

SENATE

Minutes of the meeting held at 14:00 on 23 NOVEMBER 2022, in Main Hall, International Politics Building.

Voting members: Prof Elizabeth Treasure, Vice-Chancellor; Prof Neil Glasser, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Earth and Life Sciences); Prof Colin McInnes, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation); Prof Qiang Shen, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Business and Physical Sciences); Professor Tim Woods, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience) (until minute 12); Dr Otar Akanyeti; Mr Thomas Bates; Professor Hazel Davey; Dr Sarah Davies; Professor Iain Donnison; Dr Patrick Finney; Mr Jonathan Fry, Chair of AU Branch of the CCC; Dr Sarah Higgins; Dr Aloysius Igboekwu; Dr Ffion Jones; Mr Dafydd Jones, UMCA President; Dr Alex Mangold; Dr Louise Marshall; Ms Jen Phipps; Dr Alexander Pitchford; Dr Heather Norris; Dr Samuel Raybone; Professor Eleri Pryse; Professor Phillipp Schofield; Dr Lucy Trotter; and Professor Reyer Zwiggelaar, Head of the Graduate School.

Non-voting members: Professor Iain Barber; Dr Cathryn Charnell-White; Professor Simon Cox; Dr Andrew Davies; Professor Andrew Evans; Dr Thomas Jansen; Professor Jamie Medhurst; Professor Helen Roberts, Director of Research Excellence and Impact and Dr Anoush Simon.

In attendance: Mrs Kate Wright, Information Services; Dr Gethin Rhys, Deputy Registrar; and Ms Emma Williams, Acting University Secretary and Academic Registrar.

Apologies for absence had been received from Professor Nigel Holt; Professor Anwen Jones, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences); Ms Aisleen Sturrock, President of the Students' Union; Ms Elizabeth Manners, Academic Affairs Officer, Students' Union; Professor Mererid Hopwood.

16. MATTERS RAISED BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

1. Welcome

1. The following were welcomed to their first meeting as Senate members:
 1. Mr Thomas Bates, non-academic staff member
 2. Ms Jackie Sayce, non-academic staff member.
 3. Professor Iain Barber, non-voting member, Department of Life Sciences.

2. Condolences

Sympathies were expressed following the deaths of:

1. Emeritus Professor Martin Barker, former Professor at the Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies;

2. Professor Ritchie Owendale, former member of staff at the Department of International Politics.

17. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared in relation to the business to be transacted during the meeting.

18. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RECEIVED

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2022 (SEN2223-022).

RESOLVED

2. That the minutes be confirmed as a correct record.

19. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

RECEIVED

A log setting out the progress made in taking forward decisions and actions agreed at the most recent Senate meeting, and outstanding actions from previous meetings (SEN2223-023).

NOTED

The updates provided in the decisions log.

53. Revisions to the draft Sustainability Plan would be discussed at the University Executive shortly, and presented to the next meeting of Senate. These would address issues of energy efficiency, electricity generation, tree planting, and a district heat project.

9.7 Guidance on the residency requirements of postgraduate students had been reviewed with particular attention to approved fieldwork, and would be published shortly. The item was closed.

9.8 The Students' Union had organised a series of events to highlight the risks of collusion, including a forthcoming discussion with student representatives before the end of term. The item was closed.

9.9 Academic Registry had updated the Regulations on Unacceptable Academic Practice, drawing attention to the distinction between research dissemination and the practice of having assessed work. The item was closed.

20. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to report.

21. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT TO SENATE

RECEIVED

Report by the Vice-Chancellor (SEN2223-024).

