THE SENATE

Minutes

This paper presents the confirmed Minutes of the last meeting of the Senate held on Wednesday 24 January 2018 at The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes.

The Senate **approved** these Minutes as a correct record of the meeting on 18 April 2018 subject to an inclusion of amendments to Minute 3.2 and Minute 19.2.

Keith Zimmerman
University Secretary

Sue Thomas
Working Secretary to the Senate
Email: sue.thomas@open.ac.uk
Tel: 01908 655083

THE SENATE

Minutes of the meeting of the Senate held on Wednesday 24 January 2018
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 Josie Fraser	Executive Dean, Faculty of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
Professor Patrick McAndrew	Learning and Teaching Innovation Director of Research
Ms Rosie Jones	Director of Library Services

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	Dr Helen Kaye
Dr Deborah Drake	Dr Troy Cooper
Dr Anastasia Economou (remote)	Dr Richard Heffernan
Dr Daniel McCulloch	

Faculty of Business & Law (FBL)

Miss Carol Howells	Mr Mike Phillips
Dr Kristen Reid (remote)	Dr Devendra Kodwani

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 Gareth Williams
Dr Magnus Ramage

Faculty of Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies (WELS)

Education and Language Studies

Ms Annie Eardley (remote)   Ms Tyrrell Golding
Dr Uwe Baumann   Dr Elodie Vialleton
Mrs Anna Comas-Quinn

Health and Social Care

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

Institute of Educational Technology (IET)

Mr Chris Edwards   Professor Eileen Scanlon

Other Central Units

Dr Liz Marr

3) Associate Lecturers

Mrs Frances Chetwynd   Dr Fiona Aiken
Dr Clare Spencer   Mr David Knowles
Dr Hilary Partridge   Dr Walter Pisarski
Mr Tim Parry

4) Students Appointed by Open University Students Association

Mrs Nicola Simpson   Mr Rory Powell
Ms Lorraine Adams   Ms Danielle Smith
Miss Claire Smith   Dr Barbara Tarling

5) Academic-related Staff

Mr Mike Innes   Mr Jake Yeo
Mr Michael Street   Mr Denzil DeSouza
Ms Pat Atkins   Ms Elaine Walker
Mrs Joanne Smythe   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
Mrs Louise Casella

In attendance

Mr Keith Zimmerman, 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
Mr Tony Martin, Transformation Director
Professor Allison Littlejohn, Academic Director Digital Innovation, LTI, IET
Mrs Jo Farmer, Senior Manager, Strategic Planning and Policy, LTI
Mrs Gill Buckland, Executive Assistant, Deanery, WELS
Ms Lisa French, Senior Manager, Governance
Ms Fiona Roberts, Group Human Resources Director

APOLOGIES:

Appointed

1) Ex officio

Mr Chris Rooke, Learning and Teaching Innovation Director of Translation

2) Central Academic Units

Faculty of Business and Law

Dr Sharon Slade

Faculty of Science

Dr Karen Olsson-Francis

Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology

Dr Ann Walshe

Faculty of Education and Languages Studies

Professor Regine Hampel   Dr Indra Sinka

Institute of Educational Technology

Dr Anne Adams

5) Academic-related Staff

Mr Simon Horrocks

6) Co-opted members

Professor John Domingue

In attendance

Mr Jonathan Wylie, Chief Operating Officer (Acting)
Mr Andrew Law, Director, Open Media Unit

1   WELCOME AND THANKS

1.1   The Vice-Chancellor, Mr Peter Horrocks introduced Ms Louise Casella, Director, OU in Wales to her first meeting of the Senate.

1.2   The Vice-Chancellor recorded the Senate's thanks, in absentia, to Mr Simon Horrocks, Academic Related staff who was leaving the University.

2   MINUTES   **S-2017-04-M**

2.1   The Senate **approved** the minutes of the meeting of the Senate held on 18 October 2017 subject to the inclusion of the following amendment:

Minute 4.8 (*amendment in italics*)

2.2   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.

3   MATTERS ARISING   **S-2018-01-01**

Minute 15.5 of S-2017-04-M

3.1   The Chair, Associate Lecturers' Executive (ALE) sought further clarification as to whether access had been granted for confidential papers for meetings of Teaching Committees due to take place shortly. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Academic Strategy) (PVC RAS) confirmed that such papers were in the process of being made available to Senate members.

Minute 4.18 of S-2017-04-M

3.2   A member commented that he was not aware that information on the University's financial position considered by the Council had been made available to the Senate as promised in minute 4.18. He considered that the financial background to the scale of the changes proposed to the academic operation of the University was relevant to the Senate. The University Secretary explained that members of the Senate were advised to seek information on the financial context of a wide range of decisions through their faculties and units. The University Secretary agreed to inform Senate members about where to find this information through their faculties and units.

3.3   The Senate **noted** the responses to matters arising from the minutes of the meeting of the Senate held on 18 October 2017.

