THE SENATE

Minutes

This paper presents the confirmed Minutes of the last meeting of the Senate held on Wednesday 18 October 2017 at The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes.

The Senate **approved** these Minutes as a correct record of the meeting on 24 January 2018, subject to the inclusion of an amendment to Minute 4.8.

Keith Zimmerman
University Secretary

Sue Thomas
Working Secretary to the Senate
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THE SENATE

Minutes of the meeting of the Senate held on Wednesday 18 October 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	Learning and Teaching Innovation Director of Research
Ms Rosie Jones	Director of Library Services
Mr Chris Rooke	Learning and Teaching Innovation Director of Translation

Appointed

2) Central Academic Units

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS)

Faculty of Arts

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

Faculty of Social Sciences

Dr Jovan Byford (remote)	Dr Troy Cooper
Dr Deborah Drake	Dr Richard Heffernan
Dr Helen Kaye	

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	Professor David Rothery

Dr Janet Haresnape   Mrs Diane Butler
Professor Hilary MacQueen   Professor Claire Turner

Mathematics, Computing and Technology

Dr David Bowers   Dr Leonor Barroca
Dr Rachel Hilliam   Dr Stephen Burnley
Professor Andy Lane   Dr Jon Hall
Dr Toby O'Neil   Dr Hayley Ryder
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   Mrs Anna Comas-Quinn (remote)
Professor Regine Hampel   Ms Tyrrell Golding
Dr Indra Sinka   Dr Elodie Vialleton
Dr Uwe Baumann

Health and Social Care

Professor Jan Draper   Dr Aravinda Guntupalli
Mr Mick McCormick   Dr Verena Waights
Dr Jackie Watts

Institute of Educational Technology (IET)

Dr Anne Adams   Professor Eileen Scanlon (remote)
Mr Chris Edwards

Other Central Units

Dr Liz Marr

3) Associate Lecturers

Mrs Frances Chetwynd   Mr David Knowles
Dr Hilary Partridge   Dr Walter Pisarski
Mr Tim Parry   Mr Gary Clifford (alternate)
Dr Fiona Aiken

4) Students Appointed by Open University Students Association

Mrs Nicola Simpson   Ms Danielle Smith
Ms Lorraine Adams   Dr Barbara Tarling
Miss Claire Smith   Mr Peter Cowan (alternate)

5) Academic-related Staff

Mr Mike Innes   Mr Jake Yeo
Mr Michael Street   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
Mrs Clare Ikin

6) Co-opted members

Mr Christopher Turner   Dr David Knight
Mr John D'Arcy   Mr Tony O'Shea-Poon
Ms Susan Stewart   Mrs Mary Kirby

In attendance

Mr Keith Zimmerman, University Secretary
Mr Jonathan Wylie, Chief Operating Officer (Acting)
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
Mr Tony Martin, Transformation Director
Mr Harvey Moore, Senior Information Manager (up to Minute 10)
Professor Denise Whitelock, LTI, IET (for Minute 11)
Professor Allison Littlejohn, LTI, IET (for Minute 11)

APOLOGIES:

Appointed

1) Ex officio

Professor Josie Fraser, Executive Dean, Faculty of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

2) Central Academic Units

Faculty of Arts

Professor David Johnson

Faculty of Social Sciences

Dr Anastasia Economou   Dr Daniel McCulloch

Faculty of Science

Dr Karen Olsson-Francis

3) Associate Lecturers

Dr Clare Spencer

4) Students Appointed by Open University Students Association

Mr Rory Powell

5) Academic-related Staff

Ms Pat Atkins

6) Co-opted members

Professor John Domingue

In attendance

Mr Andrew Law, Director, Open Media Unit

1   WELCOME AND THANKS

1.1   Mr Horrocks welcomed the following new members to the meeting:

Dr Jackie Watts, WELS
Dr Daniel McCulloch, FASS (in absentia)
Dr Walter Pisarski, AL representative
Mr David Knowles, AL representative
Mr Rory Powell, OU Students Association (in absentia)

1.2   Thanks were recorded to the following members who had left the Senate since the last meeting:

Dr Catriona Havard, FASS
Dr Tricia French and Dr Linda Walker, Associate Lecturers
Mr John Murphy, OU Students Association

2   MINUTES   S-2017-03-M

2.1   The Senate **approved** the minutes of the meeting of the Senate held on 7 June 2017 subject to the following amendment:

2.2   Minute 10.3: Academic Performance report (amendment in *italics* and deletion in ~~strikethrough~~)
Final sentence to be amended to read:
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, ~~social media fora should also be scrutinised to see if adverse comments were recorded there.~~ *many adverse comments have been recorded on social media fora.*

3   MATTERS ARISING   S-2017-04-01

The Senate **noted** the responses to matters arising from the minutes of the meeting of the Senate held on 7 June 2018.

