

Academic and Governance Services Restricted Minutes



Senate

19/17 A meeting of the Senate was held in G06 Chancellor's Building, on Thursday 27 June 2019 at 2.15 pm.

Present:

The Vice-Chancellor (Chair)

Professor Matthew Almond
Professor Helen Bilton
Professor Ingo Bojak
Professor Gavin Brooks
Dr David Carter
Dr Ann Chippindale
Dr Claire Collins
Professor Mark Fellowes
Dr David Field
Professor Richard Frazier
Professor Clare Furneaux
Professor Paul Glaister
Dr Rebecca Harris
Professor Chris Harty
Dr Lawrence Hill-Cawthorne
Professor Carmel Houston-Price
Dr Rebecca Jerrome
Professor Peter Kruschwitz
Dr Steve Langdon
Dr Tim Lees
Professor Elizabeth McCrum
Professor Gail Marshall
Professor Chuks Okereke
Dr Karen Poulter

Professor Susan Rose
Professor Jane Setter
Professor Simon Sherratt
Professor Catherine Tissot
Professor Julia Waters
Professor Adrian Williams
Professor Parveen Yaqoob
Professor Dominik Zaum

Students:

Molli Cleaver
Fifi Bangham
Gemma King
Zeid Sharif

Student Representatives:

William Page

In attendance:

Ms Louise Sharman (Secretary)
Dr Richard Messer
Deepa Govindarajan Driver

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed members to the Senate, and in particular the new RUSU officers for 2019/20.

The Vice-Chancellor paid tribute to the following who had died since the last meeting of the Senate:

Mr James 'Jim' Burns – Lecturer in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Management between 1971 and 1999.

19/18 The Minutes (19/01 - 19/18) of the meeting held on 6 March 2019 were approved.

19/19 Matters Arising

19/05 Report of the University Executive Board – Review of Modern Languages

Professor Fellowes informed the Senate that the detailed discussion at the last Senate had been reported in full to the Council. Council at its meeting on 18 March 2019 had discussed the Review of Modern Languages at length and had approved its recommendations.

The Senate noted that as a result of the Voluntary Redundancy Scheme it had not been necessary to undertake any compulsory redundancies.

Work had now commenced on implementing the merger between Modern Languages and IWLP. Professor Fellowes informed the Senate that the work was progressing well with colleagues being very constructive and engaging in a positive way. It was recognised that a considerable amount of work was required and that as such it had been agreed that 2019/20 would be a transition year and that the merger would happen more organically.

Professor Fellowes recorded his thanks to all those involved with the Implementation Group's work, particularly to Professor Gail Marshall.

Items for Presentation and Discussion

19/20 Update on the University of Reading Malaysia (Item 4)

The Senate received a presentation from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Professor Brooks) in respect of changes at the University of Reading Malaysia.

It was noted that it had been agreed by the Council and RUMAL that the University would refocus its campus in EduCity, Malaysia, on core subject areas and would increase collaboration between Malaysia and the UK. In particular that:

- UoRM would provide a more concentrated portfolio of foundation and undergraduate degree courses in business, real estate, finance, accounting, quantity surveying and psychology with a stronger emphasis on graduate employability, professional development and addressing industry demand.
- UoRM had also received accreditation for a new undergraduate Law degree, making it the only international branch campus in Malaysia to do so. The first cohort would be accepted from September 2019.
- The undergraduate Pharmacy course, 2 + “, would no longer accept new students. Students currently on this programme would be given the opportunity to transfer to the UK.
- All research activity would cease.

In addition, it was noted that:

- There had been leadership changes at UoRM, with enhanced scrutiny from the UK (weekly updates at University Executive Board).
- Cost efficiency measures were being driven locally and from the UK.
- Negotiations were in hand with the landlord.
- Student numbers had been reforecast.
- Staff numbers would be reduced.

