



THE SENATE

Minutes

This paper presents the unconfirmed Minutes of the last meeting of the Senate held on Wednesday 20 June 2018 at The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes.

The Senate is asked to **approve** these Minutes as a correct record of the meeting.

Jonathan Nicholls
Incoming 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 20 June 2018
in the Hub Theatre, The Open University, Walton Hall

PRESENT:**1) Ex officio**

Professor Mary Kellett	Vice-Chancellor (Acting)
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 Devendra Kodwani	Executive Dean, Faculty of Business and Law
Professor Josie Fraser	Executive Dean, Faculty of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
Dr Sally Hayes	Executive Dean, Faculty of Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies (Acting)
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)**

Dr Cristina Chimisso	Dr Elaine Moohan
Dr Naoko Yamagata	Professor John Wolffe
Professor Ole Grell	Dr Helen Kaye
Dr Jovan Byford	Dr Anastasia Economou (remote)
Dr Deborah Drake	Dr Richard Heffernan
Professor David Johnson	Mr Matt Staples
Dr Daniel McCulloch	

Faculty of Business & Law (FBL)

Miss Carol Howells	Mr Mike Phillips
Dr Kristen Reid	

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

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

Professor Hilary MacQueen
Dr David Bowers
Dr Rachel Hilliam
Professor Andy Lane
Dr Toby O'Neil
Mr Brendan Quinn
Dr Magnus Ramage

Professor Claire Turner
Dr Leonor Barroca
Dr Stephen Burnley
Dr Hayley Ryder
Dr Gareth Williams
Dr Ann Walshe (remote)

Faculty of Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies (WELS)

Ms Annie Eardley (remote)
Dr Uwe Baumann
Mrs Anna Comas-Quinn
Professor Jan Draper
Dr Jackie Watts
Ms Tyrrell Golding

Dr Elodie Vialleton
Professor Regine Hampel
Dr Aravinda Guntupalli
Dr Verina Waights
Dr Indra Sinka

Learning and Teaching Innovation (LTI) (Academic)

Mr Chris Edwards

Professor Eileen Scanlon

Other Central Units

Dr Liz Marr

3) Associate Lecturers

Mrs Frances Chetwynd
Dr Clare Spencer
Dr Hilary Partridge
Mr Tim Parry

Dr Fiona Aiken
Mr David Knowles
Mr John Eastwood (alternate)

4) Students Appointed by Open University Students Association

Mrs Nicola Simpson
Ms Lorraine Adams
Miss Fanni Zombor (alternate)

Mr Rory Powell
Mr Peter Cowan (alternate)
Dr Barbara Tarling

5) Academic-related Staff

Mr Michael Street
Ms Pat Atkins
Mrs Joanne Smythe
Mr Billy Khokhar (remote)
Mrs Clare Ikin
Mr Jake Yeo

Mr Denzil DeSouza
Ms Elaine Walker
Mr Phil Berry
Mrs Maria Crisu
Mrs Selena Killick
Mrs Kate Signorini

6) Co-opted members

Mr Christopher Turner
Mr John D'Arcy
Ms Susan Stewart
Mrs Louise Casella

Dr David Knight
Mr Tony O'Shea-Poon
Mrs Mary Kirby

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

Mr Jonathan Nicholls, Incoming University Secretary
Ms Kathryn Baldwin, Vice-Chancellor's Business Manager
Mr Lucian Hudson, Director of Communications
Dr Caitlin Adams, UCU Branch Vice-President

Mr Kit Power, UCU Academic Related staff officer (deputising for Lesley Kane)
Mrs Jenny James, Manager, Governance, Academic Policy and Governance
Ms Anna Henderson, Head of Student Support, Academic Services
Ms Akila Kassam, Team Assistant, Academic Services
Ms Anna Barber, Acting Director of Strategy, Strategy & Information (for item C2)
Mrs Susie Palmer-Trew, Head of Portfolio, Strategy & Information (for item C2)
Dr Diana Stammers, Director Academic Strategy (for item C4 and C5)
Ms Jacky Hinton, Academic Lead, SFTP (for item C4 and C5)

APOLOGIES:

Appointed

2) Central Academic Units

Faculty of Business and Law (FBL)

Dr Sharon Slade

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

Dr Karen Olsson-Francis

Dr Jon Hall

Faculty of Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies (WELS)