NOTED

1. The report consisted of three key parts: a highlight report; a planning and student enrolment report; and a communications report.
2. Recent accidents on Penglais had raised concerns around road safety, which the University would be discussing with the appropriate authorities. Members welcomed news of the development of a foot and cycle path between Penglais and Gogerddan.
3. An encouraging growth in overall student numbers was tempered by the under-recruitment of international students. The resulting budget shortfall would be addressed through non-recurrent savings during 2022/23, while work was underway to boost conversion rates in key departments with a potential for international growth. This would include the Department of Information Studies which had recently re-introduced full-time undergraduate courses. Healthcare and Veterinary studies were delivered within the Department of Life Sciences but presented separately to highlight their individual recruitment patterns.
4. 150th anniversary celebrations were underway, and highlights included a recent event in Malaysia at the University Chancellor had addressed a gathering of 130 alumni. There were also positive signs that the visit could offer new opportunities for partnerships and research.

22. RESEARCH AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

1. Report from Research and Innovation Committee

RECEIVED

Report by Research Impact Team (SEN2223-025).

NOTED

The report summarised the main items discussed during the Research Committee meetings held on 28 September 2022.

2. Annual Report on Research Ethics

RECEIVED

Report by Lisa Fisher, Research Ethics and Integrity Officer (SEN2223-026).

NOTED

1. Two allegations of research misconduct had been referred for formal investigation during 2020/21. While these provided some reassurance about current reporting processes, the time commitment for investigators was considerable, and a wide-ranging procedural review was timely.
2. Particular concerns had been raised in relation to the publication of papers by postgraduate research students, with possible links to citation cartels.

RESOLVED

3. To review research misconduct procedures, relating to both staff and students [**ACTION:** Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research].
4. To disseminate information on citation cartels to Senate members. [**ACTION:** Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research].

23. REPORT FROM THE ACADEMIC BOARD

1. Report from the Academic Board

RECEIVED

Report by Deputy Registrar, Kim Bradick (SEN2223-026).

NOTED

The report summarised the main items discussed during the Academic Board meetings held on 09 November 2022.

2. Departmental Review Schedule

RECEIVED

Report by Kim Bradick, Deputy Registrar (SEN2223-028).

NOTED

Following Covid disruption, up to five departmental reviews would be scheduled during 2022/23 to maintain the University's five-six-year cycle.

3. External Examiners Report

RECEIVED

Report by Kim Bradick, Deputy Registrar (SEN2223-029).

NOTED

1. An extract of the key issues raised in the External Examiner Reports for the previous session had been included as a separate report. The External Examiner Reports had also been considered in detail by Faculty Academic Affairs Committees.

2. External Examiners had been generally content with the academic standards of awards at Aberystwyth, and satisfied that the standards of student performance were comparable to those in other UK Higher Education Institutions.

4. Quality Assurance Statement

RECEIVED

Report by Kim Bradick, Deputy Registrar (SEN2223-030).

NOTED

1. The purpose of the annual Quality Assurance Statement was to provide the University's governing body, Council, with the appropriate evidence to be able to assure itself that it was satisfied that the University had met, and continued to meet, its obligations in respect of a series of statements in relation to quality assurance. The statement concentrated on reporting on activity in 2021/22 in the context of the QAA's Quality Enhancement Review exercise, conducted in the spring. Council, as the Governing Body, was required to report to HEFCW annually. However, assurance and enhancement of learning and teaching happened throughout the academic year and was not confined to annual processes. The report would be presented to the November meeting of Council.
2. Members welcomed the Quality Enhancement Review commendation of the University's collegiate relationship with its partners, which enabled them to participate as equals in the partnership. The associated level of concern had been reduced to low, though collaboration and partnerships would continue to be closely monitored and managed through Academic Registry (Partnerships Team) and relevant committees.
3. The level of concern for appeals, complaints and student discipline had been increased to red due to increased numbers and, perhaps more significantly, the complexity of individual cases and their resulting impact on workloads and student wellbeing. In line with trends across the sector, there was an expectation that the casework in these areas would continue to increase in volume and complexity.

