THE SENATE

Minutes

This paper presents the confirmed Minutes of the last meeting of the Senate held on Wednesday 7 June 2017 at The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes.

The Senate **approved** these Minutes as a correct record of the meeting on 18 October 2017 subject to the inclusion of an amendment to Minute 10.3.

Jonathan Wylie
Acting University Secretary

Sue Thomas
Working Secretary to the Senate
Email: sue.thomas@open.ac.uk
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THE SENATE

Minutes of the meeting of the Senate held on Wednesday 7 June 2017
in the Hub Theatre, The Open University, Walton Hall

PRESENT:

1) Ex officio

Mr Peter Horrocks	Vice-Chancellor
Professor Hazel Rymer	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching Innovation)
Professor Kevin Hetherington	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Academic Strategy)
Mr Ian Fribbance	Executive Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Professor Mary Kellett	Executive Dean, Faculty of Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies
Professor Patrick McAndrew	Director of the Institute of Educational Technology
Ms Rosie Jones	Director of Library Services
Mr Chris Rooke	Director of Learning and Teaching Solutions

Appointed

2) Central Academic Units

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS)

Faculty of Arts

Dr Cristina Chimisso	Professor David Johnson
Dr Naoko Yamagata	Dr Elaine Moohan
Professor Ole Grell	Professor John Wolffe

Faculty of Social Sciences

Dr Jovan Byford (remote)	Dr Helen Kaye
Dr Anastasia Economou (remote)	Dr Richard Heffernan
Dr Catriona Havard	

Faculty of Business & Law (FBL)

Miss Carol Howells	Dr Devendra Kodwani
Dr Kristen Reid	Dr Sharon Slade
Mr Mike Phillips	

Faculty of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)

Faculty of Science

Dr John Baxter	Mrs Diane Butler
Dr Janet Haresnape	Professor Claire Turner
Professor David Rothery	

Mathematics, Computing and Technology

Dr David Bowers	Dr Leonor Barroca
Dr Rachel Hilliam	Dr Stephen Burnley
Professor Andy Lane	Dr Jon Hall
Mr Brendan Quinn	Dr Ann Walshe
Dr Magnus Ramage	Dr Gareth Williams

Faculty of Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies (WELS)

Education and Language Studies

Ms Annie Eardley	Dr Uwe Baumann
Professor Regine Hampel	Mrs Anna Comas-Quinn (remote)
Dr Indra Sinka (remote)	Ms Tyrrell Golding

Health and Social Care

Mr Mick McCormick	Dr Aravinda Guntupalli
Mrs Sue Cole	Dr Verena Waights

Institute of Educational Technology (IET)

Mr Chris Edwards	Professor Eileen Scanlon

Other Central Units

Dr Liz Marr

3) Associate Lecturers

Mrs Frances Chetwynd (remote)	Dr Fiona Aiken
Dr Clare Spencer	Dr Tricia French
Dr Hilary Partridge	Dr Linda Walker
Dr Tim Parry	

4) Students Appointed by Open University Students Association

Mrs Nicola Simpson	Dr Barbara Tarling
Ms Lorraine Adams	Ms Danielle Smith
Mr John Murphy	Mrs Stephanie Stubbins (alternate)

5) Academic-related Staff

Mr Mike Innes	Mrs Clare Ikin
Mr Michael Street	Mr Jake Yeo
Ms Pat Atkins	Mr Denzil DeSouza
Mrs Joanne Smythe	Ms Elaine Walker
Mr Simon Horrocks	Mr Phil Berry
Mr Billy Khokhar	Mrs Maria Crisu
Miss Barbara Poniatowska	Mrs Selena Killick

6) Co-opted members

Mr Christopher Turner	Dr David Knight
Ms Susan Stewart (remote)	Mrs Mary Kirby

In attendance

Mr Jonathan Wylie, Acting University Secretary
Mrs Dawn Turpin, Head of Governance
Ms Sue Thomas, Senior Manager, Governance
Miss Teresa Coyle, Manager, Governance

Observing

Ms Kathryn Baldwin, Vice-Chancellor's Business Manager
Mr Lucian Hudson, Director of Communications

