higher Education sector in general had lost sight of the social contract with the society that it served. This document should seek to ascertain the nature of that social contract and to address how the Open University might re-establish it.
- d) that a statement of values was concerned with the relationship of the individual member of staff with the organisation.
- e) that the organisation should move away from the abstract notion of 'Philosophy and Values' towards a statement of the 'ethics of action' in order to foster greater congruence between theory and practice.

Re: The Purpose of the Open University

- f) that the statement of values should commence with the purpose of the University, i.e. to advance human knowledge, both by discovering new knowledge through research and disseminating existing knowledge through teaching. The Open University's commitment to teaching and research should be set out in the first paragraph, followed by the issues of equal opportunity, quality, lifelong learning, etc.
- g) that the capacity of the Open University to transform lives for the better by encouraging individuals to find out about the world around them was a characteristic which made the institution special.

Re: Sustainable Development

- h) that the human race had a moral obligation to protect the environment and to engage in sustainable development. Commitment to and promotion of sustainable development should be incorporated in to the Open University's statement of values.

Re: Participation and Democracy

- i) that the Senate was one of a range of Committees in the government structure where different constituencies in the University had an opportunity to participate in decision-making. As new staff and students came into the organisation, it was important that democracy and consensus remained core values.
- j) that the statement on 'listening to and acting upon a diversity of opinions in the Open University community' (paragraph 4.2) was important. Scholarly communities tended to function best when structures evolved from below.

Re: International Perspective

- k) that an international perspective was a core value. The Open University could reduce the distance between people in a metaphorical sense, by facilitating engagement with and understanding of other cultures.
- l) that the profit motive should not be the driving force behind the Open University's international strategy as this would further privilege the elite. Rather the University should take international action to bring education to the underprivileged. This could be achieved by localising the cost-base and providing subsidies for a short time.

Re: External Focus

- m) that the statement of values was lacking external focus. For example, in paragraph 3.3 'Working together', there was an opportunity to look outwards to external partnerships. Course production could benefit from collaboration with high-quality partners. The cost of course production was high and that of presentation was low. Ways of altering this balance might be found in partnership with other organisations. Models of more equitable forms of partnership needed to be developed where costs and income could be shared.

Re: Terminology

- n) that 'distance' was a word which created barriers and therefore its omission from the document was welcomed. Students should not be referred to as 'customers'.

Re: Other Issues

- o) that the Open University was committed to staff development (paragraph 1.4). It was suggested that the organisation might launch an Associate Lecture retention project to reduce the loss of well qualified and trained staff. In addition, it was requested that an acknowledgement of increased regionalisation be incorporated in to the paper.
- p) that lifelong learning (paragraph 1.2) related closely to the paper on widening participation. The Government would shortly be launching Foundation Degrees nationally, a key aspect of its widening participation policy. The Open University had failed to publicise its Foundation Degree programmes which were in the process of being developed, and had therefore missed an opportunity to lead the way in this widening participation initiative.

- 18.3 in closing remarks by the Vice-Chancellor, encouragement to Senate members to read Lord Crowther's 1969 speech about the Open University in which he introduced and explained the 'four opens'. The 'four opens' remained at the core of the Open University's mission.

(Secretary's note - the text of Lord Crowther's speech is contained in the Appendix to these minutes and is available on the intranet <http://intranet.open.ac.uk/lou-papers/crowther.htm>).