RESOLVED

4. To commend the Quality Assurance Statement and refer to Council for final approval and submission to HEFCW. [**ACTION:** University Secretary].
5. Degree Outcomes Statement

RECEIVED

Report by Kim Bradick, Deputy Registrar (SEN2223-031).

NOTED

1. The Degree Outcome Statement had been updated for 2020/21 and the data sets rolled forward. The two years of Covid influenced results indicated an increase in first class degrees but not to the same extent in the upper second-class. Results for the next academic year would provide a stronger indication of the awarding profile outside of a pandemic. The Pro Vice-Chancellor LTSE would meet with departments to review subject-level patterns, both in terms of inflation and any indications of under-achievement in comparison with entrance standards.
2. In response to a gradual increase in student withdrawals, a new retention strategy would focus on the support provided to students in particular categories, including those known to be in a vulnerable position.

RESOLVED

3. To recommend the Degree Outcomes Statement to Council for approval. [**ACTION:** University Secretary].

4. To request an update from Academic Board on subject-level classifications, following review by the Pro Vice-Chancellor LTSE. [**ACTION:** Academic Registrar].
5. To request an update from Academic Board on the strategy for student retention. [**ACTION:** Academic Registrar].

24. REPORT FROM THE MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT BOARD

1. Report from the Marketing and Recruitment Board

RECEIVED

Report by Kylie Evans, Head of Admissions Operations (SEN2223-032).

NOTED

1. The report summarised the main items discussed during the Recruitment and Marketing Board meeting held on 14 November 2022. The report was discussed by Senate members.
2. The Terms of Reference had been reviewed and updated to reflect the new location of Admissions within Global Marketing and Student Recruitment from October 2022. The terms of reference of the renamed 'Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions Board' would include some Admissions and Conversion responsibilities which had hitherto remained implicit, and the membership would be expanded with a broader range of academic liaison staff.

RESOLVED

3. To approve the revised Terms of Reference of the Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions Board.

2. Widening Participation Strategy

RECEIVED

Report from Teleri Lewis, Widening Participation Manager (SEN2223-033).

NOTED

1. The new Widening Access Strategy 2022-2026 outlined the University's priorities for responding to its Strategic Plan 2018-2023 commitment to improving access to higher education and to encourage participation and collaborative activities through extensive partnerships. The strategy also supported the aims and work of the Fee and Access Plans 2022-2023 and the Reaching Wider Programme Plans 2020/21 to 2022/23.
2. The Strategy would be further strengthened through explicit reference to students on foundation and distance learning courses, who often came from non-traditional backgrounds, and the institutional support provided to students with Additional Needs.
3. An Admissions Conference would now be held early in 2023, not before Christmas as indicated in the papers.

RESOLVED

4. To approve the Widening Access Strategy, subject to adding explicit reference to distance learning and foundation students, and the institutional support for Additional Needs. [**ACTION:** Pro Vice-Chancellor, LTSE]

25. REPORT FROM THE COLLABORATIVE PROVISION BOARD

1. Report from the Collaborative Provision Board

RECEIVED

Report by Sarah Jones, Assistant Registrar – Academic Partnerships (SEN2223-034).

NOTED

The report summarised the main items discussed during the Collaborative Provision Board meeting held on 01 November 2022.

2. Annual Report on Collaborative Partnerships

RECEIVED

Report by Judith Shepherd, Deputy Registrar (SEN2223-035).

NOTED

1. The Annual Report set out the status of current partnerships between the University and other providers. It drew particular attention to the building of strong relationships with the Royal Veterinary College, Menter a Busnes, and Further Education colleges within Wales, in addition to other activities which were being managed by Global Marketing and Student Recruitment.
2. The report was welcomed by members, and a copy would be submitted to the next Council meeting for information.

26. BLACKBOARD ULTRA

RECEIVED

Report by Kate Wright, Learning and Teaching Enhancement Unit (SEN2223-036).