4   REPORT FROM AND QUESTIONS TO THE CHAIR

Students' stories
4.1   The Vice-Chancellor informed the Senate of stories he had heard from recent graduation ceremonies of students with mental health or other conditions that had impeded their learning. The OU had helped them achieve their aims of University study but he had been reflecting on how the University can do more to help such students. He was currently exploring some ideas and asked for any further insights and suggestions. Mr Horrocks emphasised though that funding for this kind of work was not guaranteed because of the uncertainty around Government direct support and the decline in the University's numbers. Further work to help students would require funding through greater commercial effectiveness.

External Environment
4.2   The English Government was due to consult imminently on the new regulatory framework for the Office for Students (OfS). Mr Horrocks reported that he had been in discussion with various partners including Universities UK, Guild HE, the National Union of Students and the Association of Colleges to ensure that the broadest

concept of a student was promoted. Any examples to illustrate to the new regulatory body the wonderful variety of OU students would be welcomed.

4.3   Mr Horrocks reported that he had attended the Conservative and Labour Party Conferences. The Government had announced a fees freeze in England and a review of Higher Education (HE). Although not confirmed yet, it was likely that the terms of the review would be broad enough for the issues OU students face in terms of affordability and finance availability to be examined. Mr Horrocks reported that he was also taking every opportunity to correct claims that the new fee regime had resulted in more disadvantaged students attending University. The figures in fact showed that the total number of English undergraduate entrants from low participation areas fell by 15% between 2011/12 and 2015/16, or 11,500 per year. This was driven by the 47% fall in entrants from low participation areas studying part-time, which far outweighed the 7% increase in entrants from these areas studying full-time. The Vice-Chancellor informed the Senate that in the coming weeks the University would be setting out its strongest arguments for "learning and earning incentives" as a critical element in upskilling the country.

Nations' News
4.4   In Scotland, the Scottish Government had launched a consultation on behalf of its Student Support Review Group seeking ideas for improving how students across Scotland access, receive, manage and understand the support they receive. The first meeting of the Scottish Government's new Access Delivery Group charged with monitoring and coordinating work on improving access to HE across Scotland had taken place, with the Director, OU in Scotland, as one of three members representing Universities Scotland.

4.5   In Ireland work continued with the Department for the Economy, contributing to several consultations around the draft Programme for Government, and also with the Royal Irish Academy Brexit Taskforce Group researching the impact of Brexit on higher education on the island of Ireland.

4.6   In Wales, recruitment for a new Nations Director continued with strong levels of interest and good feedback from potential candidates on perceptions of the OU in Wales.

Students First
4.7   The Workshop held last month for members of the Senate, as a supplement to formal discussion, had been constructive and positive feedback had been received. Mr Horrocks requested that Senate members hold two further dates, 30 November 2017 and 17 January 2018 for further workshops with further dates to be scheduled in February/March. It is intended that the workshop on 30 November 2017 would be based upon the Learning and Teaching principles developed by the Teaching Excellence and Innovation workstreams. The Learning and Teaching principles would then come, suitably iterated, to Senate for formal discussion and approval.   That pattern would be followed with all three of the academic workstreams. The Vice-Chancellor also informed the Senate that he would be holding events to hear directly from academics and students, especially on the cross-disciplinary areas of the programme.

4.8   The Vice-Chancellor announced the establishment of up to five new "Open University professorships" focussed on supporting the aims of the Academic Strategy, enhancing the University's mission and delivering for students. Research and knowledge exchange would be a key element of these roles and there will be an expectation that they would be self-financing through clear benefits to students,

improved recruitment and retention and generation of research income. However, reductions in other spending may be required to resource the posts appropriately to enable this focus on the future. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Academic Strategy) (PVC RAS) would be taking this initiative forward to clearly demonstrate that the University was confidently building for the future.

Celebrating Success

4.9   As an example of a successful initative, Mr Horrocks informed the Senate that the Student Recruitment and Support Centres (SRSC) Programme had been completed early and under budget and was delivering better services to students with improvements in call and service request handling.