The aim in the short to medium term that UoRM would become self-sustaining and would:

- focus on what the market in Malaysia wanted, namely programmes with strong graduate employment prospects.
- build compelling differentiators to attract students through additional certifications or industry opportunities
- carefully manage scale and cost delivery
- become teaching-centric rather than research-centric.

Members of the Senate asked a number of questions, as follows:

- The President of UCU asked for further information on the University's investment to be sent to her.

The Vice-Chancellor reminded the Senate that the Council had agreed a maximum cap for investment in UoRM of

. There were a number of variables in play, including ongoing discussions with the landlord, but work was in hand to ensure the investment stayed within the accepted plan.

- Had legal costs (internal and external) been factored into the new business plan?

Professor Brooks confirmed that they had.

- How UoRM was doing in comparison to other HEI branch campuses?

It was reported that all UK universities were finding recruiting students challenging at present.

It was noted that other branch campuses on EduCity were delivering specialist subjects and that there was no competition with UoRM in terms of subject mix.

- Concerns were expressed about the move to a teaching-centric campus and the cessation of research activities, and the impact that this would have on the recruitment of staff and staff morale. It was suggested that in selling

programmes, students were interested in being taught by staff from the UK who were at the forefront of their field. There was a danger that this could also impact student recruitment.

Professor Brooks informed the Senate that this was a difficult decision to take but pointed out that research didn't deliver the same level of overhead as teaching activity. He agreed to take the Senate's comments back to the RUMAL Board.

- Concerns were expressed about the inability to recruit sessional staff and the loss of specialist teaching, particularly at Part 3.

Professor Brooks assured the Senate that work was in hand with all Heads of Section to determine what was required in order to deliver the programmes so that no critical elements were lost.

- Could reporting structure to the UK be further improved to embed activities within home Schools?

Professor Brooks assured the Senate that this matter had been discussed in a lot of detail. It was important going forward that tight control was maintained on activities. In order to do this Mr Raimo, Professor Brooks and Ms Foley would be travelling regularly to Malaysia, in addition to regular meetings.

- What would happen to the remaining part of the building not being used by UoRM?

Within the original lease it was stipulated that the building could only be used for educational purposes and not by any business that could be in direct conflict with UoRM.

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- Given the reduction in staffing had any responsibility been taken by the Board either in Malaysia or the UK for what had taken place?

The Vice-Chancellor informed the Senate that some senior posts had been removed earlier than intended.

- Would students relocating to the UK meet the entry criteria?

Professor Brooks assured the Senate that all students who relocated met the entry requirements and that for the Pharmacy programme both professional accreditation bodies (UK and Malaysia) were content with the proposals.

- Given the scale of the work ahead it was suggested that a full-time member of staff be appointed to support UoRM.

It was reported that Wing Lam (Provost) would manage activities in Malaysia and that UoRM was a priority for Mr Raimo.

- The President of UCU asked whether other programmes were expecting an impact on recruitment.

It was reported that Law was unique, and there were no other 2+2 programmes.

- Had consideration been given to offering TESOL?

Professor Brooks replied that it had been considered but was not currently included in the new business model.

- Was UoRM well advertised?

It was acknowledged that marketing could be improved.

- Given the University's experience in Malaysia would this impact the Global Strategy and how overseas partnerships were undertaken?

The University would continue with a range of international partnerships/models e.g. NUIST, BIT.

A post project of the decision to open a campus in Malaysia had been undertaken and the lessons learned already shared with the Senate.

The Vice-Chancellor concluded the discussion. He reminded the Senate that RUMAL ran the business, but the University was the majority shareholder. This relationship had been complex at times, with some structures sitting in the way rather than enabling quick action.

The Council and UEB had discussed the future of UoRM at considerable length. It was recognised that not everything had progressed as well or expected in Malaysia. The University had considered closure as an option but had recognised the huge value the operation provided that it could be placed within a sustainable framework.

