

SENATE

Minutes of the meeting held at 14:00 on 03 MAY 2023, in MedRus Mawr, Penbryn.

Voting members: Professor Neil Glasser, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Earth and Life Sciences); Professor Anwen Jones, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences); Professor Colin McInnes, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation); Professor Qiang Shen, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Business and Physical Sciences); Professor Tim Woods, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience); Dr Otar Akanyeti; Mr Thomas Bates; Professor Hazel Davey; Dr Sarah Davies; Mr Jonathan Fry, Chair of AU Branch of the CCC; Dr Sarah Higgins; Professor Mererid Hopwood; Dr Aloysius Igboekwu; Dr Ffion Jones; Mr Dafi Jones, UMCA President; Dr Alex Mangold; Ms Elizabeth Manners, Academic Affairs Officer, Students' Union; Dr Louise Marshall; Ms Jen Phipps; Dr Alexander Pitchford; Dr Heather Norris; Dr Samuel Raybone; Professor Eleri Pryse; Dr Alistair Shepherd; Professor Phillipp Schofield; Ms Aisleen Sturrock, President of the Students' Union; 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; Professor Nigel Holt; Dr Thomas Jansen; Professor Helen Roberts, Director of Research Excellence and Impact and Dr Anoush Simon.

In attendance: Mr Tim Davies, Director of Information Services; Mrs Jean Jones, Head of the Vice-Chancellor's Office; Dr Gethin Rhys, Deputy Registrar; Mr Mark Tweed, Independent Member of Council; and Ms Emma Williams, Academic Registrar.

Apologies for absence had been received from; Professor Andrew Evans; Professor Iain Donnison; Professor Jamie Medhurst; Professor Elizabeth Treasure, Vice-Chancellor; Dr Gwawr Taylor, University Secretary.

37. MATTERS RAISED BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

1. Condolences

Sympathies were expressed following the deaths of:

1. Dr Jim Provan, IBERS;
2. Jeff Saycell, Facilities and Grounds Manager;
3. Olga Kittle, Facilities Cleaner;
4. Charlie McLeod, Computer Science second year student.
5. Nick Bache, Technical and Production Manager at Aberystwyth Arts Centre.

2. Welcome – Mark Tweed, independent member of Council, as observer.

3. Industrial Action – Amendments to Integrated Master’s Regulations

RECEIVED

Report by Professor Tim Woods, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Enhancement) and Acting Vice-Chancellor (SEN2223-066)

NOTED

1. That amendments to academic regulations had been executively approved by Professor Tim Woods as Acting Vice-Chancellor, following consultation with departments and faculties and a recommendation from the Senate Working Group.
2. Under the amended regulations, examination boards would be able to award classified Integrated Master’s degrees where marks were available in at least two thirds of the credits at levels six and seven, including those with Y/G indicators. When classifying the award, modules with Q indicators would be discounted. Recommendations would be made on the basis that the available results demonstrated achievement of scheme learning outcomes. As with Bachelor’s degrees, there would be no change to the amount of credit that students could fail. The amendments would be published within the University’s Examination Conventions.

38. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

39. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RECEIVED

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2022 and 02 February 2023 (SEN2223-051).

RESOLVED

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

40. 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.

4. Further discussions were taking place on the language support for students outside the International English Centre, and an update would be provided to the June meeting of Senate.
- 9.7 Guidance on approved fieldwork in relation to postgraduate research residency requirements had been updated, and the action closed.

- 9.8 A social media campaign by the Students' Union was underway, warning students of the dangers of collusion and the use of AI in assessed work.
- 9.8 Guidance on the distinction between the dissemination of research and the sharing of assessed work had been issued, and the action closed.
11. The Welsh-Medium Academic Sub-Strategy had been approved by Council, and the action closed.

41. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to report.

42. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT TO SENATE

RECEIVED

Report by the Vice-Chancellor (SEN2223-053).

NOTED

1. The report consisted of three key parts: a highlight report; a planning and student enrolment report; and a communications report.
2. The overall trend in applications remained steady, with a small rise in the number of applicants from within Wales. It was also satisfying to note the continuing rise in the number of international applicants. Three applicant visiting days had been held during spring 2023, along with an undergraduate open day.
3. While the financial situation would continue to require careful management, it was pleasing to note an improved position following a series of mitigating actions during the course of the year, along with a boost in international student numbers in January 2023. Budget planning for 2023/24 was underway, with the aim of creating a budget surplus to support growth in both research and teaching.
4. As part of the 150th year celebrations, Lord Cwmgiedd had hosted an event at the House of Lords on 23 March, during which Baroness Kay Andrews and Professor Tim Woods addressed the guests. In late March, Professor Tim Woods, Dr Rhodri Llwyd Morgan and Professor Mererid Hopwood had represented the University in New York and Washington, an important opportunity to connect with alumni and friends in North America.
5. The University had been shortlisted in five categories for this year's WhatUni Student Choice Awards and achieved third place in the overall rankings.
6. The Vice-Chancellor was unable to be present at the meeting of Senate and was likely to need a further period of absence following surgery. Should the circumstances require temporary acting-up changes, the University Council would make the necessary changes.