4.10   On tuition delivery there had been excellent work to recover from the problems last year. For the 17J presentation all tutorial timetables were delivered to students and tutors and Mr Horrocks expressed his thanks to all teams involved in that achievement. The Learning Events Management System had been stable and both the StudentHome and TutorHome websites operated well with peaks in volumes of users. During the first weekend of the presentation, 473 tutorials took place and over 36,000 students accessed the systems.

Tuition Delivery

4.11   Mr Horrocks informed the Senate that it was due to see a report from the Education Committee Working Group on Group Tuition Policy (GTP) at the meeting. This had been withdrawn by the Chair of Education Committee as the required qualitative and quantitative analysis had not yet been completed. This work would form the basis of a future report to Senate with clear evidence of student outcomes, to inform more effectively academic judgement.

Faculty of Business and Law

4.12   Mr Horrocks informed the Senate that Professor Rebecca Taylor, Executive Dean, had left the University to pursue new opportunities. Professor Mary Kellett, Executive Dean, Faculty of Wellbeing, Education and Languages (WELS) would undertake interim leadership of the Faculty of Business and Law, in addition to WELS. Mr Ian Fribbance Executive Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) would take on the leadership and Vice-Chancellors Executive (VCE) sponsor role of More Students Qualifying and Student Experience within the wider Transformation programme. Mr Horrocks assured the Senate that the interim arrangements had been established for practical reasons and did not pre-empt the outcome of any Students First work on the Operating Model or the consequences of the Curriculum and Research Plans.

Student numbers

4.13   New student recruitment for 17J presentations was above target, but disappointingly continuing student recruitment targets had not been achieved. In summary, new students registrations were at 114% of target and continuing students at 97% of target. Mr Horrocks commented that this presented an even greater imperative to do everything possible to nurture and support the new intake of students so they stayed with the University. He reiterated that non-continuing students was a critical issue, because of regulatory interest and as it represented students not achieving their goals. VCE had embarked on a plan of action to improve student retention and for the first time, marketing would directed at continuing student recruitment. The Senate was shown a short film as part of the #WhatsStoppingYou campaign.

4.14   Mr Horrocks reminded the Senate that a detailed examination of the National Students Survey (NSS) results and actions plans was a later agenda item and that

this had originated from Senate's interrogation of the academic performance report. He emphasised that Senate's detailed scrutiny of academic performance was one of its most critical roles

Financial context

4.15 Mr Horrocks summarised that the University's cost base had been rising more quickly than growth in income. The underlying projected deficit for this year was over £30m and that was forecast to worsen without corrective action. He reported that a member of the Council had commented that the University's healthy reserves might have protected the University from the reality of the position but that the seriousness of the situation and its relevance to the mission must emphasised to the entire OU community. It was now critical to be motivated by the financial situation or the University's social purpose might not be sustainable. It was essential to bring the same passion to reforming the organisation as to what it stands for.

4.16 The Vice-Chancellor concluded that the current environment gave a clear reason for rekindling the University's purpose and changing how it was delivered. He was very optimistic that the need for the OU (in times of political, social and economic upheaval) was greater than ever. However the efforts needed to meet those challenges were greater than any in the University's history, at least since its foundation. The Senate's responsibilities were clear in ensuring the necessary academic chan ges were effected with the right urgency.

Questions and comments

4.17 The President, OU Students' Association commented that the Vice-Chancellor's remarks had been lengthy and she did not consider it necessary to show the marketing film. She was concerned that other debates on key issues such as the NSS might be curtailed as a result. Mr Horrocks apologised and explained that he had spoken in some detail as he considered it important for the Senate to receive additional context around the key issues facing the University and to hear of initiatives including the short film.

4.18 In response to a question, Mr Horrocks confirmed that the projected deficit had been calculated at £35 million however £5 million had been offset by the recruitment of additional new students above set targets. Another member requested the information on the University's financial position that the Council had considered should be made available to the Senate. The Vice-Chancellor offered to examine ways to share this information.

4.19 Referring back to an item at a previous meeting, a member enquired when the report of promotions from the Academic Staff Promotions Committee would be presented to the Senate. It was confirmed that this report would be presented to the meeting in January 2018.

4.20 A member sought further information on the academic remit of the five new professorial posts being established. The Vice-Chancellor explained that they would have subject responsibilities and were likely to be cross disciplinary. The PVC RAS added that detailed information was not yet available but that there would be consultation with the wider academic community.