Mr Mick McCormick

Learning and Teaching Innovation (LTI) (Academic)

Dr Anne Adams

3) Associate Lecturers

Dr Walter Pisarski

4) Students

Ms Danielle Smith

Miss Claire Smith

5) Academic-related Staff

Mr Mike Innes

Miss Barbara Poniatowska

In attendance

Mr Andrew Law, Director, Open Media Unit

1 WELCOME AND THANKS

- 1.1 The Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor Mary Kellett welcomed Dr Jonathan Nicholls, Incoming University Secretary who was attending the meeting as an observer.
- 1.2 Mr Matt Staples was also welcomed as an appointment to a casual vacancy in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS).
- 1.3 On behalf of the Senate, the Vice-Chancellor thanked Dr Gareth Williams and Dr Rachel Hilliam who were attending their last meeting of the Senate as they were leaving the University. Professor Kellett also thanked Mrs Nicola Simpson, whose term of office as President of the OU Students Association had come to an end.
- 1.4 The Acting Vice-Chancellor also thanked all those whose Senate membership ended on 31 August 2018 for their service and dedication.

2 MINUTES

S-2018-02-M

- 2.1 The Senate **approved** the minutes of the meeting of the Senate held on 18 April 2018 subject to the inclusion of the following amendments shown in ~~strike through~~ or *italics*:

Minute 6.13

The member enquired how this work on the Review could be progressed as a pause and review had been announced on the SFTP. He was concerned that this indicated governance processes had failed and that rushing into decisions could have critical implications. ~~A member believed that at a workshop it had been stated that Senate would decide on the outcomes of the Curriculum Review however this appeared now not to be the case. A member stated that at a Senate workshop held in September 2017, it had been noted that Senate would decide on the outcomes of the Curriculum Review.~~

3 MATTERS ARISING

S-2018-03-01

The Senate **noted** the responses to the matters arising from the minutes of the meeting of the Senate held on 18 April 2018.

4 REPORT FROM AND QUESTIONS TO THE CHAIR

- 4.1 The Acting Vice-Chancellor welcomed members to the meeting and reflected that at the last meeting she had been in post three days. She had now been 10 weeks in the role of Acting Vice-Chancellor and had spent a great deal of time with colleagues across the University engaging and listening. Professor Kellett acknowledged that whilst there was still considerable work to be done, she had seen many positive signs of healing and trust being rebuilt.
- 4.2 Professor Kellett informed the Senate that this would be the last meeting for the University Secretary Mr Keith Zimmerman. She thanked him for his service, both to Senate and to the University and his immense contribution and dedication and wished him well.

External developments

- 4.3 The success of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) pilot had demonstrated the University's ability to showcase the excellence and distinction of its teaching. Professor Kellett thanked colleagues in Learning Teaching Innovation (LTI) and faculties for their hard work.
- 4.4 In Scotland, the student loan threshold was rising to £25,000 (£3,000 increase) as part of a package of measures launched in response to the review of student support. A consultation would also take place later in the year to examine the need for greater support for part time students which had been raised by the University.
- 4.5 In Northern Ireland another increase in funded places for nursing students had been confirmed and two nursing students were joint winners of the Health Care Support Worker Award at this year's Royal College of Nursing (RCN) Northern Ireland Nurse of the Year Award. Nursing apprenticeships overall were developing well and a successful bid to the Kent Community NHS was complete. Professor Kellett considered this to be a testament to impressive collaborative work across the University.
- 4.6 The Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation, Mr Sam Gyimah referenced the University extensively during a recent speech at the Higher Education Policy Institute annual conference and referred to its track record on innovation via OpenSTEM laboratories and describing it as "not just a great national institution but as essential to our future higher education landscape". Mr Gyimah also referred to the importance of value for money, increasing competition and a focus on salary metrics in the higher education sector. Professor Kellett emphasised that such a focus emphasised the challenging landscape for the University and the imperative need for appropriate strategic change to enable it to innovate and thrive.