APOLOGIES:

Appointed

1) Ex officio

Professor Rebecca Taylor, Executive Dean, Faculty of Business and Law
Professor Josie Fraser, Executive Dean, Faculty of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

2) Central Academic Units

Faculty of Social Sciences

Dr Deborah Drake	Dr Troy Cooper

Faculty of Science

Professor Hilary MacQueen	Dr Karen Olsson-Francis

Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology

Dr Toby O'Neil	Dr Hayley Ryder

Education and Language Studies

Dr Elodie Vialleton

Faculty of Health and Social Care

Professor Jan Draper

Institute of Educational Technology (IET)

Dr Anne Adams

4) Students Appointed by Open University Students Association

Miss Claire Smith

6) Co-opted members

Professor John Domingue	Mr John D'Arcy
Mr Rob Humphreys	Mr Tony O'Shea-Poon

In attendance

Mr Keith Zimmerman, University Secretary
Mr Andrew Law, Director, Open Media Unit

1 WELCOME AND THANKS

1.1 The Vice-Chancellor, Mr Peter Horrocks, informed the Senate that Mr J Wylie was attending the meeting in his capacity as Acting University Secretary in Mr K Zimmerman's absence.

1.2 Mr Horrocks welcomed Mrs M Kirby, Acting Director, Academic Services, and Ms S Stubbins, OU Students Association (Deputy) to the meeting.

1.3 The Vice-Chancellor recorded the Senate's thanks to Mrs Sue Cole, WELS who was retiring from the University, for her contribution to the Senate over many years, and wished her well for the future.

2 MINUTES S-2017-02-M

2.1 The Senate **approved** the minutes of the meeting of the Senate held on 5 April 2017.

2.2 A representative of Associate Lecturers drew attention to the reference in Minute 12.3 to his question regarding the publication dates of the two reports in to the Group Tuition Policy (GTP) by the Business Performance Improvement (BPI) office and KPMG, and asked if any further information was available. The Acting University Secretary advised the Senate that the reports would be available within the next two weeks approximately and work was currently underway, with input from the Associate Lecturers Executive, to devise a timeline for cohesive communication across the University.

3 MATTERS ARISING S-2017-03-01

3.1 The Acting President of the OU Students Association welcomed the response provided in the paper regarding the further investigations on the length of time calls remained unanswered over two working days. She sought further information as to the nature of the planned examination and whether this would include both qualitative and quantitative data. She also queried the timescale for the investigation as the Student Experience Committee had met in the last week and the matter had not been on the agenda for that meeting.

3.2 The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Academic Strategy) (PVC RAS) responded that he would consult with the Chair of the Student Experience Committee and liaise with the OU Students Association as to whether the investigation could be considered by correspondence and reported back to the Senate in October or considered by the Committee at its meeting in November and reported to Senate in January 2018.

Action: PVC RAS

3.3 The Senate **noted** the responses to matters arising from the minutes of the meeting of the Senate held on 5 April 2017.

4 REPORT FROM AND QUESTIONS TO THE CHAIR

Higher Education and Research Act 2017

4.1 The Vice-Chancellor opened his remarks by drawing attention to various recent external developments including the decision to hold a General Election and the passing of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 on 27 April 2017. The Act introduced a new regulatory body for English higher education, the Office for Students (OfS) from April 2018 and aimed to deliver greater competition and choice for students. The Act also introduced the new Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). Mr Horrocks reported that the TEF would be reviewed independently by the end of 2019 with a report to the Secretary of State for

Education. This review would examine the metrics, the use of Gold, Silver and Bronze as ratings, and an assessment of whether the scheme was in the public interest.

4.2   Mr Horrocks informed the Senate that in its responses to the legislation, the University had emphasised that the new Office for Students must promote an inclusive and diverse higher education sector that offered the flexibility and support that students of all ages and from all backgrounds required. It was encouraging to note that the Act included a duty to consider different forms of learning, including part-time study and distance learning, to promote student choice. The OfS also had new responsibilities towards monitoring the development and take-up of credit transfer.