19.0 THE REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE (S/130/5)

- 19.1 Noted: in an introduction by the Chair of the Regional Directors, that the government's policy of increased devolution and regionalisation was leading to a multiplicity of political, social, economic and environmental developments in the regions, which included changes to the planning and organisation of post-16 training and education. Regional Development Agencies, Learning and Skills Councils and educational institutions were forming regional alliances to decide and act upon education and training policies to enhance regional development. The Open University was in a unique position as a local, regional, as well as national and international education provider, to respond to the challenges posed by the changing context, for example, through the provision of Foundation Degrees. Unlike conventional Universities which catered primarily for young school-leavers, had a national catchment area, and whose students often left the area after graduation, the Open University's students and Associate Lecturers, for the most part, continued to live and work in the region during and after their time with the University. Regionalisation and devolution were occurring at different rates in different regions. It was now appropriate for the Open University to set a clear regional policy to respond to the multiplicity of developments in the regions. Senate members were invited to submit any further comments they might have to the Chair of the Regional Directors, Roger Mills [[e-mail: A.R.Mills@open.ac.uk](mailto:A.R.Mills@open.ac.uk)].
- 19.2 the following views in the course of the discussion:
- a) in comments by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Students, Quality and Standards), that there was in existence a steering group on devolution in the UK. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor proposed to reconstitute that group so it reported in to the Development Strategy Group. It would involve representatives from the regions and elsewhere. A further group on the English regions, and one on continental western Europe would be developed, also reporting to the Development Strategy Group. It was essential to place territorial strategies at the heart of strategic decision-making in the University. It was intended that Senate would be kept informed of any future developments in this area. These proposed actions were supported by the Regional Directors, and also the students, who wished to be represented on these bodies.
 - b) that the Open University had an opportunity not only to respond to changes in the regional educational environment, but to lead the way and to anticipate change. Structures in the Open University regions needed to be examined as well as models of interaction with other institutions. However, structural templates from Scotland, for example, could not be imposed onto other nation regions nor on to the English regions.
 - c) that further decentralisation in the UK and within the Open University would call into question the current division of labour in respect of teaching and learning. Course production was centralised at Walton Hall, whereas presentation was administered by the regions. If decentralisation of Higher Education continued as in Scotland, it was conceivable that production and presentation would become the work of locally-based staff.
 - d) that there had been no mention of devolution to the English regions in the recent Queen's Speech, therefore it was unlikely that there would be major

changes to Higher Education funding mechanisms in the English regions for the next five to ten years. Nevertheless regional offices of the Open University were being expected increasingly to engage with the regional Universities Associations and with the Regional Development Agencies which had targets and delivered funding for social inclusion and widening participation.

- e) that it was important to consider the long term interests of the Open University, rather than to respond hastily to the issues of the day. The implications of devolution for corporate identity and the financial well-being of the institution had to be carefully examined.
- f) that devolution should not lead to disparity between the Open University's educational and student support provision in each region.
- g) that the Open University's regions did not correspond exactly with the regions envisaged by the government. The Open University must not lose sight of its core identity in any future actions. An important task for the proposed devolution strategy groups would be to design means of devolving flexibility to regions, without breaking up the Open University into autonomous parts. Any action taken by any region or office would be expected to conform to the strategic direction of the Open University and its statement of values/ethics. The actions of one part must not be allowed to damage the whole.

19.3 in closing remarks by the Vice-Chancellor that the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Students, Quality and Standards) would update Senate on progress made with the establishment of the proposed devolution strategy groups.

20.0 STUDENT RETENTION PROJECT (S/130/6)

20.1 Noted: in a presentation by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Students, Quality and Standards) that thanks were due to Sue Tresman and the Student Retention Project team who had co-ordinated the project over two years and produced the recommendations contained in the paper OU/01/1, previously circulated to all Senate members. The retention project had originally been an idea of David Sewart, the Director of Student Services, and the previous Pro-Vice-Chancellor, (Student, Tutorial and Regional Services) Richard Lewis.

Re: Retention Statistics

- a) that the project was established in order to address retention issues revealed by statistics showing that in 1997/8 for every 435 enquirers, 95 would continue to successfully complete a course. Of all students who started a course, 30% would withdraw before the examination and 65% of them would pass. For new students, the withdrawal and failure rates were higher with 40% of them withdrawing before the examination and a 56% pass rate. Only 43% of those who started their first course were still registered one third of the way through their second course.