Internal news

- 4.7 Work had begun on the re-accreditation process for the Middle States Commission on Higher Education which was due in 2020. The Faculty of Business and Law (FBL) had confirmed it had received EQUIS reaccreditation for another three years which was an excellent result.
- 4.8 Researchers from the Centre for Electronic Imaging in the Faculty of Science, Technology and Mathematics (STEM) had been awarded a £1m research grant by the UK Space Agency to develop a new prototype camera to observe the Earth from Space. A project led by Dr Manish Patel, STEM, had been awarded £274k by the UK Space Agency to assess whether gases were released into the atmosphere after a seismic event on Mars. In FBL, a project has been awarded almost £100,000 to evaluate the usefulness of "virtual field trips" to help strengthen the social resilience of groups of young people aged nine to 11 across England, who are considered some of the most vulnerable to hate and extremism. Professor Kellett commented that this inspiring work reminded everyone how research had a vital role to play in the innovation the University prided itself upon, as well as strengthening its social mission.

Working together

- 4.9 The Acting Vice-Chancellor reflected that at the last meeting she had asked the Senate for a period of grace to review and reset parts of the Students First Transformation Programme and establish new and better ways of working. Professor Kellett explained that she had, for this reason, postponed launch of a proposed Senate Forum until there had been a chance to see how new approaches in Senate were working. She acknowledged the need for a space for open and deep

conversation amongst Senate members and hoped that such conversations would take place in meetings. She was also concerned of the workload consequences of forum engagement.

5 ACADEMIC QUALITY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE S-2018-03-02

Minute 3.4

5.1 The President, OU Students Association informed the Senate that students were disappointed by the inconsistent approach to the recording of tutorials across the University. Students were accessing recordings in greater numbers than participating and it was important they were able to access them.

5.2 The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching Innovation) (PVC-LTI) responded that work was underway to identify the types of events the University should record for the 18J presentations.

Minute 9.1

5.2 The President, OU Students Association requested that the issue of a standardised approach across all Teaching Committees for appropriate provision for Postgraduate Research (PGR) students be resolved promptly. She was concerned that the issue had been under discussion for some time without resolution. A member supported the concern expressed and emphasised the need for consistent arrangements.

5.3 The Chair of the Academic Quality and Governance Committee drew attention to minute 9.4 which explained that several issues required resolution but that the matter was being considered and would be considered again by the Committee.

5.4 The Senate **noted** the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Academic Quality and Governance Committee held on 24 May 2018.

6 RESEARCH COMMITTEE S-2018-03-03

The Senate **noted** the unconfirmed Minutes of the meeting held by correspondence (via email) between 19 March and 13 April 2018 and the special meeting of the Research Committee held on 17 May 2018.

7 HONORARY DEGREES COMMITTEE S-2018-03-04

The Senate:

- a) **noted** the arrangements for conferment of honorary degrees at ceremonies being held during 2018
- b) **approved** en bloc the list of nominations recommended by the Honorary Degrees Committee for the award of Honorary Degrees in 2019 and at future degree ceremonies

8 ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE REPORT S-2018-03-05

8.1 The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Academic Strategy) (PVC RAS) introduced the report and emphasised the importance of the scrutiny of the report by the Senate.

8.2 A member commented on the set of new indicators on OU degree classification, alongside the UK sector averages and was concerned that the University was considerably below the sector average. He enquired whether there were any explanations for the disparity or whether any action was being taken to address it.

The PVC RAS confirmed that the issue was a matter of concern for the University. Concern was also being expressed in the sector over grade inflation and indicators were due shortly from the Office for Students (OfS). The PVC LTI informed the Senate that Module Teams were aware of the issue and initiatives were in place to support students to succeed in their modules.

- 8.3 Another member queried the significance of the measure relating to degree classifications to the University. He suggested that the report in future attempted to highlight the significance of changes, comparisons to benchmarks or the implications for budgets or quality. The PVC RAS agreed to look further at this suggestion. A representative of the OU Students Association sought further information on the strategies in place to address issues of retention as she was concerned they were not addressing the problem. She also pointed out that the presentations for comparison were different from those in the Report presented to the Senate in April 2018. The PVC RAS explained that the information presented aimed to provide the Senate with the most recent data and this might present difficulties in identifying trends. He agreed to consider this further