43. RESEARCH AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

1. Report from Research and Innovation Committee

RECEIVED

Report by Research Impact Team (SEN2223-054).

NOTED

1. The report summarised the main items discussed during the Research Committee meetings held on 28 November 2022 and 14 April 2023.
 2. The travel policy had been revised and approved and updated on the University website.
 3. A review of the Research Leave Policy was underway, with a consultation involving heads of academic and professional services departments before formal consideration at the June meeting of Senate.
 4. Three 'Big R Days' were being held as part of REF and research monitoring, and the results would be presented to Senate. A different approach would be taken for research monitoring during the summer, with departments to present their research to colleagues across the University. Senate members were encouraged to attend where possible.
 5. An audit of the Concordat for Researcher Development was underway. While the status of research seminars remained unclear, work was accelerating to enable the University to reach the required target of 10 researcher development days per annum.
2. International Framework

RECEIVED

Report by Colin McInnes, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation) (SEN2223-055).

NOTED

1. Developed in consultation with colleagues across the University, the International Framework was designed to further embed, promote and develop international engagement across the University. It recognised its financial and economic benefits, its reputational importance for the University, along with the academic value for research and teaching.
2. Building on the core values of the University's Strategic Plan, the Framework identified a series of principles which would underpin the approach to international engagement across a range of university strategies, along with a commitment to bilingualism. Members welcomed the framework's emphasis on principles, which could serve as a model for future projects.

44. REPORT FROM THE ACADEMIC BOARD

1. Report from the Academic Board

RECEIVED

Report by Deputy Registrar, Kim Bradick (SEN2223-056).

NOTED

1. The report summarised the main items discussed during the Academic Board meetings held on 8 March 2023.
 2. All staff involved in teaching and assessment were encouraged to engage with the extensive and helpful resources which were available in the membership resources area of the QAA web site.
 3. The University's Regulation on Unacceptable Academic Practice had been updated to include a category of 'presenting work generated by AI as if it were your own', along with updated guidance on penalties. The first cases of UAP involving AI had been considered by university panels, and a new guidance document prepared for staff. QAA had published a briefing document on generative AI, and departments were making initial steps to review assessment design to combat its use.
 4. A series of annual reports had been considered by Academic Board, and attention was drawn to the importance of good record keeping and procedural compliance in order to minimise the number of Student Complaints.
 5. While the number of Student Complaints and Final Reviews had remained similar in 2022, there had been a significant rise in the number of Academic Appeals, including those which related to SNA reports. This was being considered further by the Director of Student Services.
 6. The first cohort of BSc Nursing (Adult and Mental Health) students had started in September 2022, followed by a Return to Practice Programme in February 2023, which had been approved by the NMC. Bespoke examination conventions and regulations had been developed and executively approved by the Chair of Academic Board ahead of the start of the programme. A part time BSc programme was also due to start in June 2023.
2. Amendments to Regulations

RECEIVED

Report by Kim Bradick, Deputy Registrar (SEN2223-057).

NOTED

1. BVSc Regulations. As a result of operating the examination conventions for the joint programme board in summer 2022, it had been proposed to clarify several issues around capped and uncapped modules, along with the procedure for extenuating circumstances.
2. Student Residency Requirements. The wording had been revised in response to recommendations by Senate and would be incorporated in section 3.1 of the Rules and Regulations (residency requirements). The guidance in the published Dates of Term would also be replaced.
3. MSc Advanced Computer Science. Amendments had been proposed and approved by the Chair of Senate by Executive Approval, in order that the Admissions cycle for January 2024 could be opened. These would take account of the longer duration of the course (which was necessary to accommodate a

January start) along with the industrial placement options within the award. The scheme was due to start in January 2024.

4. Postgraduate Research Regulations and guidance. Developed in response to a recommendation of the Quality Enhancement Review 2022, the proposed changes would strengthen institutional oversight of the appointment of external examiners for research degrees. It was agreed that the proposed text for section 7.11 of the Academic Quality Handbook should be further amended to clarify that all external examiners for research degrees should have 'experience of successful supervision of research students and *internal* examination of research degree candidates.

RESOLVED

5. To approve amendments to the Regulations for BVSc.
6. To approve amendments to the Student Residency Requirements.
7. To note the Executive Approval of amendments to the Regulations for MSc Advanced Computer Science.
8. To approve amendments to Postgraduate Research guidance (AQH 7.11) with further minor amendments as noted in the minutes.

45. REPORT FROM THE COLLABORATIVE PROVISION BOARD

RECEIVED

Report by Sarah Jones, Assistant Registrar – Academic Partnerships (SEN2223-058).