National Students Survey
4.3   The Senate was informed that response rates to the Survey had achieved the 50% response rate threshold for publication across all four nations, and in Scotland, a response rate of 59% had been achieved.

Nations' news
4.4   The Vice-Chancellor reported that the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) had confirmed over £23m funding for the University alongside a 2% increase in general grants, a 1% increase in capital funding and the maintenance of the disabled students' premium. The SFC had also committed its continuing support for the Young Applicants in Schools Scheme with a further 3 years of funding. In Northern Ireland, an OU Graduate, Robin Swann MLA, had been appointed as leader of the Ulster Unionist Party. The annual remit letter from the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) contained a welcome commitment to the enhancement of part-time provision as a 'fundamental priority', with at least some of this enhancement involving higher level apprenticeships.

Director, OU in Wales
4.5   The Senate was informed that after a decade leading the OU in Wales, Mr Rob Humphreys had informed the Vice-Chancellor that he would be stepping down from his role to retire in November. The Vice-Chancellor thanked Mr Humphreys for his leadership of the University's work in Wales and extended to him every good wish for the future. For an interim period, Mr John D'Arcy, Nation Director of The Open University in Ireland, would provide interim leadership in Wales.

Other news
4.6   Mr Horrocks summarised a number of other achievements within the University:

- Successful application to join IMISCOE (International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion), Europe's largest interdisciplinary research network in the field of migration, integration and diversity studies.
- Mr John Oates, Senior Lecturer in Development Psychology was elected as an Honorary Fellow of the British Psychological Society
- Dr Mark Nichols and Dr Jane Roberts, LTI had been awarded Principal Fellowships by the Higher Education Academy.
- Start of the campaign to advertise Student Recruitment and Support Centre (SRSCs) services to students informing them about the enhanced services available to them, including extended opining hours and enhanced curriculum specific help and support

5   SENATE WORKING GROUP: LOCATIONS   S-2017-03-02

5.1   A member acknowledged the support in the report from the Director, Academic Services for the Group's previous recommendations but requested information as to what action would now be taken. She expressed her concern that SRSCs were experiencing operational difficulties and many staff who were now homeworkers were suffering from isolation. She reported that there were some elements of good practice in operation but she felt it was

important that the Working Groups' recommendations were taken forward. The member reminded the Senate that when the University's regional offices were closed, assurances were given that a proportion of the budget savings would be reinvested into SSTs and SRCSs. She expressed a view that SSTs were short of staff and particularly under resourced to deal with vulnerable students. She expressed her regret over this situation to the Associate Lecturer (AL) and OU Students' Associations representatives on the Senate. She requested that the Senate be given a full assessment as to whether the resources realised from the closure of the regional offices were redirected to SSTs.

5.2   Another member expressed concern that staff tutor colleagues in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Faculty were having to offer supplementary guidance to students who had been advised incorrectly by inexperienced SST staff.   He acknowledged that mistakes could happen but he sought reassurance that there was a coherent system established to deal with the errors and ensure learning points were identified from them.

5.3   The Acting University Secretary assured the Senate that a proportion of savings had been invested in SSTs and SRCSs. He acknowledged that there had been issues in the Manchester SRCS but a delay in staff recruitment was currently being addressed. Mr Wylie also advised that continuing improvement processes were in place within SSTs.

5.4   The Senate **noted** the report of the meeting held on 8 May 2017.

6   CENTRAL DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE   S-2017-03-03

6.1   A representative of the OU Students Association, who was also a member of the Qualifications and Assessment Committee reported that she was not aware that the Committee had received a report from the Academic Conduct Services Office (ACSO) recently (paragraph 4). The Head of Governance reported that this had been raised with the Secretary to the Committee and a report had not been available for the last meeting. It would be followed up for the next meeting.

Action: Governance Team

6.2   Another member drew attention to the issues raised in paragraphs 24 and 25 which appeared to be related to matters of process, and hoped that procedures were now in place to prevent them happening again.