Action: PVC RAS

- 8.4 Another member drew attention to the information relating to academic career stages, particularly the decrease in the proportion of female professors compared to male professors over the last three years. She requested that the University examine this and investigate the ways in which female academics could be supported in their careers. The PVC RAS confirmed that the forthcoming review of the promotion scheme would include issues such as this.
- 8.5 A representative of associate lecturers (ALs) expressed concern over the low take up of degree apprenticeships offered by the University and requested a re-evaluation of the investment in this initiative. The PVC RAS acknowledged the concerns expressed and explained that there appeared to be many reasons affecting apprenticeships nationally including bureaucracy of the process and employers' decisions over the use of the Government levy for apprenticeships. Apprenticeships were still a new development in the sector and it was hoped that the Government's review of post-18 education would reflect on some of these issues. The University was monitoring its own applications very closely against its targets.
- 8.6 The Chair, Associate Lecturer Executive (ALE) commented that it was essential to ensure regulations were kept up to date and drew attention to an issue with TM111, where several students were prevented from registering onto a new module. The Acting Director, Students confirmed she was aware of the issue and that it was being investigated.
- 8.7 The Director, Teaching (LTI) explained that as part of its registration with the Office for Students (OfS) the University was required to submit an Access and Participation Plan. Some areas such as award of degrees would therefore be open to external scrutiny so it was essential that progress was made. Another member considered that the University used an antiquated method of classifying degrees and that many other universities used a different weighted approach. He believed that the University should adopt this different approach and it would result in it being more in line with the sector. Another member agreed it was timely to be considering this issue as it also had implications for academic quality.
- 8.8 The Senate **noted** the report on academic performance.

9 STUDENTS FIRST TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME (SFTP):

A: CRITICAL REVIEW UPDATE

S-2018-03-06

- 9.1 The Acting Director of Strategy introduced the paper and explained the objectives and proposed outputs from the Critical Review. She emphasised that a key challenge for the project was the pace required to complete the work in time to report to the meeting of Council on 17 July 2018 so to avoid compromising on quality, significant resource had been directed to the Review. The independence and transparency of the Review was emphasised. Surveys had been run, interviews conducted and many focus groups had been organised reaching hundreds of members of staff.
- 9.2 Significant amounts of feedback had been received and was currently being reflected upon. However, some early themes were emerging and these included an appreciation of the need to change and evolve, greater clarity on the financial context for the savings targets required, the pace of the proposed change and the extensive use of consultants. There had also been a recognition of the work already undertaken and a strong desire for the University to learn lessons from the recent events and move forward in a more positive way. The Review had also received responses relating to the weight of the infrastructure surrounding the SFTP and the separation of the transformation and business as usual activities. Questions had also been raised over the University's capacity and capability to deliver change on the scale proposed and the role of the project sponsors. The feedback had also included references to the culture and leadership of the University and a desire to see progress with previous work carried out on the organisation and culture of the University. The Review Team was currently analysing these themes to produce positive recommendations from them for the future. The Acting Director of Strategy commented that the Review had been very valuable as honest opinions had been received on the process of change from all staff groups and the OU Students Association.
- 9.3 A member asked for any predictions on the likely outcomes of the Review, for example, what might happen to various elements of the SFTP. The Acting Director of Strategy explained that recommendations would be drafted and it was likely some would relate to the process of undertaking change in the University. Areas to be considered would be agility, the idea of testing and pilots for proposals, and benchmarking of best practice from other institutions. These would be independent recommendations and the management of the University would be invited to respond to them. Another member reflected that one key area to be addressed was how staff were valued and empowered. The Acting Director of Strategy agreed that the Review would look at identifying more inclusive and transparent ways of working and colleagues in Human Resources (HR) would be pursuing issues such as culture and working together.
- 9.4 Another member thanked the Review Team for their efforts and emphasised that it was important to learn from recent experiences. He was also concerned that the data collected from the Staff Survey in December 2017 was not shared sufficiently widely to enable the University to identify early signs of issues. He suggested that the data from the surveys in the Review must be used to ensure a better understanding of staff experiences. Another member commented that communication on the outcomes of the Review must not simply be issued from senior management. He considered that especially in relation to any recommendations on cultural change, engagement could be more positive if team colleagues were able to lead to encourage adoption. Another member emphasised the importance of not

establishing a blame culture. It was important to understand exactly why issues arose but apportioning blame would not help the University to move forward. The Acting Vice-Chancellor assured the Senate that lessons would be learned from the process enabling the University to look to the future.