NOTED

1. Following discussion and agreement at the Academic Enhancement Committee and the November 2022 meeting of Academic Board, the University would proceed with preparations for Blackboard Ultra between January and September 2023. Blackboard Ultra was a new, mobile-friendly and accessible version of Blackboard, and its Ultra Base Navigation (UBN) would be enabled on the University's live version of Blackboard between 3 and 6 January 2023. The Learning and Teaching Enhancement Unit would then proceed to work with colleagues across the University to ensure that Ultra Courses would be in use from September 2023.
2. LTEU was currently working with Blackboard to ensure course readiness, particularly in relation to quizzes and any potential difficulties in transferring to Ultra. LTEU would

provide an update to Heads of Department in due course, and report to the next meeting of Senate on any additional resource and support needs.

3. Blackboard was committed to a Welsh language interface for Blackboard Ultra, following preparatory work led by Welsh higher education institutions.

RESOLVED

4. LTEU to provide an update on Blackboard Ultra preparations at the next meeting of Senate. [**ACTION:** Director of Information Services].

27. STUDENT CHARTER

RECEIVED

Report by Emma Williams, Acting University Secretary (SEN2223-037).

NOTED

1. HEFCW requires that Universities and Students' Unions agree a Student Charter, which should serve as a high-level partnership document which is applicable to the diverse body of students, providing signposts and links to more detailed information, such as regulations, student support, and course information. The University's Student Charter was published on the institution's website.
2. The Funding Council expected that institutions reviewed their Student Charters on an annual basis, in consultation with representatives from the Students' Union.
3. Aberystwyth University's Student Charter had been last reviewed and revised in August 2021, in response to additional guidance received from HEFCW. The provisions of the Charter had recently been reviewed in consultation with the Students' Union, and minor updates had been required for the 2022–23 academic year.

28. ABERSU'S RELATIONSHIP AGREEMENT

RECEIVED

Report by Emma Williams, Acting University Secretary (SEN2223-038).

NOTED

1. HEFCW required that Universities and Students' Unions enter into a Relationship Agreement, which should be endorsed by the institution's Governing Body, reviewed annually in time for the new academic year, and signed by the incoming Student Officers. The Relationship Agreement for 2022–23 had been reviewed by the University Secretary, the SU President, and the SU Chief Executive. Other than to update signatures, no changes were being proposed to the current Relationship Agreement.

RESOLVED

2. To retain the current Relationship Agreement for the forthcoming academic year. [**ACTION:** University Secretary].

29. HONORARY AWARDS

RECEIVED

Report by Emma Williams, Acting University Secretary (SEN2223-039).

NOTED

1. On 28 October 2022, the Honorary Awards Group had met to consider nominations for Honorary Awards of Aberystwyth University. The report set out the proposed shortlist, and members were asked to respect the confidential nature of this paper. The University would not correspond with those being recommended for an Honorary Award until their names had been approved by Council. Furthermore, the names of those to be conferred with an Honorary Award would not be publicised until the summer of 2023.

RESOLVED

2. To refer the nominations for Honorary Awards to Council for approval. [**ACTION:** University Secretary].

30. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

RECEIVED

Members received reports on the following for information:

1. Report from the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol (SEN2223-040);
2. Research Grants (SEN2223-041)
3. Summary Corporate Risk Register (SEN2223-042) and;

NOTED

4. The contents of the other reports presented for information.

31. COMMITTEE MINUTES

RECEIVED

A report comprising the following (SEN2223-043):

1. Research and Innovation Committee (28 September 2022);
2. Academic Board (09 November 2022);
3. Recruitment and Marketing Board (14 November 2022);
4. Collaborative Provision (01 November 2022) and;
5. Council (23 September 2022)

NOTED

6. The reports received from the committees.

32. ANY OTHER BUSINESS, MEETING REVIEW, AND FUTURE BUSINESS.

NOTED

The next meeting of Senate was expected to be rescheduled due to a 150th anniversary event on 22 March 2023.

HGRh 03/12/22