4   STARRING OF AGENDA ITEMS

The Vice-Chancellor reported that following a request from a member of the Senate the order of the agenda items in section C would be revised. Item C5, the Report of the Education Committee Working Group on Group Tuition Policy (GTP) would be taken ahead of item C3, the Learning and Teaching and Innovation Principles.

5 **REPORT FROM AND QUESTIONS TO THE CHAIR**

External Environment and Events

5.1 The Vice-Chancellor reported that following a Cabinet reshuffle, the Government had confirmed its intentions to initiate a "major review of university funding and student finance" in England and further information was awaited. Mr Horrocks had met Ms Nicola Dandridge, Chief Executive Officer, Office for Students during which students from the OU Students' Association had given a highly effective presentation which Ms Dandridge had referred to as "inspirational". Mr Horrocks also reported that he had written an article in a policy report from the Fabian Society on a national education service, emphasising the importance of part-time higher education opportunities.

Recruitment and Performance

5.2 Mr Horrocks informed the Senate that analysis of recruitment to the 18B presentations showed that new undergraduate student recruitment targets were due to be exceeded by 13%. Continuing students' registrations were currently forecast to meet targets set. Postgraduate registrations were currently forecast to achieve 98% of target set. However, in respect of retention, the percentage of undergraduate students who were still registered on their 2017J module at week 11 was slightly lower than for students registered on 2016B modules at the same point in time.

5.3 All timetables for the 18B presentation had been published according to schedule and although this was a smaller presentation, it included some significant level 1 modules. This achievement reflected hard work and commitment by colleagues working in AL Services and Student Recruitment and Support Centres (SRSCs)

Mental Health Issues

5.4 In December a ThinkTank was held with a range of colleagues who shared experiences of supporting students and ideas for improving support for student mental health and wellbeing. Dr Troy Cooper, Head of School of Psychology, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS), was leading this work alongside Mary Kirby (Acting, Director Academic Services) and proposals would be submitted in due course to the Student Experience Committee.

2017 Annual Report

5.5 The 2017 Annual Report of the University was now available and colleagues were encouraged to read about the University's achievements throughout 2017.

Senate workshops

5.6 The Vice-Chancellor thanked members for their contributions to a productive workshop the previous week. He hoped that Senate members were finding the series of workshops a useful way of contributing. The Learning and Teaching Principles being discussed at the meeting formed an important element of the development of the Academic Strategy for the University. He emphasised the importance of obtaining the Senate's views on these principles to develop a well thought through Teaching Framework.

Ways of Working

5.7 The Vice-Chancellor acknowledged that debates at the meeting would focus on issues that were at the heart of the University and its staff. He emphasised the importance of members listening to each other and reaching decisions on the basis of respectful debate.

6   ACADEMIC QUALITY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE   **S-2018-01-02**

Minute 11: Academic Governance Review

6.1   A member enquired whether the suggestion from the review of Council Governance in 2015/16 that its recommendations be more widely considered was the basis for the review of the academic governance structure. He did not consider that such suggestions should form the basis of any review and requested that the full terms of reference of the proposed review be brought to the Senate for consideration.   The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Academic Strategy) (PVC RAS) and Chair of Academic Quality and Governance Committee (AQGC) explained that a small review group of the Committee would provide advice to external consultants who would be engaged to carry out the review. The Review Group would receive the consultants' report and present recommendations to the Senate in June 2018. The member reiterated his concerns and informed the Senate that he considered this to be an unacceptable process to follow. The PVC RAS clarified that the process was in accordance with the Senate's Schedule of Delegation

6.2   The Director, Academic Policy and Governance confirmed that the Academic Quality and Governance Committee was acting within the authority delegated to it by the Senate and it was ultimately accountable to the Senate. He emphasised that the Review Group would not be making any decisions on the outcome of the review but would oversee the work of external consultants. It was good practice to invite an independent organisation to review the University's practice. The University Secretary reiterated that the Senate delegated its powers to a number of Committees in accordance with the Schedule of Delegation agreed by the Senate. The AQGC had agreed the terms of reference of the Review Group and these would be circulated to the Senate and any points in relation to these should be raised with the Chair of AQGC

Action: Governance Team

6.3   Another member urged the Senate to trust its substructure. If Senate wished to see all business then it could do so, but this would lead to lengthy agenda for meetings and delay progress of initiatives. He proposed that the Review Group should be permitted to conduct its work and then the Senate can consider it at a later date.

6.5   The member who had raised concerns in minute 6.1 reiterated his view that the process being followed was unacceptable and reminded members that Senate had the right to challenge decisions taken by its substructure. He considered that the review was of sufficient importance to use this provision for challenge.   He thus proposed a motion that was seconded:

That no further action be taken on the proposed review of academic governance until the Senate had considered and agreed its terms of reference

6.6   The Vice-Chancellor requested the Senate vote on the motion as proposed in minute 6.5

6.7   The motion was **not carried** with the following votes recorded:

For the motion: 21
Against   42
Abstentions   18

6.8   The Senate **noted** the unconfirmed Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Quality and Governance Committee held on 6 November 2017

7   RESEARCH COMMITTEE   **S-2018-01-03**

        Minute 9.4: Research and Enterprise Plan: Overview and Update
7.1   A member drew attention to the review of the curriculum currently underway in faculties. He sought clarification of the identification of sustainable and unsustainable curriculum according to Students First Transformation (SFT) parameters, which would contribute to the identification of research areas where there was sustainable curriculum. This was one of the key criteria for supporting research set out in SFT Big Shift 8. The University Secretary explained that the process for review had been approved by the Education Committee and it would consider the final outcomes at its meeting in March 2018.