Re: Main Themes

- b) that Senate was invited to consider how open entry might be managed in order to increase transparency and flexibility, for example, achievement might be rewarded by allowing students to carry forward course credit from a partially completed course, or rescue strategies might be developed for those in difficulty. Further ways of managing open entry might be to restrict registrations after the course start date, and to restrict entry of new students directly onto level three courses. Senate was also invited to consider ways of reducing workload and providing enhanced guidance on managing workload, and further, how to build stronger relationships with students. For example, sometimes intervention was needed to assist struggling students. Information sent to students needed to be clarified. Students had requested the provision of feedback on examinations. Finally, it was suggested that Senate might

wish to discuss a proposal that funding for academic units might in future be based on retention levels rather than recruitment levels.

Re: Implementation

- c) that a high degree of consultation had occurred during the course of the student retention project to determine what its recommendations should be. The next period of consultation sought to address how the proposals should be implemented. The Student Retention Team was to become the Retention Strategy Implementation Team (RetSIT). RetSIT would produce an implementation strategy document by September 2001. 30 November 2001 was the deadline date for the receipt of reports from all responsible for actions. By 31 December 2001 target dates would be set for outcomes from recommendations. In implementing these initiatives, the Open University would have to be committed to taking action, to take account of other institutional strategies, to be conscious of the external perspective and to ensure that these initiatives were embedded in other new initiatives, e.g. 'OU for You'.

20.2

the following views in the course of the discussion:

Re: External Environment and the Open University's Mission

- a) that the Open University was a Higher Education Institution with unique ideals. It had been a global leader, never afraid to lead, nor afraid of change. However, the market place had now caught up with the institution. There were now too many University places for too few students. Retaining the students already in the Open University system was not only an economic necessity, but also important in terms of the philosophy and values of the Open University. The fact that 57% of new students failed to register and stay on a second course of study meant the educational opportunities presented by the Open University were not being maximised. The Open University did not have to change its fundamental mission as a scholarly institution, rather it would have to change aspects of how it delivered teaching and learning to students. The Director of the Marketing and Sales Development Group was keen to work with the Director of the Implementation Team to maximise educational opportunities for all students and potential students.

Re: Workload

- b) that the Associate Lecturers welcomed the student retention project recommendations, particularly those in relation to student workload. It was considered that many courses had excessive workloads. The Curriculum and Awards Board had received curriculum plans from units and noticed that many had not addressed the issue of excessive workload. However, the School of Health and Social Welfare had addressed the issue and the scheme it had developed could be an example of best practice for other units. It was suggested that shifting the emphasis of central academic unit funding to students retained might focus minds on implementing other recommendations contained in the document, such as recommendation 12 on developing templates for study which would establish a framework for workload. Associate Lecturers supported the enhancement of status of presentation course teams, and requested that Associate Lecturers and students be incorporated into course teams to advise on practical aspects, such as workload pacing.

Re: Managing Open Entry

- c) that while the students welcomed many recommendations in this paper, and were pleased to see that student requests for provision of feedback on examinations had been taken on board, there was concern that recommendations regarding the establishment of entry requirements for level 3 courses was in conflict with the Open University's philosophy of openness. Further concern was expressed in relation to recommendation 8 regarding introduction of incentives to encourage progression from first to second courses. Price restructuring, that was perceived to advantage some students yet disadvantage others, was opposed by the Student Association.

Re: Short Courses

- d) that the short courses project exemplified some of the themes highlighted by the student retention project. Short courses developed by the Faculties of Science, and Education and Language Studies, demonstrated that the Open University was capable of producing flexible, pro-active courses. The short courses project could provide a template for regionally-focussed academic developments and learning and teaching support.

Re: Costing

- e) that the recommendations in the OU/01/1 paper appeared to be imprecisely costed. Concern was expressed that the cost of implementing the recommendations might lead to inflation of student fees.