5   ACADEMIC QUALITY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE   S-2017-04-02

AQGC-2017-02-M: Minute 6.10

5.1 A member drew attention to the reference to an extended Final Enrolment Date (FED) having little impact on tuition and commented that an extension to FED would

in practice have a significant impact. The Chair, Academic Quality and Governance Committee commented that the wording might be inaccurate and should refer to impact on timetables not tuition strategy and agreed to look at this

Action: Secretary and Chair, AQGC

5.2   The Senate **noted** the minutes of the meetings held on 3 July 2017 (confirmed) and 18 September 2017(unconfirmed)

6   RESEARCH COMMITTEE   S-2017-04-03

The Senate **noted** the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2017

7   EDUCATION COMMITTEE   S-2017-04-04

Minute 17: Group Tuition Policy: Report form Working Group
7.1   A representative of Associate Lecturers (ALs) expressed his concern that the report from the Education Committee Working Group on Group Tuition Policy had not been presented at this point to the Senate. He enquired what additional data would affect the perceptions of GTP and urged the University to look forward. Another member supported this stance and enquired when the Senate would see the report and requested that the valuable work undertaken not simply be subsumed into a workstream of the Students First Transformation Programme (SFTP) but be presented to the Senate as stated in the minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2017.

7.2   The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Innovation) (PVC LTI) explained that the report had been reflected upon after the meeting of the Education Committee and it was agreed that further analytical work was required on the 16J presentations and the academic outcomes. The timetable had thus reverted back to its original timings and a report would be presented to the Senate in the spring of 2018 as originally planned.

7.3   The Senate **noted** the minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2017

8   SENATE WORKING GROUP   S-2017-04-05

The Senate **noted** the update report from the Chair of the Working Group.

9   LEARNING, TEACHING AND INNOVATION: PRINCIPLES   S-2017-04-06

This paper was withdrawn.

10   ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE REPORT   S-2017-04-09

10.1   The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Academic Strategy) (PVC RAS) introduced the report and explained that it comprised the report against standard academic performance indicators, the annual student numbers report covering 2016/17 and targets and early information for 2017/18 and the current draft of the Academic Strategy KPIs.

10.2   A member commented that ownership of targets for research and enterprise bids were not clearly specified. The PVC RAS explained that he had overall institutional responsibility for but Executive Deans had responsibility for individual targets in Faculties.

10.3   The Chair, Associate Lecturer Executive (ALE) sought information on the cost to the University of the apprenticeships programme and its contribution to the projected deficit. She also enquired whether the projected target set for student recruitment to the programme was realistic. The PVC RAS explained that across the sector, recruitment was comparably low with a slower uptake by employers than predicted. The University would be conducting a review and the outcomes of this would be available early next year.

10.4   The Director of Research, LTI drew attention to an error in the presentation of the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) satisfaction rate. The agreed correct figure was 82% and not 73% which had been used when results were first received, however an internal error had been identified with the sample. A similar correction was also required in paper S-2017-04-10, the Annual Quality Report. Another member commented that the suggested measure for success in Aim 5 was rather vague and she wished to see a clearer and more robust measure relating to securing return on investment.

11   NATIONAL STUDENTS SURVEY: REPORT   **S-2017-04-07**

11.1   The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Innovation) (PVC LTI) introduced the report and explained that the data from the National Student Survey (NSS) was extremely valuable for the University.   The paper, which was requested following reference to declining overall student satisfaction ratings in the Academic Performance Report at a previous meeting, was intended to update Senate on the action being taken to address the falling satisfaction rates.   Professor Rymer explained that students were selected to participate in the NSS according to a number of criteria so students who were included in the 2017 survey, were predominately studying in 2015/16 or earlier.   Therefore, activities undertaken both institutionally and at qualification level during 2016/17 would have the greatest impact on the August 2018 NSS survey results. Professor Rymer also reported that indicators of satisfaction from the Student Experience on a Module (SEaM) surveys also appeared to be falling which was of concern as the NSS results tended to correlate with SEaM data.   She considered that in the lead up to the 2018 NSS survey it would be valuable to promote and communicate actions that have been taken in response to feedback.   Work was ongoing to alter questions in the SEaM surveys to relate more closely to the NSS survey questions and this would help the University to predict more accurately results from the NSS. Professor Rymer drew attention to the quality enhancement activities which had already been initiated which it was hoped would have an impact on NSS results from 2018.