7.2   The Senate **noted** the unconfirmed Minutes of the meeting of the Research Committee held on 15 November 2017

8   EDUCATION COMMITTEE   **S-2018-01-04**

        The Senate **noted** the unconfirmed Minutes of the meeting of the Education Committee held on 13 December 2017.

9   SENATE WORKING GROUP   **S-2018-01-05**

9.1   The Chair of the Working Group reported that the meeting had been the last one for the Group. He drew attention to some outstanding issues listed in the report, which he considered should now be pursued through other committees in the Senate substructure.

9.2   The Director, Student Support Team Hub assured the Senate that staff turnover in Student Recruitment and Support Centres (SRSCs), as referred to in paragraph 3 of the report, was being monitored closely but was not yet a matter of serious concern. Considerable effort was being focussed on addressing issues in relation to liaison between faculties and SRSCs and she asked that examples of evidence of problems be sent to the relevant areas.   The Executive Dean, FASS, and lead for the SFT Workstream on the Student Experience confirmed that the Workstream would consider the issues identified and he expected the Student Experience Committee to be monitoring relevant areas.

9.3   In relation to homeworking, a member asked whether a University-wide group would be established to encourage a coordinated approach and the sharing of good practice. The University Secretary confirmed that Human Resources and the Vice-Chancellors' Executive acted in this capacity.

9.4   An Associate Lecturer (AL) member enquired whether the Staff Tutor Liaison Group was willing to accept the proposed greater responsibility in relation to the issues set out in paragraphs 7 and 8 of the report. The Chair of the Working Group confirmed that this had not been discussed in detail yet.

9.5   The Vice-Chancellor thanked the Chair of the Working Group, Professor John Wollfe and the members for their hard work and commitment during the Group's existence.

9.6   The Senate **noted** the report of the meeting held on 16 November 2017.

10   ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE REPORT   **S-2018-01-06**

10.1   The PVC RAS introduced the report and explained that it presented updates to Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (as of 18 December 2017 and 8 January 2018) to show the current overview of Academic Performance and the annual overview of academic performance success measures within the Students First Strategy.

10.2   A member was pleased to see the change in KPIs covering measures of satisfaction. However she emphasised that it was important to focus on measures of quality.   The Director, SST Hub confirmed that attention was being given to improving measures of quality. In response to a question, she explained that that the two day targets had not been changed but it had been recognised that the Educational Advisers' work was of a very different nature. It had therefore been agreed with the Strategy and Information Office to report their work to the Vice-Chancellor's Executive (VCE) within the new student experience target which looked at the end-to-end life of a student's individual request for support.

10.3   A member noted that the new KPIs covered responsiveness to requests for information and advice but not the provision of guidance. This was particularly important for students who were experiencing difficulties with their studies. The Director, SST Hub explained that the measures took into account the work of educational advisers who engaged with students with complex queries and had been redesigned to reflect the investigative nature of their work. Another member expressed concern that requests for detailed guidance would not be visible in this measure and considered that a separate KPI was required in this area. It was confirmed that this was under investigation.

10.4   The Director of Research, Learning and Teaching Innovation reported that, in relation to paragraph 2(d) (i) his area had now also exceeded its agreed research income target.

10.5   Another member reflected that as the University's curriculum was complex, mistakes were liable to occur in the provision of advice to students. He enquired whether such errors and their implications were measured. The Director, SST Hub confirmed that by developing more qualitative measures, it was hoped to address exactly this issue.

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

11   ACADEMIC STRATEGY: IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE   **S-2018-01-07**

11.1   The PVC RAS introduced the report and explained that the implementation programme for the Academic Strategy, formed of a number of related projects, was now embedded in the Students First Transformation, via the Academic Excellence workstream. The report provided details of progress and timelines of those projects.

11.2   The President, OU Students Association drew attention to the imminent consideration of proposals for future curriculum by Teaching Committees. She was concerned that as the proposals were currently confidential, student representatives on Teaching Committees would be unable to discuss the proposals with each other. Ms Simpson wished to see more communication across faculties to help support student representatives on Teaching Committees and Boards of Studies to assist them in carrying out their roles effectively. The University Secretary agreed to discuss this with the President, OU Students Association outside of the meeting.

Action: University Secretary

11.3   A representative of the OU Students Association enquired when the wider student body would be informed of outcomes of the projects. The University Secretary explained that communications would set the strategic direction of the University, including information on the breadth of the curriculum offered.