**21.0 STRATEGY FOR WIDENING PARTICIPATION
(S/130/7)**

21.1 Noted: in an introduction by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Students, Quality and Standards) that this draft strategy for Widening Participation was a development of the statements requested by HEFCE in October 1999, and considered by the Senate at its meeting (S/125/Minutes 26.0-26.3). This developed statement would be submitted to HEFCE in July, following consideration by other bodies in the government structure. This version of the Widening Participation strategy reflected the achievements of the previous strategy and was a more comprehensive document. The act of producing the document had been helpful because it had enabled the team to draw together initiatives from all parts of the Open University, the regions and the centre. In order to reflect the importance of widening participation to the Open University's mission, it was proposed to establish a Widening Participation Sub-Committee of the Student Policy Board and to link it with the Centre for Widening Participation. In Autumn a new initiative would be launched to recruit more students from minority groups. Another issue yet to be decided was whether the Open University should develop targets for recruiting young students (under 25s). This age group was the target audience of many conventional Universities, but not of the Open University. The aims of the strategy for Widening Participation and the Student Retention Project should be perceived as complementary, enabling the Open University to provide high quality education to all groups.

21.2 the following views in the course of the discussion:

- a) that whilst the Business School had a high level of market penetration in India, the penetration of the market in respect of other ethnic groups in the UK itself was very low. 'Ethnic minorities' were a diverse group and care must be taken to differentiate and develop appropriate and targeted recruitment and retention strategies. Widening participation issues needed to be drawn together and addressed as part of a comprehensive marketing strategy.
- b) regret that the document was UK focussed as the Open University was undertaking widening participation initiatives outside the UK.

- c) that extra resources needed to be invested at critical stages in the student value chain, which had been identified in the retention project document, in order to recruit and retain students from under-represented groups.
- d) that the Open University should ensure that support systems were in place to allow all students to have access to courses with IT components.

21.0 MEDIA STRATEGY (S/130/8)

22.1 Noted: in an introduction by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning Technologies and Teaching) that the media strategy paper embraced broadcasting and non-broadcasting strategy. The new partnership agreement with the BBC would reduce airtime for Open University programmes, but allow the University more prime time slots. Prime time slots would enable the Open University to produce intellectually challenging programmes, such as the successful *Romans in Britain*, *Rough Science* and *In Pursuit of Pleasure*, whilst reaching a wider audience. Course-related programmes would be broadcast in the BBC's *Learning Zone* schedule. Broadcasting was an excellent way of enabling the University to fulfil its public service role. Issues addressed in the media strategy concerned the overall aims of use of media and how to develop and deliver course materials. There were opportunities to use increasingly diverse media in the production and delivery of course materials. Great expansion had taken place in this area, although investment had not kept pace. It would be undesirable to introduce a 'technology fee' to cover costs, as had happened elsewhere. The Open University would be seeking to utilise new technologies in a more efficient way by enhancing the skills base and therefore job satisfaction of its staff. Academic needs must set the framework for the media strategy. This was an early draft of the media strategy document. It was concerned with fostering innovation, diversity and effectiveness.

22.2 the following views in the course of the discussion:

- a) a welcome for the fact that the strategy document had been brought forward as a draft, and that Senate members therefore had been given the opportunity to have input into the development of the media strategy.
- b) that the aims of the media strategy contained in section B of the document did not mention curriculum. It was undesirable to separate curriculum from the medium of delivery, both in the Committee structure and in the strategy document.
- c) that academic staff had an important contribution to make to decisions about course delivery. There was no clear division between 'academic content' and medium of delivery; course production was in reality more iterative. Academics were concerned about how to make 'academic content' meaningful for different markets. In this connection, paragraph 7.2(iv) which aimed to disaggregate audio-visual material from other course materials for future 're-purposing' gave cause for concern.
- d) that there were fewer truly educational Open University broadcasts now than previously. Academics had been deskilled by being taken out of broadcasting production, to the potential diminution of the educational product.
- e) a request for more central academic unit representation on the Media Strategy Group so that academics' concerns might be addressed.
- f) that branding, to which section 4.2 referred, had been largely unsuccessful in respect of the peak viewing time programmes, because market research had shown very little recognition among the general public that Open University programmes shown at such times had indeed been produced by the Open University. Therefore, these broadcasts were unlikely to have led to increased recruitment.