11.2   A representative of the OU Students' Association welcomed the paper and the depth of analysis within it. She urged the University to proactively demonstrate its responses to issues students had raised.   The President, OU Students' Association drew attention to paragraph 7 and the reference to the student engagement agenda. She did not consider that student engagement was well established and believed there were numerous opportunities to increase engagement that were missed due to under resourcing. It was also reported that the question in the NSS relating to students' associations had been changed in 2017. The results were lower than was hoped but an action plan had been devised, however the result should not be compared to previous years' results due to the new wording.   Another OU Students' Association representative welcomed the quality enhancement activities outlined in the paper and hoped they would be expanded. She also proposed that other avenues existed for student feedback as well as the SEaM surveys and these should also be explored.

11.3   A representative of ALs noted that in table 3 in appendix 1, satisfaction with Organisation and Management had fallen by 6%, and she enquired as to whether there were any explanations for, or analysis of this decrease. Another AL representative was pleased to see satisfaction with Assessment and Feedback was high and congratulated ALs who would have been intrinsically involved in this area. He also enquired whether the work on study intensity, listed in Appendix 5 and dated as August 2016 had been pursued.

11.4   A member noted the references in the Institutional-level action plan (Appendix 5) to the provision of advice and support but not specifically to the provision of guidance. She also expressed her concern over the references to students making study planning errors. She did not consider that students made errors but made choices and that guidance was specifically required to ensure the choices were right for them and their circumstances. She also drew attention to the deliverables of the Entry Project and considered that it was essential that students were treated as individuals with dynamic interactions at appropriate points. It was not clear from the plan who would be responsible for such provision. In relation to the Student Success: Analytics Project, concern was also expressed that some students did not wish to study via digital means and felt their concerns were being ignored.   It was essential that the University learnt from the past, particularly from the Transitional Arrangements processes in 2012 to be able to progress confidently.

11.5   Another member urged the University to track the data from SEaM surveys more closely as they provided data from all students and not just those on level 3 modules as in the NSS. There was also less of a time lag with data and actions. He also registered his concern that the University was paying insufficient attention to feedback, especially from students in relation to digital teaching material.

11.6   A member advised caution against believing that technology would resolve all issues. He urged the University to canvass opinions and strive to be ahead rather than rely on data from 2015/16 as this was too long to adapt and initiate change. He also pointed out that the risk analysis table in paragraph 40 did not identify any high risks yet in his opinion, some merited classification as high. He also queried why work was ongoing to alter postgraduate pass rates if satisfaction rates were good. Another member supported increasing the relevance and use of data acquitted from SEaM surveys. He noted that scores were lower in relation to value but he felt the University was limited in its ability to influence this as students' perceptions of value was a sector-wide issue.

11.7   The Vice-Chancellor reminded the Senate that the action plans before it identified areas which required addressing. He acknowledged that the University needed to respond rapidly and improve how it demonstrated that it acted upon feedback it received. Mr Horrocks also reiterated that one of the key areas for debate at the forthcoming workshop would be the principle of digital by design and what this entailed and how it would be delivered. Mr Horrocks offered to provide an update at the next meeting of the Senate on how various actions had been taken forward.

Action: PVC LTI

11.8   The PVC LTI thanked members for their helpful and insightful comments. She emphasised that the University was working hard to improve engagement with students and also to demonstrate actions in relation to feedback received. She agreed with the suggestions that more significance should be given to information from the SEaM surveys. Professor Rymer also undertook to examine the risk levels

identified in relation to the falling satisfaction rates to ensure they adequately reflected the concerns expressed by the Senate.

12   ACADEMIC STRATEGY: IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE   S-2017-04-08

12.1   The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Academic Strategy) (PVC RAS) introduced the report and confirmed that the implementation programme was now embedded in the Students First Transformation Programme, via the Academic Excellence workstream. The report identified the key areas in which was underway, the teams responsible and the risks and their owners.

12.2   A member commented that the initiatives relating to sustainable academic communities listed in paragraph 8 required reordering so (h), (i) and (j) were given greater precedence. He also commented that the risks identified did not address research sufficiently. The PVC RAS explained that paragraph 8 was a list and not a set of priorities. Another member suggested further development under sustainable academic communities in relation to partnerships and also inclusion of a risk associated with this.