6.3   The Senate **noted** the report of the Central Disciplinary Committee for 2016/17.

7   SPECIAL APPEALS COMMITTEE   S-2017-03-04

The Senate **noted** the report of the Special Appeals Committee of the Senate (SAC).

8   HONARARY DEGREES COMMITTEE   S-2017-03-05

The Senate:

a)   **noted** the arrangements for conferment of awards at the degree ceremonies being held in 2017
b)   **noted** the statistical analysis of the nominations received for 2018
c)   **approved** the list of nominations recommended by the Honorary Degrees Committee for the award of Honorary Degrees in 2018 and at future degree ceremonies

9   ACADEMIC STRATEGY: UPDATE REPORT

9.1   The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Academic Strategy) (PVC RAS) informed the Senate that following approval of the Academic Strategy at the last meeting of the Senate, work was now underway on developing plans for implementation. Six enabling plans were being considered to cover the six key aims of the strategy, curriculum, educational opportunities, research, scholarship, professional development and international development. Each plan would identify the key aims and be linked to the "big shifts" identified in the OU Redesign project. Professor Hetherington explained that governance oversight of these plans would be provided within the Senate's substructure, for example by Education Committee and Research Committee. External engagement would form a key part of the Academic Strategy and a Steering Group had been established to oversee work across all work streams of the implementation project. Other areas being worked upon were the establishment of a Curriculum Forum and a Research Board to share practice.

9.2   Professor Hetherington reported that Reference Groups and Project Teams had been established for each work stream within the implementation project with academic leads identified for each one so far. These were:

Research	Professor Iain Gilmour
Scholarship	Dr Anne Adams
Sustainable Academic Communities	Dr Steven Hutchinson
Curriculum	Dr Jacky Hinton (Interim)
External Engagement	Professor Rick Holliman

9.3   The development of academic communities was currently being focussed upon and in particular ways of involving ALs in module production. Attention was also being given to developing teaching careers for staff through the Teaching profile in the promotions criteria.

9.4   The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching Innovation) (PVC LTI) assured the Senate that as Chair of Education Committee, the Committee was well placed to give consideration through the governance system to relevant plans to implement the Academic Strategy. She reminded the Senate that the terms of reference of the Committee were available on the intranet and non-confidential papers were accessible to all staff but consideration could be given to notifying Senate members of their availability.

9.5   The Acting President, OU Students Association welcomed the engagement through the Senate substructure but asked whether students would be involved in other aspects of the implementation of the strategy. The PVC RAS assured the Senate that as well as representation on formal governance committees, the OU Students Association would be invited to participate in wider engagement activities which would run across the different aims of the strategy.

9.6   Members commented that it was complicated to understand the integration of the implementation of the Academic Strategy with the OU Redesign Big Shifts and that the Senate itself needed to review the implementation plans. Such complication seemed to be at variance with the OU Redesign Big Shift to simplify ways of working. One member commented that the University had initiated other projects in the past which had become very bureaucratic but had not always achieved significant change. He acknowledged that the implementation of the Academic Strategy had to progress through relevant structures but he requested more information on how areas such as academic communities would be developed. He also emphasised the importance of working closely with staff to establish the new structures.   Another member welcomed the importance being given to external engagement and considered this to be vital for creating sustainable academic communities.

9.7   Professor Hetherington explained that he was leading work to align activity on the development of academic excellence which had dependencies with some of the OU Redesign Big Shifts. He considered it was appropriate for the substructure of the Senate to consider the implementation plans and this scrutiny would be accessible in the minutes of the Committees reporting to the Senate. He emphasised that he was committed to working with a wide group of stakeholders and as chair of the Steering Group overseeing implementation of the Strategy he assured the Senate he would insist that extensive engagement occurred across the University.   The Vice-Chancellor supported this position and emphasised the importance of colleagues working together to shape the future of the University.   Mr Horrocks acknowledged the views expressed over the processes but emphasised that four clear aims were driving this important work forward in the University, an improved and more consistent student experience, a concerted focus on digital technology, a commitment to academic excellence and a more coherent organisation.