- g) that section 8 of the document, which was concerned with proliferation of media, and suggested a commissioning model for the production of multimedia materials, appeared to be at odds with section 9 of the document, which advocated a more organic development, building on experience within the University. Commissioning multimedia materials from outside the University as a matter of course would necessarily mean losing some control over the product, and this was undesirable. It was better to build on what the Open University already did well in Learning and Teaching Services, whilst integrating academics formally in to the production process. It was hoped that the developed draft of the strategy document would adopt the approach advocated in section 9.
- h) that there was an issue as to the ownership of the various dimensions of the production of courses and course materials.
- i) a request that the revised media strategy document recognise the benefits new media could bring to students with special needs. Courses could be made more accessible to visually impaired students by the increased use of electronic media.
- j) a request that the statement regarding the 'representation of distance education as a dull and solitary activity' be revised, because changing the experience was more important than changing the image.

23.0 THANK YOU

- 23.1 Noted: in concluding remarks by the Vice-Chancellor that the quality of the interventions on all of the papers had been very high. He had been pleased that many new speakers had participated.
- 23.2 that the Vice-Chancellor thanked those elected members of Senate who were retiring on 31 August 2001.

24.0 ADDRESS TO THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

- 24.1 Noted: in an address by the Chair of the Senate Agenda Committee to the Vice-Chancellor, to mark the Vice-Chancellor's final Senate meeting, that a significant aspect of the Vice-Chancellor's role was to be Chair of the Senate, the leading figure in the Open University's academic community. The Chair of Senate Agenda Committee wished to thank the Vice-Chancellor for his Chairmanship of Senate during his twelve years in post. At his first Senate meeting, the Vice-Chancellor had stated that Senate was a body which had a valuable and important role to play in building an academic community, by giving the University a collective sense of purpose and direction. That the Open University Senate still existed in its current form was a cause for celebration for the University, and a source of envy for many other institutions whose Senates were less inclusive. The Open University Senate embodied the principles of democracy and consensus and was a forum where controversial yet productive debates could take place.
- 24.2 in an address to the Vice-Chancellor by the President of the Open University Students Association, thanks and farewell on behalf of OUSA. The Open University had come a long way under the Vice-Chancellor's distinctive steer. The President of OUSA presented the Vice-Chancellor with a photograph of all the OUSA presidents who had served whilst he had been in post. The gift represented all the students who had studied with the Open University during that time.
- 24.3 in a response from the Vice-Chancellor, that he had been deeply touched by the words of the Chair of Senate Agenda Committee and the President of OUSA. Senate was an important body and could make significant contributions by debating the core academic issues facing the University. A distinctive feature of the Open University Senate was its large delegation of

students and Associate Lecturers. The Vice-Chancellor was proud that students and Associate Lecturers were represented on bodies throughout the University. All OUSA Presidents had worked positively and pro-actively to move the University forward. The Vice-Chancellor supported the present structure of Senate. Some might have claimed that participative processes slowed down decision-making, however in his view, participative processes accelerated implementation of decisions by engendering ownership of those decisions. It had been a privilege to serve as leader of the Open University's academic community.

25.0 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

25.1 Noted: that Senate meetings in 2001/2002 were scheduled as follows:

Tuesday 30th October 2001
Thursday 14th March 2002
Thursday 27th June 2002

AFW/HW/JT/RJG
4.7.2001

LORD CROWTHER'S ADDRESS AT THE OU INAUGURATION (23 July 1969)

To be chosen as the Chancellor of any university is a great honour. To be named as the Foundation Chancellor of this unique institution is a distinction of which I have difficulty in thinking myself worthy. But since the command comes from the Queen in Council, I have accepted it with alacrity and with a deep sense of gratitude for being given so elevated a platform from which to observe the course of a great experiment. This is the *Open* University.

We are open, first, as to *people*.