12.3   A representative of the OU Students' Association welcomed the reference in paragraph 8 (h) to student engagement in academic communities. She recorded her concern however that nine of the ten risks associated with the project were assessed as high.

12.4   The PVC RAS assured the Senate that the risk analysis identified the implications of non-delivery of aims and did not infer that any areas were currently at risk. He agreed that inclusion of reference to partnerships work would be useful.

12.5   The Senate **noted** the update on the implementation of the Academic Strategy.

        Tea Break

13   ANNUAL QUALITY REPORT   S-2017-04-10

13.1   The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Academic Strategy) (PVC RAS) introduced the report and explained that it provided a summary of the effectiveness of the University's management of quality and standards. The Senate was required to scrutinise the report and if content, recommend to the Council that it endorse the statement of assurance required by the Higher Education Funding Council for England and also the Scottish Funding Council.

13.2   A representative of ALs commented that the reference in paragraph 65 to open comments pointing to particular concerns with tutorials was not helpful as written. It was assumed that the open comments received related to organisation and management and not to tutors and how they conducted tutorials but it would be helpful to have further information on the issues raised.

13.3   A representative of the OU Students' Association was encouraged to read the reference in paragraph 40 to there being clear pedagogic reasons to provide print material which had a bearing on student retention and progression. She drew attention to the reference in Appendix 6 to the use of a combination of printed texts and online activities in T192 *Engineering: origins, methods, context* and reiterated the Association's support for this approach. The President, OU Students' Association commended the good work on student engagement within the quality process and

wished to see it continue and improve with inclusion of the widest range of students possible, not only representatives on University Committees.

13.4   A member commented that some University policies appeared to restrict flexibility of study and he urged the University to examine these. He cited an example of 10 point modules not being able to be counted towards qualifications.

13.5   Another member suggested that in future reports analysis should be included of student satisfaction with tutors. He considered that staff development of tutors needed to be emphasised more and he was concerned that insufficient support had been provided to enable them to work in the digital environments. He requested that as part of the academic rigour of the report it should evaluate the development programme for tutors and the resources made available for it.   The Vice-Chancellor assured the Senate that the digital workstream within the SFTP would be examining ways of enhancing digital capability.

13.6   The Vice-Chancellor requested that members of the Senate express any concerns which would indicate that they were not prepared to recommend to the Council that it endorse the statement of assurance on academic quality and standards. The PVC RAS reiterated that the purpose of the report was not to set policy or comment upon it, but to collate various forms of assurance to capture an understanding of the quality and standards of the University's provision. He agreed to clarify paragraph 65 further and other points raised would be referred to the relevant areas in the University.

Action: PVC RAS

13.7   The Senate **recommended** to the Council that it endorse the statement of assurance required by the Higher Education Funding Council for England and the Scottish Funding Council

14   ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE ASSURANCE REPORT   S-2017-04-11

14.1   The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Academic Strategy) (PVC RAS) introduced the report and explained that it provided a summary of the effectiveness of academic governance, following consideration by the Academic Quality and Governance Committee (AQGC). The Senate was asked to approve the assurance statement on the effectiveness of the University's academic governance arrangements in 2016/17, to be reported to the Council in November 2017 and proposed changes to the Senate Standing Orders.

14.2   A member commented that in relation to Action 5, if different colleagues acted as nominee for a member on a number of committees there was a risk that continuity could be adversely affected. It would be important to maintain continuity both longitudinally and latitudinally across the governance structure.

14.3   The PVC RAS drew attention to paragraph 9 which stated the gender balance across all academic governance committees met the minimum 40% male / 40% female indicator set out in Objective 3c of the University Equality Scheme.   AQGC had however commented that for those committees where the indicator had not been met, men were often under-represented.   The Chair, ALE reported that following recent elections, the ALE now satisfied the gender balance objective in the Equality Scheme. The Executive Dean, WELS commented that the gender balance on committees needed to be seen in the context of the male/female balance of the University's staff overall.   The PVC RAS acknowledged this point but reflected that the balance may indicate a wider issue relating to University citizenship generally.

14.4   The Senate **approved**:

   a)   the assurance statement on the effectiveness of the University's academic governance arrangements in 2016/17, to be reported to the Council in November 2017

   b)   the proposed changes to the Senate Standing Orders

15   STUDENTS FIRST TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME: APPROACH TO GOVERNANCE   **S-2017-04-12**

15.1   The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Academic Strategy) (PVC RAS) explained that the paper set out how the Students First Transformation Programme (SFTP) intended to engage with academic governance. He informed the Senate that he chaired a small working group that had been established to ensure a coordinated and holistic approach to the consideration of SFTP matters through the academic governance structure of the University.