19/21 Report of the Vice-Chancellor (Item 5)

The Senate received the Vice-Chancellor's address to the Senate, noting in particular:

- a) University Strategy – there had been a good level of engagement following the consultation. 579 colleagues had submitted individual responses and 39 School/Function level responses. Students had been given the opportunity to take part through an online survey and through focus groups. In addition, 77 responses had been received from external stakeholders. A discussion on the draft strategy would take place at Council on 8 July 2019.

The Vice-Chancellor thanked all those who had contributed to the survey.

- b) Voluntary Redundancy and Next Steps – the Voluntary Redundancy scheme closed in March and all resulting changes would be implemented by the end of July 2019. The scheme would generate a saving of over £5m. Whilst the figure was less than that targeted it was good to see colleagues engage positively with the scheme.

There were several factors that would determine the University's financial health, the most important of which was student recruitment. Work was in hand to support Schools with their recruitment activity and to identify areas for growth. In addition, support would be given to cross boundaries and develop new modules and shared programmes and explore whether there were any structural or organisational changes required.

Finances still needed to be brought on a sustainable footing, and this might result in compulsory redundancies in some areas. This was not a step that would be taken lightly, and we would do everything reasonably possible to avoid redundancies. However, the University's finances were affected by factors over which it had little control, such as the review of higher education funding, increased pension costs and the economic impacts of Brexit. It was important to take stock of these changes before deciding next steps.

- c) Augar Review – the Review was the long-awaited report and series of recommendations designed to improve aspects of choice, value for money and access for students, as well as skills provision for the economy and a wider review of technical education. It was uncertain as to if and how the report's recommendations would be implemented.
- d) League Tables – The publication of the Complete University Guide in April showed that the University had gone down to 40 (from 32) and in the Guardian University Guide to 68 (from 46). Given the 25% weighting of NSS in the Guardian methodology, it could suggest that this explained the decline, and in particular the impact of student satisfaction during the Library refurbishment. However, the University needed to examine the full range of factors underlying this year's drop. Student satisfaction with feedback was a notable area of decline as was overall course satisfaction. In addition, in areas where the University had remained static, or achieved gains, these were not necessarily keeping pace with sector-wide improvements.

- e) UCU letter to USS employers – on 7 June 2019, UCU wrote to all universities with USS pension scheme members seeking confirmation that those institutions would not impose any benefit cuts and/or contribution increases or would fully cover any scheduled increases. In the absence of confirmation, the UCU would consider a trade dispute to exist between the University and UCU members from 19 June 2019.

The Vice-Chancellor was concerned that this approach undermined the Joint Expert Panel process that was agreed between employers and the UCU after last year's industrial action. The Vice-Chancellor had written to the UCU Head of Education to explain why the University could not agree to UCU's request.

- f) University of Reading Malaysia – the University had announced its commitment to the University of Reading Malaysia. Plans had been drawn up for significant changes to ensure that it would operate as a financially sustainable part of the University. On 19 June 2019 colleagues in Malaysia were informed of detailed restructuring plans. The restructuring would include significant cost saving measures, including a renewed focus on the most popular undergraduate courses and graduate employability; introduction of new undergraduate courses (including Law); discontinuation of the Pharmacy 2+2 programme and most postgraduate courses; and a move to occupy one half of the existing campus building in EduCity.

The President of UCU asked the Vice-Chancellor whether anyone had been censured in respect of NIRD.

The Vice-Chancellor informed the Senate that he had written to both the Charities Commission and the Office for Students. The Charities Commission had confirmed that as an exempt charity the Office for Students as regulator should take the matter forward. The Office for Students had also been informed via a reportable event. They had acknowledged receipt of the University's communication and had asked that a report be submitted at the conclusion of the University's processes.

The Senate were reminded of NIRDs charitable objectives around research into agriculture and food, and noted that NIRD was wholly owned by the University.

Items for report and approval

19/22 Report of the University Executive Board (Item 6)

The Senate received a Report of the meetings of the University Executive Board held on 25 February, 4, 11, 18, 25 March, 1, 8, 23, 29 April, 7, 13, 20, 28 May, 3 and 10 June 2019.