9.8   The Senate **noted** the report of the implementation of the Academic Strategy.

10   ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE REPORT   S-2017-03-06

10.1   The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Academic Strategy) (PVC RAS) introduced the report on Academic Performance. Professor Hetherington requested that members give the report detailed scrutiny as following the joint meeting in April, a member of the Council had observed that a fuller discussion of the retention issues raised in the Academic Performance Report would have been useful, given the Council's role in endorsing the statements of assurance required by the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) and the Scottish Funding Council. The report would be developed to provide a holistic approach to monitoring the Academic Strategy. It would provide a robust, quarterly overview of progress towards outcomes rather than simply a report of activity.

10.2   A member drew attention to the National Student Survey (NSS) satisfaction result which had declined for a fourth consecutive year.   He requested that this be investigated carefully to identify what had changed during those four years to lead to such a serious decline in satisfaction. He believed the change in the relationship between ALs and their students was a contributory factor.   Whilst embracing the aspiration to become digital by design, he urged the University to be more ambitious in its approach and aspire to develop its students as critical citizens. The Vice-Chancellor agreed that the declining NSS scores were of great concern and encouraged the Senate to reflect on the reasons for this.

10.3   Representatives of the OU Students' Association reminded the Senate that HEFCE had requested further information on rates of completion and retention and asked what measures were in place to demonstrate that work was ongoing and there had been improvements. The PVC RAS explained that HEFCE had been informed of the initiatives in place and being developed as part of the More Students Qualifying (MSQ) project and was satisfied with this work, however, rates of completion and retention still required further improvement. Another student representative commented that although the report recorded that no dissatisfaction had been recorded from enquirers or students following an increase in training and development which had impacted on email service, many adverse comments have been recorded on social media fora.

10.4   Members also sought clarification on the reference in the report (page 2) to an increase in training and development resulting in an 8% improvement in quality. It was not clear what was being measured or assessed or what the baseline was to indicate this improvement. It was suggested it could refer to indicators such as falls in the numbers of student complaints about incorrect advice, misrouted calls or queries requiring further investigation due to incorrect advice, however this was not clear. Another member requested greater transparency in the presentation of this data so a variety of opportunities could be identified

to increase quality. It was suggested that in order for the Senate to provide greater scrutiny of the data, as requested by the Council, further detail on this issue was required.

10.5   The Acting University Secretary explained that the reference to the improvement in quality was based on results of internal quality assurance processes. He agreed that this was a vital area to examine and offered to discuss this further with the Working Group of the Senate (Locations) and report back to the Senate.

Action: Acting University Secretary

10.6   A member reported that at its last meeting, the Student Experience Committee had considered the report of the Progression Contacts by Tutors project. One of the key findings had been that two additional contacts from tutors had made a significant difference to student success measured by completion rates, pass rates and reregistration rates. He requested that as the funding for the project had now ended, the findings from this work be taken forward by the More Students Qualifying project. The Vice-Chancellor agreed to this suggestion.

10.7   The Vice-Chancellor thanked members for their scrutiny of the report and emphasised the importance of this role for the Senate.

10.8   The Senate **noted** the Academic Performance Report.

11   TUTORIAL DELIVERY: UPDATE   **S-2017-03-07**

11.1   The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching Innovation) (PVC LTI) introduced the report and recorded her thanks to colleagues for their hard work and engagement with the Tutorial Delivery, Sustainable Model focusing on the operational delivery of tutorials at each presentation. She reminded the Senate that the Education Committee had established a Working Group to examine the academic intent and impact of the Group Tuition Policy and an update on the Group's work would be available at the next meeting of the Senate. The review of the implementation of the policy by KPMG would be available within the next two weeks approximately.

11.2   In response to a question from a representative of the OU Students' Association, Professor Rymer gave an assurance that the geographical link between students and their tutors would be restored for the 17J presentation, assuming that was applicable to the tuition strategy for a module.   The Director, Access Careers and Teaching Support confirmed that the categorisation of modules as explained in the report had helped with operational issues. Communications to students were currently being drafted and these would be issued ahead of module start dates.