15.2   A member welcomed the paper and considered that a clear mechanism had been established to ensure engagement with academic governance. He noted that one member of the Senate had been appointed to the working group, with an alternate, and suggested that both become substantive members to share the volume of work.

15.3   A member participating remotely requested specific assurance that Senate, and not the working group, had the ultimate authority to determine which decisions would be delegated to committees within the Senate substructure. He considered that this would be particularly relevant for parts of SFTP directly relevant to Senate's role in 'overseeing the University's academic management, including the curriculum and all aspects of quality and standards associated with the University as a degree-awarding body'.

15.4   Another member referred to the mitigating action set out in paragraph 13 (b) and acknowledged that minutes of the substructure committees were presented to the Senate and might be 'starred' for discussion, however she was unsure whether a decision taken could be overruled or altered.   A representative of the OU Students' Association commented that the risk assessment section did not include any reference to failing to engage with students.

15.5   A member commented that members of the Senate could legitimately challenge a decision taken by a committee within the Senate's substructure. He emphasised that information should not be hidden and he requested that all members of the Senate be given the relevant permissions to access to all papers (including confidential papers) on the intranet for substructure committees. The University Secretary agreed to effect this change in policy but in doing so he reminded Senate members that certain papers might be classified as highly confidential.

Action: Governance Team

15.6   The PVC RAS in responding to the points raised considered that one member of the Senate was sufficient for the membership of the working group. It was a small management group, acting in a "triage" capacity working with the workstream leads and using the Senate's Schedule of Delegation. The risks listed would be revised to include reference to student engagement.   Professor Hetherington also commented that no changes were intended to governance processes or the Senate's Schedule of

Delegation. Members of the Senate would be able to read all substructure papers and raise issues as appropriate.

15.7 The Senate **approved** the proposed engagement of the Students First Transformation Project with academic governance.

16 ACADEMIC MODEL FOR APPRENTICESHIPS **S-2017-04-13**

16.1 A member commented that the paper should refer to the organisational structure of the University as she did not feel it lent itself to establishing apprenticeships. She was concerned that academic staff were not in touch with employers. She was also concerned that establishing apprenticeships required the University to give priority to employers and their requirements which was at variance with the Student's First strategy. The member did not consider that the paper was appropriate for the Senate to approve at this point. Whilst supporting the development of a set of principles to guide an operational model, she felt that there were numerous examples where the paper confused principles with actions. She proposed that the paper was revised to focus solely on the principles. In reflecting further on the paper in detail, the member also drew attention to areas where she felt inconsistencies were evident. In particular she considered there to be a lack of clarity across the requirements for apprenticeship and non-apprenticeship students and also over apprenticeship standards within the principles.

16.2 Another member endorsed the points made and emphasised the need to separate operational activity from principles. He commented that in relation to Principle 9, the University's Stagegate process for curriculum design would not be appropriate for use with apprenticeships as it was too cumbersome and would stifle innovation. A representative of ALs also drew attention to the significance of the role of the practice tutor (paragraphs 37 and 38) but was concerned that there was no reference to integration between the roles of the practice tutor and AL. Another member acknowledged the significant work that had gone into the preparation of the model but also agreed that a set of generic principles should be identified to guide the operational strategy for apprenticeships. These could focus purely on the differences between apprenticeship and standard University provision to avoid duplication.

16.3 A member referred to principle 4 and explained that within the nursing curriculum, practice tutors liaised closely with employers. She pointed out that for these professional programmes practice tutors had to be validated and recognised by the relevant professional body. The standards required were very specific and she did not feel that principle 4 was sufficiently detailed to reflect this.

16.4 The Chair, ALE drew attention to paragraph 11 and commented that the vast majority of OU students fitted their studies in around work commitments. ALs were able to provide flexibility with studies if required and she did not understand why apprenticeship students required increased provision for flexibility. She was concerned that this was associated with the fact that employers were funding apprenticeships. Another representative of ALs supported this view and considered that apprenticeship students should study in the same pattern as other OU students.