In regard to matters for recommendation 1) the Senate approved revisions to the Ordinances.

19/23 Report of the University Board for Teaching, Learning and Student Experience (Item 7)

The Senate received the Report of the meetings of the University Board for Teaching, Learning and Student Experience (UBTLSE) held on 19 March, 23 April, 14 May and 11 June 2019.

The Senate noted updates on:

- the University's Access and Participation Plan 2020/21 to 2025/26;
- the T&L Risk Register;
- the Board's consideration of the outcomes of the Review of Modern Languages;
- implications of the Voluntary Redundancy Scheme on the student experience;
- HEA Fellowship and equivalence;
- a review of branch campus/partner operation of student-facing policies;
- the Academic Tutor System Implementation Project.

In addition, the Senate noted that a number of policies had been introduced, or revised and updated since its last meeting, including:

- updated Criminal Convictions Disclosure Policy;
- the University's policy and procedures on Access by staff and students to security-sensitive material;
- Deceased Student Policy and Procedures;
- amendments to Section 6: Conduct of Assessment, Section 9: Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct and Section 30: Visiting Students of the Assessment Handbook, with immediate effect;
- revisions to the policy on Student Academic Representation and associated guidance notes, which are available in Section 4a of the Guide to Policies and Procedures for Teaching and Learning;
- the introduction of a Policy statement on non-contributory modules and guest attendance, which will be published in the Guide to Policies and Procedures for Teaching and Learning ahead of the 2019/20 academic session.

19/24 Report of the University Board for Research and Innovation (Item 8)

The Senate received and noted the report of the University Board for Research and Innovation.

In particular, the Senate noted proposed changes to the research and innovation governance structure from academic year 2019/20, subject to consideration of minor changes to membership. The structure aimed to address the identified lack of clear distinction between governance, strategy and delivery, high committee workloads and overlapping responsibilities. At the same time, ways or working

would be introduced that will increase transparency and encourage collaborative work across Functions and academic units. The Senate noted that two members would be appointed by the Senate to ensure an appropriate level of challenge.

Members of the Senate congratulated colleagues on the Research Impact Event. It was suggested that some of the case studies could be used at open/visit days.

19/25 Report of the Global Engagement Strategy Board (Item 9)

The Senate received and noted the report of the Global Engagement Strategy Board.

19/26 Global Recruitment and Admissions (Item 10)

The Senate received the second in a series of bi-annual reports submitted to the covering the work of the Global Recruitment and Admissions function. Whilst the first report of 2018/19 focussed on a statistical analysis of outturn and attainment of September/October 2018/19 entrants, this paper provided a high level forecast summary of expected intake for 2019/20 entry, together with an overview of activity delivered by each of the services within Global Recruitment and Admissions to achieve the forecast outturn. In doing so, there was a particular focus on the innovations delivered, as well as opportunities and challenges presented in meeting the University's aspirations for student growth.

The Senate noted changes to the membership of the Recruitment and Admissions Steering Group whereby Heads of School would now be directly involved in recruitment and admissions decision making and consideration of the function's activity, it was proposed that future reports to the Senate would focus solely of a latest summary of performance against recruitment targets.

Members of the Senate commented on the recent open day. It was suggested that:

- the atmosphere was dull and lacking feeling
- that consideration should be given to having a natural centre for events
- use of the dome should be reconsidered
- more emphasis could be made of our National Teaching Fellows – we teach you
- student societies could be paid the same as ambassadors
- more support functions were needed onsite e.g. cleaning, facilities

Professor Fellowes agreed to take these recommendations forward with the working group on student recruitment.

Items for note

19/27 Report of the Senate Standing Committee on Examination Results (Item 11)

The Senate received and noted a report from the Senate Standing Committee on Examination Results summarising cases since the last Senate.

19/28 Report of the Student Appeals Committee (Item 12)

The Senate received the Report of the meeting of the Student Appeals Committee held on 19 February and 9 May 2019 and noted the outcomes of the Committee's decisions.