Not for us the carefully regulated escalation from one educational level to the next by which the traditional universities establish their criteria for admission. "We took it as axiomatic," said the Planning Committee, "that no formal academic qualifications would be required for registration as a student." Anyone could try his or her hand, and only failure to progress adequately would be a bar to continuation of studies.

The first, and most urgent task before us is to cater for the many thousands of people, fully capable of a higher education, who, for one reason or another, do not get it, or do not get as much of it as they can turn to advantage, or as they discover, sometimes too late, that they need. Only in recent years have we come to realise how many such people there are, and how large are the gaps in educational provision through which they can fall. The existing system, for all its expansion, misses and leaves aside a great unused reservoir of human talent and potential.

Men and women drop out through failures in the system, through disadvantages of their environment, through mistakes of their own judgement, through sheer bad luck. These are our primary material. To them we offer a further opportunity. Almost we can say, like the Statue of Liberty in New York harbour, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me. I lift my lamp beside the open door."

But if this were all, we could hardly call ourselves a university. This is not simply an educational rescue mission - though that is our first task and we do not decry it. But we also aim wider and higher. Wherever there is an unprovided need for higher education, supplementing the existing provision, there is our constituency. There are no limits on persons.

We are open as to *places*.

This University has no cloisters - a word meaning closed. Hardly even shall we have a campus. By a very happy chance, our only local habitation will be in the new city that is to bear two of the widest-ranging names in the history of English thought, Milton Keynes. But this is only where the tip of our toe touches ground; the rest of the University will be disembodied and airborne. From the start it will flow all over the United Kingdom.

But it is already clear that the University will rapidly become one of the most potent and persuasive, and profitable, of our invisible exports. Wherever the English language is spoken or understood, or used as a medium of study, and wherever there are men and women seeking to develop their individual potentialities beyond the limits of the local provision (and I have defined a large part of the world), there we can offer our help. This may well prove to be the most potent form of external aid that this country can offer in the years to come. The interest of those all over the world who are wrestling with the problem of making educational bricks without straw has already been aroused, and before long the Open University and its courses, electronically recorded and reproduced, will be for many millions of people their introduction to the riches of the English language and of Britain's heritage of culture. There are no boundaries of space.

We are open as to *methods*.

The original name was the University of the Air. I am glad that it was abandoned, for even the air would be too confining. We start, it is true, in dependence on, and in grateful partnership with, the British Broadcasting Corporation. But already the development of technology is marching on, and I predict that, before long, actual broadcasting will form only a small part of the University's output. The world is caught in a communications revolution, the effects of which will go beyond those of the industrial revolution of two centuries ago. Then the

great advance was the invention of machines to multiply the potency of men's muscles. Now the great new advance is the invention of machines to multiply the potency of men's minds. As the steam engine was to the first revolution, so the computer is to the second. It has been said that the addition of the traditional university to the lecture room is a sign of its inability to adjust to the development of the printing press. That, of course, is unjust. But at least no such reproach will be levelled at the Open University in the communications revolution. Every new form of human communication will be examined to see how it can be used to raise and broaden the level of human understanding. There is no restriction on techniques.

We are open, finally, as to *ideas*.

It has been said that there are two aspects of education, both necessary. One regards the individual human mind as a vessel, of varying capacity, into which is to be poured as much it will hold of the knowledge and experience by which human society lives and moves. This is the Martha of education - and we shall have plenty of these tasks to perform. But the Mary regards the human mind rather as a fire which has to set alight and blown with the divine afflatus. This also we take as our ambition.

What a happy chance it is that we start on this task, in this very week* when the Universe has opened. The limits not only of explorable space, but of human understanding, are infinitely wider than we have believed. I am reminded of Milton's description of an even greater return from Outer Space with mission accomplished. "The Planets in their stations listening stood, while the bright Pomp ascended jubilant. 'Open ye everlasting gates,' they sung, 'Open ye heavens your living doors. Let in the great Creator, from his work returned; Magnificent, His six days work, a World.'"

*The inauguration ceremony took place in the week that the Apollo astronauts returned from the first moon landing.