Tea Break

B: MOTION

S-2018-03-07

- 9.5 The proposer of the motion, M Ramage, reminded the Senate that the motion had been submitted to the last meeting however it had been deferred to this meeting. It was now being proposed again with some changes to reflect recent circumstances facing the University. He expressed his appreciation to the Acting Vice-Chancellor for listening to colleagues' concerns and to the Acting Director of Strategy and her team for their work so far with the Critical Review of the SFTP. He emphasised that the motion should not be seen as criticism of their efforts or an attempt to undermine them, but he wished to see a clear line drawn under the Programme. He felt that the motion was a demonstration of the action Senate should take to express its concerns in relation to the SFTP and its effects on academic activities within its remit. It would also strengthen the work of the Critical Review.
- 9.6 Dr Ramage called for the Senate to support the motion calling for the end of the Students First Transformation Programme in title and infrastructure. He did not believe that the University was in crisis and, although acknowledging a need to reduce costs, he firmly believed that the University could adapt and change without the need of an all-encompassing programme which risked turning it into something very different from its original mission.
- 9.7 A member commented that whilst she sympathised with the spirit of the motion she was concerned that it might prevent or undermine the Critical Review conducting its work. She thus felt she could not support it and suggested that the Senate waited until the Review had reported its outcomes. The Director, Academic Policy and Governance reminded the Senate of its remit and powers which related to academic policies and strategies and was concerned that part (b) of the motion referring to "academic elements" of the Review was unclear.
- 9.8 Another member expressed his support for the motion and considered that it was very important for Senate to support it to demonstrate to the rest of the University that trust was being rebuilt. He was concerned that the wider University would doubt the role and conscience of the Senate if it did not express its views through this motion. Another member considered that the motion would empower the Critical Review in its work. He agreed with the previous view that the University was not in crisis but he felt it was essential for a very clear line to be drawn under the SFTP and this motion would demonstrate that. He requested that future projects should be based on collegiate decision making and good University practice. An online participant sought clarification on the wording of part (d) of the motion particularly the use of "reformed" in relation to those workstreams continuing. She also commented that she had been involved in the HR workstream and considered it had involved consensual and collegiate decision making.
- 9.9 The Director, OU in Scotland felt unable to support the motion although understood the sentiment behind it. She considered that some of the outputs of the workstreams were very positive and productive and she commended outputs reflecting the University's role across four nations. The LTI Director, Research did not consider it necessary to pass the motion particularly as some elements of it were unclear as

presented. He urged the Senate not to pre-empt the report of the Critical Review. The Director, Teaching, LTI supported this stance. She reflected that some of the criticism of the SFTP had been that it was not sufficiently evidence based. She was therefore concerned that passing the motion would pre-empt the outcomes of the Review without conclusive evidence.

- 9.10 Another member reflected that the motion was difficult to consider. He agreed with some of the intentions and believed that the University needed to halt some developments such as increased online activity and less face to face support. However, it was challenging to encapsulate the right sentiments in the drafting of motions and he wished to hear the outcomes from the report of the Critical Review. He also reflected that in the past Senate rarely considered motions. He was concerned that motions were restrictive and he hoped Senate could return to a position that was more agile and flexible.
- 9.11 Another member said that he supported the motion very strongly. He was concerned that confidence within the University was still very low and although tentative steps had been taken to restore it, there was still considerable work to be done. He considered that the proposing of motions to the Senate reflected a culture of not listening to staff and that this motion would not undermine the Critical Review but was required to bring an end to a crisis period for the University. Another member emphasised that the motion did not call for the closure of workstreams producing positive outcomes so he saw no reason to oppose it. He considered the title of the Programme to be very toxic for the University as staff saw it as the very core of their roles to put students first.
- 9.12 Another member considered that the motion was the Senate's last opportunity to make a judgement on the SFTP. He believed that given the strength of feeling at the last meeting, it was essential that the Senate made a formal statement in the form of the motion. Another member reinforced this point and considered that supporting the motion would send a clear message that the period of the SFTP was over. He felt it was essential for Senate to pass the motion to demonstrate its effectiveness.
- 9.13 Professor J Wolffe, seconded by Dr E Moohan proposed an amendment to the motion that the first six points be voted upon but that the second four points be deferred pending the outcome of the Critical Review of the SFTP.
- 9.14 A member pointed out that the Standing Orders of the Senate stated that the Chair could refuse an amendment which had the effect of negating the original motion. He considered that the amendment proposed did substantially change the original motion proposed and asked the Chair to rule it out.
- 9.15 The Acting Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the amendment would be refused in accordance with Standing Order 69.
- 9.16 The Acting Vice-Chancellor requested the Senate vote on the motion as proposed in paper S-2018-03-07
- 9.17 The motion was **carried** with the following votes recorded:

For the motion:	39
Against	31
Abstentions	18

10 CURRICULUM PORTFOLIO REVIEW

A: MOTION

S-2018-03-10A

B: FINANCES

S-2018-03-10B

- 10.1 The proposer of the motion, D Knowles, did not believe that the explanations of savings as a result of the planned reductions in curriculum set out in paper S-2018-03-10B were sufficiently robust and considered that it was essential that the University considered the issue of the cost of module production and delivery. He was concerned that the Curriculum Review did not address this fundamental issue. He emphasised that he saw no reason to reduce curriculum in presentation in November 2018 as he did not consider modules in presentation incurred costs for the University. In paragraph 15, where examples of previous curriculum withdrawals had been given, there was no indication of savings or whether the withdrawals had been considered successful. Dr Knowles informed the Senate that he could see no justification for use of the multiplier of three stated in the paper. He was also concerned that some of withdrawals could adversely affect employability or equality of opportunity for students. He considered that the approach was incorrect and he urged the Senate to support the motion in paper S-2018-03-10A.
- 10.2 A member did not support the motion as he did not consider it to be factually correct and commented that modules in presentation did incur costs. He also pointed out that some of the curriculum being proposed for withdrawal attracted very small numbers of students which was simply not financially sustainable for the University. He believed that other opportunities existed for the University to grow its curriculum such as in non-accredited learning or continuing professional development although systems would need to be able to support such initiatives.
- 10.3 Another member expressed his concern that the University's curriculum appeared less rich than that of its competitors. He also considered there to be a significant range of uncertainty in the figures presented in relation to the numbers of students potentially lost due to curriculum cuts.
- 10.4 Another member considered it important for the Senate to discuss this issue, however he opposed the motion. The proposals for reductions in curriculum applied to small study programmes and it was essential that the University made financial savings. The decisions had undergone a rigorous process of scrutiny in academic units and he hoped in the future there would be ways to ensure the curriculum was more flexible. Another member supported this view and considered that the cuts were not to the scale suggested in the motion. He felt that the University should continually be reviewing its curriculum as a business as usual activity. He was aware that students had been informed of changes to the curriculum and urged the Senate to reject the motion. A representative of the OU Students Association agreed and accepted that the University needed to introduce changes which had progressed through the correct channels so should not be reversed. Another student representative pointed out that the information on teach out periods was incorrect on student facing websites and required correction.
- 10.5 The Executive Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) welcomed the opportunity for Senate to discuss these issues. He expressed his regret that curriculum had to be reduced but did not support the motion as it did not recognise that new curriculum was being introduced, for example in music and cybersecurity. If the motion was carried, it could make it difficult for the University to introduce new curriculum in a diminishing market. He also pointed out that modules in presentation made a loss for the University financially as they incurred a share of infrastructure costs. The Executive Dean, Faculty of Business and Law (FBL) did not support the

motion and assured the Senate that teams in academic units had worked hard on the reviews. The proposals were not uninformed and passing the motion would undermine confidence in the Senate's substructure. Another member supported this view and commented that the proposals from his own faculty had been considered in a collegiate way. The decisions taken were difficult but necessary changes. This view was supported by another member who agreed that the changes to the curriculum were sensible and had been considered by the relevant governance bodies. He accepted that reductions needed to be made now and advised the Senate to focus on the Curriculum Plan for the future.