NOTED

1. The report summarised the main items discussed during the Collaborative Provision Board meeting held on 16 March 2023.
2. CPB had considered a second draft of the AU Collaborative Provision Strategy, and approved the KPIs which were designed to improve the efficiency of the Board, subject to minor amendments to wording.
3. Members welcomed the reports received from the Academic Partnerships team at meetings of Faculty Executive Committees, which had been helpful in managing departmental partnerships portfolio.

46. BLACKBOARD ULTRA

RECEIVED

Report by Kate Wright, Learning and Teaching Enhancement Unit (SEN2223-059).

NOTED

Preparations for the full introduction of Blackboard Ultra in summer 2023 were continuing, and a new course template had been agreed following input from the Academic Enhancement Committee. Alongside technical developments, the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Unit was engaged in a programme of staff training which included blog posts, weekly emails and a

series of departmental training sessions. Staff were also encouraged to attend the annual Learning and Teaching Conference which would provide a further opportunity for discussion. Information Services were investigating means of supporting departments with the publication of reading lists, and reviewing the ease with which information could be accessed.

47. FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES – REVIEW OF FACULTY STRUCTURES

RECEIVED

Report by Anwen Jones, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences) (SEN2223-060).

NOTED

1. The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences was proposing to establish a new school which would bring the following three departments into a strategic alliance: Welsh and Celtic Studies; Modern Languages; and English and Creative Writing.
2. The remaining departments within the Faculty (Law and Criminology; Theatre, Film and Television Studies; International Politics; History and Welsh History; Education; and Art) would operate an affiliate model to enable collective representation on central university committees.
3. The proposals were part of a faculty project with the aim of reducing workload, enabling staff wellbeing, reallocating time in favour of research productivity, and ensuring effective delivery of key institutional objectives.
4. The project included a series of 'red lines' and a firm commitment to preserve departmental identities, including that of the Department of Welsh and Celtic Studies, and to preserve their external visibility and prestige. The proposals would maintain current staffing numbers, and the internal use of the Welsh language would be ensured through simultaneous translation at school meetings and the appointment of a deputy head with designated responsibilities.
5. The name and formal structure of the new school had not yet been determined, and further consultation would take place before approval by the University Council. The new structure would be introduced as a pilot from September 2023, with close monitoring of KPIs to be followed by a formal review at the end of 2023/24.
6. Members welcomed the initial proposals and their overall aims and awaited further details of the structure before formal consideration. Final approval would be referred to the University Council. It was also noted that the proposed 'deputy head' role could be a helpful model for succession planning across the University's academic departments.

RESOLVED

7. To welcome the initial proposals of the review and to invite the Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, to submit final proposals to the July meeting of Council. The proposals would also be circulated to Senate members. [**Action:** Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences].

48. SUSTAINABILITY POLICY STATEMENT AND NET ZERO STRATEGY

RECEIVED

Report by Professor Neil Glasser, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Earth and Life Sciences) and Dewi Day, Environmental and Sustainability Advisor (SEN2223-061).

NOTED

1. The Sustainability Policy Statement had now been updated to incorporate earlier feedback from Senate members and was available on the University website. A Net Zero Strategy and Net Zero Action Plan had also been developed and approved by the University Executive. The financial outlay for the institution had been estimated at approximately £52M over the next 8 years, but it was also expected that savings would be made through specific sustainability initiatives.
2. The Net Zero Strategy outlined measures that would reduce AU emissions by approximately 70% and identified a range of measures to ensure further reductions. Performance against actions and targets would be renewed annually, and the strategy updated every two years to incorporate further reduction measures as necessary.
3. The commitment to decrease carbon and other emissions from staff and student travel would need to be assessed in relation to research and networking aims, maximising travel sustainability.
4. Members welcomed the revised policy statement while noting key areas for further developments. These included possible alternative means of commuting, reducing the use of plastics on campus, and a greater emphasis on sustainability within the curriculum and research. More could also be done to highlight key sustainability initiatives during open and visiting days.

RESOLVED

5. To approve the revisions to the Sustainability Policy Statement.

49. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

RECEIVED

Members received reports on the following for information:

1. Report from the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol (SEN2223-062);
2. Research Grants (SEN2223-063);
3. Summary Corporate Risk Register (SEN2223-064) and;

NOTED

4. The contents of the reports presented for information.
5. The Chair of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol would visit Aberystwyth University on 24 May 2023.
6. Members noted that university data did not appear to include all research grants.

RESOLVED

7. To review data gathering process for research grants and report back to Senate [**Action:** Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation].

50. COMMITTEE MINUTES

RECEIVED

A report comprising the following (SEN2223-043):

1. Research and Innovation Committee (23 November 2022 and 20 February 2023);
2. Academic Board (8 March 2023);
3. Collaborative Provision (16 March 2023) and;
4. Council (28 November 2022 and 10 February 2023).

NOTED

5. The reports received from the committees.

51. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

NOTED

Members congratulated Professor Andrew Evans and Professor Helen Roberts on their election as Fellows of the Learned Society of Wales.

HGRh 120623