11.4   A representative of ALs sought information as to whether many ALs had been appointed to module teams as had been proposed in the Academic Strategy. He was not aware of many such appointments. The University Secretary confirmed that it was expected that Faculties would involve ALs in module teams and issues in relation to this should be raised with Executive Deans. The Executive Dean, Faculty of Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies confirmed that ALs in both WELS and the Faculty of Business and Law (FBL) were involved in module teams and making very valuable contributions due to the breadth of their experience. Another AL representative emphasised the importance of involving ALs in the process of building sustainable academic communities from the outset.

11.5   A member was concerned that some issues appeared rather unclear in the Strategy. He noted that paragraph 2 referred to reducing the size of the curriculum in order to reduce overall module dependent costs and drive cost reductions in other teaching. However, if less choice was offered then this might deter students from registering with the University. He considered that a full cost benefit analysis was required. The PVC RAS confirmed that the Curriculum Review was not completed yet and that a number of different aspects were being taken into account such as performance of curriculum, student numbers and market share. This wide ranging consideration could result in a number of different outcomes such as qualifications changing or ceasing or modules changing or being redefined.

11.6   Another member commented that the Academic Strategy stated that research that was considered to be internationally excellent would be supported. However a recent review of Units of Assessment (UoA) included areas where there was no evidence of a strong sustainable curriculum.   There appeared to be a lack of alignment in this work.   The PVC RAS commented that the review of UoA was one element in determining research excellence.

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

12   EDUCATION COMMITTEE: GTP WORKING GROUP REPORT   S-2018-01-10

12.1   The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching Innovation) (PVC LTI) introduced the report and explained that it presented the final report of Education Committee Working Group on the Academic Evaluation of the Group Tuition Policy (GTP). Professor Rymer thanked Dr L Marr who had chaired the Working Group and all those who had contributed to the report. The findings of the evaluation would be shared widely to support the enhancement of implementation of GTP and used to inform developments within Students First Transformation, particularly in the Teaching Excellence and Innovation and Student Experience workstreams.

12.2   A representative of ALs, and a member of the Working Group made a personal statement expressing his concern over the processes by which the report had been produced. He was concerned that he had not seen the report before submission to the Senate and as a member of the Working Group he had not approved the findings or recommendations. He reported that he had seen an earlier version of the report that had unequivocally found that the GTP was not fit for purpose. He expressed his

disappointment that the version presented to the Senate did not include this finding or others including the lack of a clear rationale for introducing GTP or insufficiently strong academic evidence to support the new approach to tuition. He considered that the report had been revised to reflect the view that the failure of GTP was a systems issue. He strongly believed that other factors including the policy itself and leadership caused the failure. The AL representative stated that he wished to disassociate himself completely from the report and its findings. He emphasised that it was important to move forward and learn from mistakes, but felt it would not be possible to do this without an acceptance by the University that the GTP was flawed as a policy.

12.3   The Vice-Chancellor acknowledged that the member was entitled to express such views . The Director of Teaching, LTI, who had chaired the Working Group and led the academic evaluation, expressed her regret that the AL representative did not feel any ownership of the report. A draft of the evaluation had been discussed by the Working Group and also by the Education Committee at its meeting in December 2017. The interim report of July 2017, referred to by the AL representative, was discussed with the Chair of the Education Committee and it was agreed to carry out further quantitative analysis.

12.4   Dr Marr commented that the report, which was produced by a team of academic staff from LTI (Academic), was complex and could have benefitted from further time being devoted to the analysis.   It focussed on three key areas, the importance of the tutor/student relationship, the need for students and ALs to receive support to make more effective use of online tutorials and the importance of engaging ALs in module teams developing tutorial strategies. Dr Marr emphasised that many of the findings aligned closely with the work of the Teaching Excellence and Innovation workstream of the Students First Transformation Programme (SFTP).

12.5   The Chair, ALE, agreed that adoption of the key recommendations must be a priority to enhance the provision of online tuition. In particular, she emphasised that recommendation 13 (provide ALs and students with more support, training and development to make effective use of online tuition) should be implemented urgently by Faculties and not wait for the workstreams to conclude their work.   Students wanted to benefit from an enhanced experience and ALs needed more training to provide that. The PVC LTI assured the Senate that such work would not be delayed and was currently underway.

12.6   A representative of the OU Students' Association commented that recommendations 8 and 20 appeared to be contradictory. She also expressed her concern over the suggestion in recommendation 20 that any tutorial should be compulsory.   The PVC LTI explained that the recommendation was aiming to incentivise participation in tutorials and that it was recognised that students had numerous pressures on their time so participation would not be compulsory.

12.7   Another member emphasised the importance of ensuring that professional staff were included in training in the provision of online tuition as many delivered group tuition. Another member was concerned that the implementation of GTP had resulted in other forms of tuition being side-lined.