19/29 Report of the Standing Committee of Academic Misconduct (Item 13)

The Senate received the Report of the meeting of the Standing Committee on Academic Misconduct outlining 17 cases received to date.

19/30 Report of the Standing Committee on Academic Engagement and Fitness to Study (Item 14)

The Senate received and noted the Report of the meeting of the Standing Committee on Academic Engagement and Fitness to Study.

19/31 Report of the Standing Committee on Fitness to Practise (Item 15)

The Senate received and noted the Report of the meeting of the Standing Committee on Fitness to Practise.

19/32 Report of the Standing Disciplinary Committee (Item 16)

The Senate received and noted the Report of the Standing Disciplinary Committee on disciplinary sanctions including those imposed in the Halls of Residence.

19/33 Report of the Joint Standing Committee of Council and Senate on Honorary Degrees (Item 17)

The Senate, for its part, approved the Report of the meeting of the Joint Standing Committee of Council and Senate on Honorary Degrees.

19/34 Items approved by Chair's Action (Item 18 a)

The Senate noted the following items had been approved by Chair's Action:

- That under the provisions of Ordinance B7 the title of Professor Emeritus/Emerita be conferred with effect from the date indicated on:

Professor Peter Cooper (30 April 2019)

Professor Martin Woodward (30 April 2019)

Professor Margot Gosney (30 April 2019)

19/35 Appointments to Committees and other bodies (Item 18 b)

In respect of appointments -

Joint Standing Committee of the Senate and the Council on Honorary Degrees:

- a) Three vacancies for Senate representatives on the Joint Standing Committee of the Senate and the Council on Honorary Degrees to serve until 31 July 2022.

Research Ethics Committee:

- a) Appoint Dr A. Thies to the Research Ethics Committee to serve until 31 July 2022.
- b) Re-appoint Dr G. Botting to the Research Ethics Committee to serve until 31 July 2022.
- c) Re-appoint Dr T. Lincoln to the Research Ethics Committee to serve until 31 July 2022.
- d) One vacancy remains

Joint University/UCU Committee:

- a) One vacancy remains

Personal Titles

- a) Appoint Professor Richard Frazier to the Personal Titles Committee to serve until 31 July 2020.

The University Secretary asked any members of Senate interested in joining a Committee to contact him directly.

19/36 Retirement of Professors (Item 18 c)

The Senate approved under the provisions of Ordinance B7 the title of Professor Emeritus/Emerita be conferred upon the following with effect from the date indicated:

Professor Alison Black (31 July 2019)
 Professor Bradford Hooker (31 July 2019)
 Professor Lynne Murray (31 July 2019)
 Professor Jill Porter (31 July 2019)
 Professor Susan Rose (31 July 2019)
 Professor Kathleen Ryan (31 July 2019)
 Professor Hugo Tucker (31 July 2019)
 Professor Lindy Grant (30 September 2019)

19/37 Other Retirements (Item 18 d)

The Senate approved that that the following be accorded the title of Honorary Fellow for a period of five years with effect from the date indicated:

Ms Geraldine Taylor (31 March 2019)
Nicholas Hollis (30 April 2019)
Dr Ann Parkinson (31 May 2019)
Dr Evelyn Fenton (31 May 2019)
Dr Jacqueline Laws (30 June 2019)
Alison Nader (31 July 2019)
Alison Nicholson (31 July 2019)
Karin Herbst (31 July 2019)
Pilar Gray-Carlos (31 July 2019)
Amparo McEwen (31 July 2019)
Dr Martin Bicknell (31 July 2019)
Ms Caroline Crolla (31 July 2019)

19/38 List of Meetings 2019-20

The Senate received the final version of the list of meetings for 2019-20 for its information.

19/39 Any other business

The Senate recorded its thanks to the outgoing RUSU officers and student representatives. The Senate also thanked all other Senators whose terms of office were coming to an end, and in particular Professor Glaister for 25 years continuous service on the Senate.

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Student representatives withdrew from the remainder of the meeting
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