- 10.6 A member commented that the Senate had been requesting financial evidence for curriculum changes for some time however he did not consider that the paper presented was fit for purpose. It did not justify the use of the multiplier of 1:3 and gave no assurance that robust processes had been followed in the determination of savings. Another member supported this view and was very concerned that reducing curriculum meant a reduction in choices for students which could mean the University became less attractive. Information was also sought to how the savings would be implemented and sought assurance that reductions in academic services management and administration would be focussed on curriculum being withdrawn
- 10.7 The PVC RAS thanked members of the Senate for an informative discussion and acknowledged that making cuts to the curriculum was challenging. He emphasised that the vision in the Curriculum Plan was not for a smaller University but for a more efficient institution. The reductions in curriculum had been considered via a robust process of governance and he called on the Senate to reject the motion.
- 10.8 The proposer of the motion disputed the comments that the cuts were small and explained that he could see no short-term gain as the curriculum being cut had to progress through a teach-out process. He believed that academic units had been forced to make reductions without full discussion and there was no robust evidence that if modules were ceased there would be savings to administrative costs. He urged the Senate to support the motion.
- 10.9 The motion was **not carried** with the following votes recorded:

For the motion:	13
Against	56
Abstentions	12

11 CURRICULUM PLAN

S-2018-03-09

- 11.1 The PVC RAS introduced the Curriculum Plan for the University for the next five years for approval. Issues raised by members of the Senate at the meeting in April 2018 had been considered and an actions list was appended to the paper. The Plan was the culmination of many different inputs and contributions across the University and had been recommended for approval by the Education Committee. In response to specific issues raised previously, Professor Hetherington explained that the paper provided more information on the proposed cross-University oversight group for the curriculum portfolio. He emphasised that this group would be advisory to the Vice-Chancellor's Executive (VCE) and was not a formal governance body. He also clarified that certain curriculum designed to support the University's social mission would not satisfy the default gross contribution rate to generate a surplus against teaching costs.

- 11.2 A member acknowledged the revisions made to the Plan. She remained concerned over the role of the proposed cross-University oversight group for the curriculum portfolio and requested further information as to how the Senate would have oversight of its activities and how it linked into the governance structure. She sought reassurance that in its role in advising on approvals it would not over ride policies agreed by the Senate.
- 11.3 The President, OU Students Association welcomed the clarification in relation to the cross-University group and suggested that the wider issue of how management groups related to the governance structure be considered within the academic governance review due to take place in the autumn. She was supportive of the Plan but considered that the review date of 2023 was too far ahead. She was concerned that in a rapidly changing sector and markets, the University should be reviewing its curriculum plan more frequently.
- 11.4 A member queried the profile of OU students over the next five years and enquired how the profile was compiled. A representative of the OU Students Association suggested that the University should be more competitive in its targeting of students aged 18-22. He saw other universities competing for part-time students and felt the University should promote its curriculum to younger students at recruitment fairs etc as an alternative route for study. Another student representative pointed out that whilst the profile indicated that the average age of OU students was declining it did not make any reference to students wishing to study at the University at the equivalent to full-time levels.
- 11.5 The Director, Academic Strategy agreed that it would be helpful for the review of academic governance to examine the relationship between management groups and governance bodies. In respect of the proposed curriculum oversight group, she reiterated that this group would be advisory to VCE and would focus on providing a common oversight of the curriculum portfolio. The Academic Lead, Curriculum Plan and Review explained that the profile of students in the Plan had been built using trend data, surveys and other marketing information. She acknowledged that study at full-time intensity was a growing market and some initial marketing analysis was currently underway with representatives of the OU Students Association involved. Referring to the life of the Plan, it was acknowledged that the sector and markets could change but it would not be desirable to review the entire Plan on an annual basis. In response to questions, the Director, Academic Strategy explained that the detail on the calculation of the default gross contribution rate of 67% for new or replacement degrees was explained in information provided to members in advance of the last meeting of the Senate. Reviews of the Plan would be considered by the Education Committee, however a member commented that the Senate should also consider them.
- 11.6 A member noted the references to postgraduate (PG) curriculum on page 2 of the Plan and considered that in subject areas where PG curriculum was currently offered, the University was fulfilling the aspirations of the Plan. He also enquired whether the two pilot subjects for lower cost taught PG curriculum referred to on page 4 had been identified. The Academic Lead, Curriculum Plan and Review confirmed that this was still to be decided.
- 11.7 A member considered there was still ambiguity around the role of the oversight group for the curriculum portfolio and requested that members of the Senate should see its terms of reference. The University Secretary advised the Senate that VCE would approve the terms of reference of the oversight group and this would be reported back to the Senate.

11.8 Following a vote, the Curriculum Plan was **approved** by an overwhelming majority.

12 TEACHING INNOVATION EXCELLENCE: UPDATE S-2018-03-08

The Senate **noted** the update report on the work carried out by the Teaching Excellence and Innovation (TEI) workstream of the Students First Transformation Programme.