12.8   A representative of ALs drew attention to a reference in the earlier version of the Report on group tuition presented to Education Committee (EC-2017-02-14) that the original policy was very long and written in an overly complicated style which it believed led to contradictions and a lack of clarity. It also stated that any future policy must be much more concise. In response to a question, the University Secretary

confirmed that the report presented to the Education Committee would be accessible to all Senate members.

12.9   The Senate **noted**:

(a)   the final report of Education Committee Working Group on the Academic Evaluation of the Group Tuition Policy (GTP)

(b)   that the findings of the evaluation would be shared widely to support the enhancement of implementation of GTP and used to inform developments within Students First Transformation, particularly in the Teaching Excellence and Innovation and Student Experience workstreams

13   NATIONAL STUDENTS SURVEY: ACTION PLANS   S-2018-01-09

13.1   The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching Innovation) (PVC LTI) introduced the paper and explained that it set out proposals to support improved satisfaction from the National Students Survey (NSS).

13.2   A member was concerned that the report did not provide sufficient context to the results of the NSS for the University over recent years. He did not feel that the fall in satisfaction rates had been sufficiently analysed and enquired whether those modules who were scoring well had been examined in detail to see what was leading to those high scores. He felt good practice from those high scoring modules should be disseminated widely. The PVC LIT assured the Senate that this work was underway.

13.3   A representative of ALs suggested that ALs should be involved more in the University's processes in respect of the NSS. She felt they were in a good position to encourage students to participate.

13.4   A member welcomed the paper and viewed the proposals as positive, particularly around viewing the insight data holistically and proactively.   She also suggested examining data from Voice (the University's customer relationship management system) which was a valuable source of student insight and suggested this was incorporated into the recommendations.   She was concerned that there did not appear to be a University-wide action plan, with emphasis on Faculty plans. She also proposed that the University should improve its engagement with students in the process by working with them as co-developers of pan-University and qualification specific action plans.   The member drew attention to examples of best practice in the sector and cited an example of an institution which had increased its student satisfaction score by 18% in the past 10 years through the establishment of a dedicated group that was accountable for improving satisfaction. The member was concerned that it was not clear from the paper where ownership of and accountability for the action plan lay and how all colleagues could support the shared goal of improving the student experience.   She suggested that the University could learn from other institutions that had made demonstrable impact in this area and establish an accountable cross-University team with dedicated resource to improve the student experience.

13.5   The PVC LTI confirmed that a number of groups existed doing very valuable work in this area and agreed that it would be beneficial to co-ordinate that work.   However, it was important to look at satisfaction on individual modules as well as widely across the University. She emphasised that the new Quality Monitoring and Enhancement

(QME) process would enable more rapid responses to issues arising and the Academic Governance and Quality Committee.

13.6   The Senate **noted** the report.

Tea break

14   LEARNING, TEACHING AND INNOVATION: PRINCIPLES   S-2018-01-08
                                                                 S-2018-01-08A

14.1   The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching Innovation) (PVC LTI) introduced the paper and reminded the Senate that Learning and Teaching Principles have evolved as a response to meeting the vision of Personalised Open Learning. Extensive consultation and engagement had taken place across the University and paragraph 6 of the paper explained how this feedback had been used to define the draft Principles. Professor Rymer emphasised that the Principles would set the strategic direction for learning and teaching and avoid unnecessary inconsistencies which impacted on student satisfaction and success. The Teaching Framework would set the scope for implementation of the Principles and provide a holistic view of learning and teaching to inform decisions about different elements in the University's provision. The overall aim was to improve student success and satisfaction and lead to improved financial sustainability.

14.2   The Vice-Chancellor informed the Senate that two amendments had been proposed to the Principles and that these were presented in paper S-2018-01-08A. He requested that the discussion focus on the Principles in the first instance and the two amendments would then be proposed and voted upon.

14.3   A member explained that he had seen the Principles develop through various iterations and welcomed their current form. He was worried however that the Principles might lead to uniformity across the University's provision, when in some instances different tuition or teaching was necessary. He opposed the removal of the word "digital" from Principle 5 and considered that the University's ambition must be the production of curriculum developed to the best pedagogical devices to deliver the best student experience.

14.4   The Chair, ALE, sought clarification of the status of the appendices to the paper and if the Senate was required to vote upon the Principles, whether the appendices would form part of the basis of the vote. The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the Senate would only be required to vote upon acceptance or otherwise of the Principles themselves. The Chair, ALE, also asked if a risk register was available for the Principles. The PVC LTI confirmed that the risk register was within the SFTP risk register. Reports would be regularly brought to the Senate on progress within the Teaching Excellence and Innovation (TEI) workstream and could include the risk register. Another representative of ALs considered that the Principles were very vague and he was unsure as to whether they would save money or increase expenditure. The PVC LTI reiterated that the aims of the Principles were increasing student success and satisfaction and improving financial sustainability. Another AL sought clarification of the meaning of paragraph 6(b) in the paper and was concerned that was inconsistency between this and operating model workstream. The PVC LTI advised that the Teaching Framework would clarify such issues.