16.5 Another member was concerned that the paper reflected a tension between the University's standard teaching model and the academic model for apprenticeships and he feared the latter was taking priority. Another member commented that reference to assessment standards, assessment for academic credit and contractual agreements with the employer were missing from the paper

16.6 A member asked the Senate to reflect as to where students came first in the model under consideration. She was concerned that the model did not allow for the provision of impartial guidance especially if problems arose during the apprenticeship.

16.7 The Director, Teaching, LTI thanked the Senate for the points raised. She pointed out that all Faculties had been represented on the Apprenticeships Academic Project Management Group which had shared the model widely so it was unfortunate that the concerns raised had not been surfaced before this point. The paper would be examined in the light of the comments raised and be resubmitted to the Education Committee in due course.

Action: Director, Teaching, LTI and Secretary, Education Committee

17   TUTORIAL DELIVERY – SUSTAINABLE MODEL: UPDATE   **S-2017-04-14**

17.1 The Chair, ALE drew attention to paragraph 21 and expressed concern that ALs would not be able to participate in the weekly "huddles" being convened to update on tutorial delivery. She was concerned as to how they could input valuable information. Another AL commented that the Cluster Managers were under pressure and that as the role was critical this was not a sustainable position (paragraph 12). The paper gave no indication of status and he considered that the position was far from stable with considerable work areas reliant on temporary staff.

17.2 Another member sought clarification of paragraph 14 as she was aware of a number of issues which had arisen in relation to venues. These included no IT provision so ALs were required to bring their own laptops, unsuitable rooms and poor timings and logistics. Another member supported this view and was concerned that such issues affected the ability to implement the tutorial strategies for modules.

17.3 The PVC LTI acknowledged that some operational processes were not sustainable but that compared to this point in 2016 they had delivered a much improved service. Looking forward, the newly appointed Tuition Delivery Implementation Director would be focussing on tuition delivery for presentations 18 J and K. Professor Rymer acknowledged that some logistical issues may have occurred with venues but issues such as provision of laptops were not related to the Group Tuition Policy. The paper was correct at the time of writing. Any issues relevant to venues should be reported through the appropriate channels.

17.4 The Vice-Chancellor thanked members for their comments and assured the Senate that the Vice-Chancellor's Executive continued to monitor the position in relation to tutorial delivery.

17.5 The Senate **noted** the update report.

**18   STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND SUPPORT CENTRES (SRSCS):
PERFORMANCE REPORT**   **S-2017-04-15**

The Senate **noted** the increased investment in student facing activities, the successful development of the new SRSCs and the formal closure of the SRSC Programme.

**19   FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (FASS):
         CHANGE OF SCHOOL NAME**   **S-2017-04-16**

19.1   A member questioned whether the use of the term "Cultures" in the proposed new title for the School of Art History, Classical Studies, English and Creative Writing, Music might have impacts on other academic areas and lead to confusion for students not being able to locate appropriate modules. The Executive Dean, FASS, assured the Senate that there was no intention to impact upon other areas of the University and the Faculty would monitor the position as the new title became embedded.

19.2   The Senate **approved** the proposal that the School of Art History, Classical Studies, English and Creative Writing, Music be renamed to the School of Arts & Cultures

20   EMERITUS PROFESSORS

The Senate:

a)   **approved** the recommendation from the Chairs Subcommittee that the title of Emeritus Professor be awarded to Professor Mike Sharples, Institute of Educational Technology, Learning and Teaching Innovation Portfolio

b)   **noted** that the Chair of the Senate took Chair's Action to approve on behalf of the Senate that the title of Emeritus Professor be awarded to Professor Anne de Roeck, Faculty of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)

21   SENATE MEMBERSHIP OF COUNCIL   **S-2017-04-18**

The Senate **noted** the changes to the Senate membership of the Council.

22   THE COUNCIL   **S-2017-04-19**

The Senate **noted** the report of meeting held on 18 July 2017

23   CHAIRS ACTION   **S-2017-04-20**

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

24   FUTURE ITEMS OF BUSINESS   **S-2017-04-21**

The Senate **noted** the provisional items for the agenda for the meeting of the Senate on 24 January 2018.

25   DECLASSIFICATION OF PAPERS

Post meeting clarification:

Confidential paper to remain classified as confidential:
S-2017-04-09: Appendix 2: Report on Student Numbers

Paper declassified
S-2017-04-17 Emeritus Professors

26   DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

Meetings will be held on the following dates:

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

Keith Zimmerman
University Secretary

Sue Thomas
Working Secretary to the Committee
Email: sue.thomas@open.ac.uk