13 ACADEMIC STRATEGY: IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE S-2018-03-11

13.1 In response to a question, the PVC RAS assured representatives of ALs that the valuable work already carried out on the provision of tools to support academic workforce planning; and community-building work on integration of different elements of academic communities (paragraph 12 of the paper) would not be lost due to the pause in the Sustainable Academic Communities project. The President, OU Students Association supported this view and believed that some of the valuable work in involving students in academic communities should continue.

13.2 Another member enquired whether the University was still intending to develop a teaching focussed career path for academic staff as had previously been stated in the Academic Strategy. He also requested that the Academic Strategy be revised to ensure that its aims and overall vision were compatible with the announcement at the last meeting that research would continue to be a central component of the University's academic endeavour. The PVC RAS confirmed that it was still the intention to offer academics the opportunity to engage in teaching and scholarship and the most appropriate ways to do this were currently under review. He also informed the Senate that the Academic Strategy was not being revised. The Curriculum Plan approved earlier was an outcome of the Strategy and the Research and Scholarship Plans would come forward to the Senate in October for approval. The recommendations from the Critical Review of the SFTP would direct further activity.

13.3 The Senate **noted** the report on the implementation of the Academic Strategy

14 REGULATIONS FOR VALIDATED AWARDS S-2018-03-12

14.1 A member requested that reference to higher apprenticeships be included in the glossary. Another member queried why the opening paragraphs of the regulations differed with the regulations for dual awards clearly referring to an effective date of 1 September 2018. The regulations for single awards did not include this date. The Director, Open University Validation Partnerships agreed the addition to the glossary and explained that the wording of the regulations for single awards was different as they had been revised in 2017.

14.2 The Senate **approved** the amendments to the Regulations for Validated Awards of The Open University subject to the inclusion of the amendment in minute 14.1.

Post Meeting Note

A typographical error was identified in the glossary entries in Appendices 1 and 2 for "Direct Entry" and this was corrected after the meeting. The glossary entries therefore read (underlined text inserted):

Direct Entry

Exemption to stage of a programme without award of OU credit. Direct entry via stage exemption allows an applicant into Open University validated awards at level 5 or level 6 of an undergraduate qualification on the basis of completion of an appropriate certificated qualification from a recognised UK HE programme of study.

15 REPORT ON ACADEMIC PROMOTIONS S-2018-03-13

15.1 A member welcomed the announcement of the review of the promotions process and the provision of additional data. She commented however that it would be helpful to see numerical information and as well as percentages in the analysis. She also requested that data relating to individual promotion profiles be provided. Another member expressed concern over staff tutors and opportunities for promotion. The PVC RAS confirmed that the issues highlighted by members of the Senate would be examined in the review.

15.2 The Senate **noted** the report.

16 EMERITUS PROFESSOR S-2018-03-14

The Senate **approved** the recommendation from the Chairs Subcommittee that the title of Emeritus Professor is awarded to Professor Hazel Johnson, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

17 THE COUNCIL S-2018-03-15

17.1 A member drew attention to minute 6.7 and expressed his concern over the reference to the Council not being fully aware of the substance of the Students First Transformation Programme which had led to a lack of confidence amongst Council members to provide advice and guidance. He considered this to be a major failing and offered to provide further examples outside of the meeting.

17.2 The Acting Vice-Chancellor assured the Senate that the issues identified were being examined.

17.3 The Senate **noted** the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 22 May 2018.

18 CHAIRS ACTION S-2018-03-16

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

19 FUTURE ITEMS OF BUSINESS S-2018-03-17

The Senate **noted** the provisional items for the agenda for the meeting of the Senate on 10 October 2018.

20 DECLASSIFICATION OF PAPERS

Post meeting declassification:

Paper to remain classified as highly confidential:
S-2018-03-04-Appendix 2: Honorary Degrees

Paper declassified
S-2018-03-14 Emeritus Professors

21 DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

Meetings would be held on the following dates:

Wednesday 10 October 2018

Thursday 24 January 2019 (Note: Change of day)

Wednesday 3 April 2019

Wednesday 26 June 2019

Jonathan Nicholls
Incoming University Secretary

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