11.3   Another student member queried the information relating to risks provided in the appendix to the paper. The PVC LTI confirmed that this was the log of risks currently open and that the full risk register was available on the Tutorial Delivery SharePoint site. A summary could be made available if required. A representative of Associate Lecturers expressed his concern over the reference in the Issue Log (19) to some ALs being disengaged with the Group Tuition Policy Implementation. He considered the majority of ALs to be very engaged but reported that they were not being sent important communications relating to timelines or tuition strategies. He urged the University to resolve these issues as quickly as possible.   Another member was concerned that staff tutors and academic managers were being omitted when messages were issued to ALs. Another AL representative supported this point and felt there were still numerous issues to resolve in respect of tuition within her own Faculty (WELS). She said that she still had major concerns over the delivery of tutorials for the 17J presentation. Another member questioned the omission of homeworkers from the risk log. The PVC LTI explained that they were not considered to be a risk but line management had been identified in the register. A comment was also

received online from the Chair, Associate Lecturers' Executive (ALE) that no details were given in paragraphs 14-17 of the developments delivered to the Learning Events Management (LEM) system.

Post Meeting Note
A link to the Tutorial Delivery intranet page giving details of systems improvements and updates was sent to the Chair, ALE after the meeting.

11.4   The Executive Dean Faculty of Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies (WELS) commented that she did not consider there to be significant issues across Faculty in relation to tuition and would be willing to discuss specific issues outside of the meeting. Professor Kellett considered the overall programme for tuition for 17J presentations to be on track across the Faculty.

11.5   The Senate **noted** the update report on tutorial delivery.

12   ANNUAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW   S-2017-03-08

12.1   A member commented that it was very encouraging to see the response rate to the member survey increasing so significantly compared to the response rate for 2016. He was however, concerned to read the comments about the conduct of business in paragraphs 21, 22 and 23 particularly the references to discussions being rushed or managed. He suggested that careful, proactive consideration is given to those viewpoints. The Head of Governance confirmed that all Annual Effectiveness Reviews from within the academic governance structure were reported to the Academic Quality and Governance Committee and further actions considered.

12.2   The Vice-Chancellor emphasised the importance of this review and thanked members for their engagement this year and for their constructive feedback.

13   VALIDATED AWARDS OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY: REGULATIONS   S-2017-03-09

The Senate **approved** the revisions to the Regulations for Validated Awards of the Open University.

14   EMERITUS PROFESSORS   S-2017-03-10

The Senate **approved** the recommendations from the Chairs Subcommittee that the title of Emeritus Professor be awarded to Professor John Richardson, Learning and Teaching Innovation and Professor John Storey, Faculty of Business and Law

15   THE COUNCIL   S-2017-03-11

15.1   A member commented that it had been useful to see the discussion of the OU Redesign Operating Model recorded in the confidential minutes but it had been very frustrating not to be able to access the confidential appendix to which the minutes referred. She believed that the Senate should have discussed the full report and not just an aspect of it as much of what was approved would have implications for the academic endeavour of the University, such as "digital by design" and student recruitment and retention. The Head of Governance confirmed that the paper considered by the Council would be declassified as *For Internal Use* after the Open Forum on 13 June 2017.

15.2   The Vice-Chancellor clarified that the Council, at its meeting on 9 May 2017, had approved the OU Redesign Operating Model which the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Academic Strategy) had outlined in the workshop before the meeting. Further decisions were still to be taken and the implementation of the model was likely to include measures which fell within

the remit of the Senate. A representative of the Senate on the Council emphasised that Senate needed to contribute to this further work and he wished to see a constructive dialogue between the two bodies.

15.3   The Senate **noted** the report and confidential report of matters discussed at the last meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 9 May 2017.

16   ACTION BY THE CHAIR   **S-2017-03-12**

The Senate **noted** the report of action taken by the Chair since the last meeting of the Senate.

17   FUTURE ITEMS OF BUSINESS   **S-2017-03-13**

The Senate **noted** the provisional items for the agenda for the meeting of the Senate on 18 October 2017.