14.5   The AL representative who had proposed removing the word "digital" from Principle 5 explained that the intention was not to preclude digital pedagogical driven learning

materials but to encourage the use of all such materials, retaining a blended learning approach.

14.6 A representative of the OU Students' Association expressed her concerns over approving principles without the detail on their implementation. In drawing attention to Principle 5, she advised the Senate that students did not support the use of digital materials only and felt their concerns were being ignored. Students were not opposed to digital study *per se*, but were concerned that the Principles set out the overarching direction as production of digital materials only, and students wanted a blended approach.

14.7 The President, OU Students' Association enquired to whom the Principles applied, and whether this included informal learners. She drew attention to the Strategic Context for the Principles set out in the paper and expressed her concern that the University was failing students from disadvantaged backgrounds. She reminded the Senate that students faced many challenges such as poverty and mental health issues. Many students did not have access to reliable broadband services and public libraries were closing and she was concerned as to how such students would access digital material. She considered it essential that the University carried out an equality impact assessment on the principles to identify groups who would be affected and the impact on the University's social justice mission. She was also concerned that the University was also excluding potential students who opted not to register due to the digital focus. The PVC LTI explained that the Principles were a high level direction of travel and that an equality analysis would be performed once the Teaching Framework was in place. Professor Rymer emphasised that widening participation was at the heart of all those at the University and the new mental health initiative recently announced by the Vice-Chancellor was aiming to improve support for student mental health and wellbeing. The President, OU Students Association requested that the University consulted disadvantaged students to gain knowledge of the issues they had to address including lack of digital skills. She informed the Senate that she had no faith that the proposed direction for the University would not be a digital only experience. The PVC LTI emphasised that the Teaching Framework would address the issues raised and the University was working very hard to develop a holistic approach to the student journey.

14.8 A member welcomed the direction of travel set out in the paper but was concerned that it did not include any information on the implementation of Principles. He also suggested that more clarification was required on indicators of success. Another member emphasised that employers viewed engaging with digital means and skills very highly. The University's competitors had acknowledged this and the University must also recognise this in its reflections on the employability of its students. Another member acknowledged the concerns expressed by the President, OU Students Association but considered that use of digital means could act as an important enabler.

14.9 Another member urged the University to develop initiatives such as the Principles in partnership with students rather than in consultation to ensure the student voice was incorporated from the outset. This view was supported by another member who emphasised many students struggled to succeed in a digital environment. Printing costs were not included in the student loan and she urged the University to listen to students' views.

14.10 Another member drew attention to Principle 3 and the importance of the tutor/student relationship. He considered this Principle to be too vague and requested removal of reference to "peers" as it was covered in Principle 4. In considering Principle 5 he

suggested examining the tuition strategies of modules that were performing well with high populations. He wished to see reference to blended tuition and was concerned over the commitment to one form of delivery only.   Another member supported the reference to the tutor/student relationship and considered this was critical in setting the University apart from other distance learning institutions.

14.11   A member expressed his concern that Principle 6 did not recognise the relevance of research in teaching and learning and requested that it be revised. He considered that subject based research was the intellectual foundation of teaching and learning and gave the institution its identity as a university.

14.12   A member participating remotely sought assurance that changes to the curriculum arising from the Curriculum Review, which were matters of academic policy, for example pathways within qualifications would still be discussed by the Senate. She requested they be debated widely within the Teaching Framework and not decided through the Curriculum Review as University policy. The PVC RAS offered to discuss the point with the member outside of the meeting.

14.13   The Executive Dean, WELS commented that she fully understood the concerns of the President, OU Students Association and as a VCE member wanted to reassure her that the University cared very deeply about disadvantaged students. She explained that the SFTP was working to divert resources to student support and enhancing the student experience and it was a great incentive for the University to help students with digital advances. She considered that the Principles helped the University to do this.

14.14   Mr D Knowles, seconded by Mr G Williams proposed an amendment, in accordance with Standing Orders 68-73, to the Learning and Teaching Principles paper (S-2018-01-08).

14.15   This amendment stated:

The Senate is asked to agree to defer approval of the Learning and Teaching Principles, but to allow the work on the Teaching Framework to proceed with these draft principles as a working basis. When the Teaching Framework is ready, both the Principles and the Framework will be discussed in detail, and at that point, Senate will be asked to approve both papers, possibly after amendment.

14.15   In proposing the amendment, Mr Knowles believed that it was essential for the Senate to be appraised of the details of implementation before the Principles could be approved. He also considered that from hearing comments during the debate the Principles were not yet ready for approval.

14.16   The PVC LTI responded by acknowledging the importance of the detail of implementation but she did not consider that members of the Senate had expressed strong opposition to the Principles themselves.   Professor Rymer explained that the Academic Strategy, approved by the Senate, had set a strategic direction for the University, and the Principles would inform the development of the Teaching Framework. She urged the Senate to reject the amendment.

14.17   A call to move to a vote was received from the floor.

14.18   In response to a question the University Secretary clarified that any matter approved by the Senate would not normally be re-visited within a twelve month period.