18   DECLASSIFICATION OF PAPERS

Post meeting clarification:

All confidential papers to remain classified as confidential with the exception of

S-2017-03-10: Emeritus Professors which was declassified
S-2017-03-11B would be declassified after 13 June 2017

19   DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

Meetings will be held on the following dates:

Wednesday 18 October 2017
Wednesday 24 January 2018
Wednesday 18 April 2018
Wednesday 20 June 2018

Jonathan Wylie
Acting University Secretary

Sue Thomas
Working Secretary to the Committee

Attachment:

S-2017-03-M Appendix   Notes from Workshop for Members of the Senate

**NOTES FROM WORKSHOP FOR MEMBERS OF THE SENATE
OU REDESIGN
7 JUNE 2017**

Format of Workshop

The workshop started with presentations from the Vice-Chancellor and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Academic Strategy) on the OU Redesign Operating Model.

Members of the Senate then worked in groups to discuss the 2 Centres of Excellence (CoE) and identify:
- What would work well?
- What challenges might there be to implementing and how they could be resolved?

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Academic Strategy) then gave a short presentation on Academic Excellence, Academic Strategy and Students First Transformation Programme

Feedback from Senate members

Timing
- Insufficient time to consider such significant and complicated information
- Should have been circulated in advance to give time to read and assimilate
- Concerns if further OUR initiatives were going to be presented in this way
- Senate members want to be helpful - so must have information in advance to contribute in a meaningful way
- Want to engage positively and be constructive but discussion in 10 minutes was very hard
- If changes were necessary - this way would not work – this felt like it was being done to us
- Propose a pause to reflect

General thoughts
- Relationships between parts of the diagram (slide 26) not clear - expected to see more clarity
- Benefits of this model are not clear – what are we trying to achieve?
- Concern over the complexity of the model
- Agree that we must restructure the University to put students first
- This structure might help produce widgets for customers but cannot see how it will produce education for students
- Centralisation might allow us to be lean – but not be agile
- Initial approach to dismantle a complex structure is to break it down - this is wrong – as can miss the interrelationships between people and subsystems
- Concerns regarding communication – feel it might lead to polarisation
- Increasing the academic voice was a key part of the recent Faculty reconfiguration – yet this plan for centralisation appears to remove that voice
- This could be exciting - but not entirely clear how it all fits together

Centres of Excellence (CoE)
- Recognise CoE will build on existing excellence in curriculum management teams but concerns that they might inhibit academic innovation
- Will the nuances between different academic areas be lost?
- Concerns over Faculties losing key staff and expertise
- Concern that control is being taken from Faculties

- Is the Hub and Spoke concept the right way round?
- Accept CoE will provide greater oversight of the University curriculum
- Do not understand the thinking – Faculties have curriculum managers with very specific and specialised Faculty knowledge – that will be lost - this happened before with Editors
- Council asked for practical information as to how the model will work – agree be helpful to see how a module will be created from an idea to presentation using this model
- Where does pedagogy fit into this model?
- Concern that academic input could be outsourced
- Who do CoE report to? What size are they?
- Can students be involved in CoE?
- Confusion - why are CoE not listed as Shared Services?

Nations
- Where do nations fit into this plan?

Student Support
- What are the component parts of student support?

Research
- Should there be a separate model for research?
- CoE have no reference to research

Digital by Design
- Agree digital innovation is necessary – but must not lose sight of all other mediums

Sector benchmarking
- Need reassurance that other institutions use this model – and it works

Cost modelling
- Need information on the costs of this model
- Will it provide the savings to invest into the provision of academic excellence?

VC's comments
- Want to discuss this with the Senate and hear its views
- This is not a diminution of the academic voice - Exec Deans are on VCE to give opinions
- This model is a consolidation of academic expertise in the University
- There is evidence of excellent practice at the University – but it's in pockets so given the threats faced, it is essential to have a mechanism to ensure we are good everywhere
- CoE will enable the University to deliver the best education to change lives
- It is not about producing widgets - but have to be cost effective
- CoE will provide the best opportunity for colleagues to work together for students
- Agree worked examples would be helpful
- Brilliant brains here - want to create a way of working together for ideas to emerge

Sue Thomas
Senior Manager (Governance)
16 June 2017