14.19   The amendment was **carried** with the following votes recorded:

   For the amendment: 47
   Against   29
   Abstentions   4

14.20   At this point, Dr Hilary Partridge informed the Senate that she would withdraw her proposed amendment to Principle 5, set out in paper S-2018-01-08A.   A member suggested it be deferred until the next meeting and discussed during the debate on the Teaching Framework. The University Secretary confirmed that in accordance with the Standing Orders, the proposer of the amendment was required to seek the permission of the Senate to withdraw it.   A member considered that the amendment was very important and requested it be debated.   Another member considered it important for the Senate to receive clarification as to how the PVC LTI would proceed in respect of the Principles in the light of the debate at the meeting.

14.21   The Senate **agreed** that it would not proceed to a vote on the withdrawal of the amendment.

14.22   The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the PVC LTI and her team would consider the Principles and Framework together in the light of the amendment agreed in minute 14.19. Mr Horrocks stated that the proposed amendment to Principle 5 would be considered as part of the continuing work on the Principles and Framework.

Action: PVC LTI

15   MOTION: STUDENTS FIRST TRANSFORMATION PROJECT   S-2018-01-11

15.1   Dr J Hall proposed the motion, calling for increased academic engagement and moderation of the timetable for the Students First Transformation Programme, which was seconded by Professor H MacQueen. He explained that all organisations faced change which was associated with significant risk. He did not consider that the University was special in its ability to change or be immune from the risks associated with it. The Senate therefore urged VCE to take all due care to minimise the risk of failure of outcomes or of process. He pointed out that VCE would have observed the disquiet of academic staff although most understood the need for change and only wished to be able to trust that the right changes would be made in the right order. This motion was the basis for deeper constructive academic engagement to reduce the risk of failure.

15.2   Dr Hall welcomed the University's recent programme of engagement, through the Senate workshops and the Vice-Chancellor's regular messages to staff, but felt more should be done.

15.3   The University sustained itself by creating value for others, primarily students through teaching. Changes which negatively affected its mission and reputation risked damaging its sustainability. Understanding how this value was created was a baseline to understanding the changes that could be made and what should be preserved so as to protect the unique Open University brand. Dr Hall believed that the current system had discharged the University's mission and served the student community well over five decades, it was only the recent funding changes that caused the number of students wishing to study to fall dramatically from their peak, reducing cash flow to the point of approaching unsustainability. It was important not to rush to judgement that what exists now was wholly without value but seek to value both old with new when determining which changes were desirable.

15.4   Dr Hall proposed that to ensure that the overall change would be beneficial for the students that have inspired it and for whom it was named, VCE needed to present evidence in terms of its effect on student retention, progression and satisfaction. The changes should also preserve the University's distinctive social mission and be sensible in terms of the sector in respecting the external and internal constraints placed on it.

15.5   Dr Hall stated that the Senate needed to see evidence to be able to discharge its role as the continuous academic authority for the University, to check the rational basis for decisions, the impact of change within the academic scope, and how the proposals would fit together and how they would be reached from the current state. In the areas where the evidence was weak then the motion provided a more logical, rational and argued approach to change that would reduce the risk of failure. It was also important for VCE to present their detailed timetable for change to the Senate so that the human impact of the change could be examined and discussed.

15.6   The motion urged VCE to engage with academics and other change agents in other universities to understand their successes and to avoid their failures and asked VCE to give the Senate and the broader academic community the means to help it achieve the success desired.

15.7   The motion was accepted without proceeding to a vote.

16   MOTION: OU PROFESSORS   **S-2018-01-12**
                                                                    S-2018-01-12B

16.1   Professor O Grell proposed the motion, calling for the discontinuation of the initiative to create five new University professorships, which was seconded by Mr G Williams. Professor Grell stated that he did not consider that the five professorships would add value to the University and considered them to be an exercise to promote the University externally. He was concerned that in the midst of significant reorganisation and reductions in expenditure, the creation of these posts demonstrated disregard for existing academic staff.   He expressed concern over the process by which they had been created and urged the University to support the future Research Excellence Framework (REF) submission and curriculum development by embedding professors in academic units. He considered this initiative to be poorly thought through and likely to result in costly failure.

16.2   The PVC RAS drew attention to paper S-2018-01-12B which described the process by which the posts were established and their future focus. Professor Hetherington emphasised that the academic community had been involved in the creation of potential subject areas for the posts. He assured the Senate that the subject areas selected would be credible academic areas, appropriate for submission to the REF, and the posts would be available to both internal and external applicants.

16.3   The seconder of the motion, commented that the stated aim of the posts, to provide academic leadership and strategic focus, was discourteous to the University's current professoriate. He also considered that a professor on appointment would expect an institutional "home" and a clearly defined role. These were not clear from the proposals. He viewed the timing of the announcement at the same time that modules were being reduced, as unacceptable.

16.4   Another member commented that the posts were likely to be created in important areas for the University but was concerned that the motion indicated a lack of trust. A representative of ALs had no objection to the creation of the posts but considered

the timing of their announcement to be wrong. The costs of the posts was likely to reach £1m and he believed this should be spent on projects for improving student support and progression.

16.5   Another member welcomed the intention to invest to renew the University's academic focus but was concerned that those appointed, if external, might not stay to support the University in its mission. He wished to see greater investment in academic staff at junior levels and urged more recruitment of early-career academics and provision of support to them to develop professionally at the University.

16.6   Following two counts, the motion was **not carried**:

For the motion: 31
Against   32
Abstentions   15

17   ACADEMIC MODEL FOR APPRENTICESHIPS   S-2018-01-13

17.1   A representative of ALs expressed disappointment that there still appeared to be a lack of clarity between principles 5 and 6 and the overall principle that apprenticeship students would not be treated differently to other students. The Director, Teaching, LTI explained that there was no intention for apprenticeship students to receive preferential treatment. However, requirements beyond the control of the University such as Apprenticeship Standards had to be addressed.

17.2   A member supported the principles and reiterated the view that in some situations apprenticeship students required different arrangements. For example, some apprenticeships required hours of study to be recorded and presented to external assessors. Another member welcomed the changes from the previous version presented.

17.3   The Chair, ALE, commented that many students had to manage two assessments due at the same time and the reference to avoiding clashes implied different approaches for apprenticeship students. The Director, Teaching LTI explained that some extension periods would be permitted but apprenticeship students had to complete their studies in a timely way to fulfil the requirements of their programmes.

17.4   The Senate **approved** the principles for the academic model for apprenticeships.

18   PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE FRAMEWORK PERFORMANCE REPORT
                                                              S-2018-01-14

The Senate **approved** the Professional Doctorates Framework.

18   EMERITUS PROFESSORS   s-2018-01-15

The Senate:

a)   **approved** the recommendation from the Chairs' Subcommittee that the title of Emeritus Professor be awarded to Professor Elizabeth Silva, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS); and

b)   **noted** that on 20 December 2017, the Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor Kevin Hetherington took Chair's Action to award the title posthumously to Professor Chris Bissell (STEM)

19   ANNUAL REPORT ON ACADEMIC PROMOTIONS   **S-2018-01-16**

19.1   A member welcomed the presentation of the report to the Senate.   She commented that the new promotions scheme was introduced to enable the University to become a leader in equality for promotions however the data in the report did not appear to present that position. She expressed concern over the numbers of women promoted to professor and senior lecturer compared to the numbers of men promoted since the new scheme was introduced. She also commented that the paper showed varying success rates between different profiles and different genders, in particular, the low success rate of women applying for promotion under the teaching route. The paper also showed that only four Staff Tutors were promoted in 2017.   She asked whether the two facts were related and whether the promotion criteria for Staff Tutors would be examined.

19.2   Another member commented that the success rate for staff submitting cases under the Teaching profile appeared low relative to those for the Research and the Research and Teaching profiles. He considered this to be of concern especially as the University was encouraging the development of teaching pathways. He felt this profile and the criteria within it required further examination.

19.3   Another member also drew attention to the low success rate of cases submitted under the Teaching profile. She was concerned that if research activity at the University was reduced then more staff would be considering this profile for promotion. The member also requested that further analysis be presented including more historical data, breakdown by academic unit and analysis of other characteristics.   She enquired what action would be taken to address the issues arising from the report.

19.4   Another member enquired whether the closure of the English regional offices and transfer of staff tutors (many of whom were women) to homeworking had had an effect on opportunities for promotion.

19.5   The PVC RAS and chair of the Academic Staff Promotions Committee (ASPC) commented that the ASPC had scrutinised the data and was concerned about similar issues to those raised by members of the Senate.   The Committee continued to monitor the situation however it was difficult to identify clear trends as the criteria had changed from 2015 and direct comparisons were not possible.   Professor Hetherington acknowledged the concerns raised in relation to the Teaching profile and reported that the Sustainable Academic Communities team was undertaking a review. A wider review of the promotion scheme would be undertaken in due course. Professor Hetherington also informed the Senate that the ASPC had issued additional guidance last year to help staff tutors interpret the promotion profiles.

19.20   A member repeated her request for the presentation of more historical data. The PVC RAS reiterated that comparisons would be very difficult as the data would relate to two different sets of promotion criteria, however he would bring further information back to the Senate.

Action: PVC RAS

20   THE COUNCIL   **S-2018-01-17A**
                                                                  S-2018-01-17B

The Senate **noted** the minutes and confidential minutes of meeting of the Council held on 28 November 2017.

22   CHAIRS ACTION   **S-2018-01-18**

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

23   FUTURE ITEMS OF BUSINESS   **S-2018-01-19**

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

24   DECLASSIFICATION OF PAPERS

Post meeting clarification:

Confidential paper to remain classified as confidential:
S-2018-01-7B: Confidential minutes of the meeting of the Council

Paper declassified
S-2018-01-15 Emeritus Professors

25   DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

Meetings will be held on the following dates:

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