

Senate

Minutes of a meeting held on Monday 22nd May 2023

1300 to 1430 hrs

32MS01

Ex-officio members:

President & Vice-Chancellor
 Chair: Provost & Senior Vice-President
 Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Academic
 Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Research & Innovation
 Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Executive Dean (FASS)
 Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Executive Dean (FEPS)
 Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Executive Dean (FHMS)
 Vice-President, External Engagement
 Associate Dean, Education (FASS)
 Associate Dean, Education (FEPS)
 Associate Dean, Education (FHMS)
 Associate Dean, Research & Innovation (FASS)
 Associate Dean, Research & Innovation (FEPS)
 Associate Dean, Research & Innovation (FHMS)
 Dean International
 Chief Student Officer
 Academic Registrar
 Director of Surrey Institute of Education
 Director of Library & Learning Support Services
 Director of Research & Innovation Services
 Director of Research Strategy
 Director of Innovation Strategy (IP, Industry & Impact)
 Dean of the Doctoral College
 President of the Students' Union
 VP Voice of the Students' Union

Professor Max Lu *
 Professor Tim Dunne
 Professor Osama Khan
 [vacant]
 Professor Annika Bautz
 Professor Bob Nichol *
 Professor Paul Townsend *
 Mr Patrick Degg *
 Professor Emma Mayhew *
 Professor Esat Alpay *
 Professor Rhys Jones
 Professor Rachel Brooks *
 Professor Jin Xuan *
 Professor Dan Horton
 Professor Amelia Hadfield
 Ms Kerry Matthews
 Mr Glenn Moulton (Joint, Interim)
 Professor Naomi Winstone
 Mr Paul Johnson
 Mrs Gill Fairbairn (Interim)
 [vacant]
 Dr Will Lovegrove
 Dr Allan Kilner-Johnson (Interim)
 Ms Diana Dakik
 Ms Megan Simmons *

Nominated members:

FASS	FEPS	FHMS
Dr Joshua Andresen	Dr Lewis Baker	Dr Charo Hodgkins
Professor Karen Bullock	Professor Tom Bridges	Dr Dynatra Subasinghe
Dr Bora Kim	Professor Philip Jackson	Mrs Claire Tarrant
Professor Anna McNamara *	Dr Tan Sui	[vacancy]

In Attendance

Mrs Beth Herbert (EH), Secretary
 Mr Michael Cotter, Director of SOUL (for item 2.1)

* indicates member not present

1. Introductory Items

1.1 Welcome / Apologies for Absence

- .1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the Extraordinary meeting of Senate for the current academic year. The Chair further welcomed new ex-officio member Glenn Moulton (and thanked Marie Sheehan for her contributions as Interim Academic Registrar).
- .2 Apologies were received from Esat Alpay, Rachel Brooks, Patrick Degg, Max Lu, Emma Mayhew, Anna McNamara, Bob Nichol, Megan Simmons, Paul Townsend and Jin Xuan.

1.2 Approval of minutes of meeting on 27th April 2023

- .1 The minutes of the Senate meeting held on 27th April 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

1.3 Chair's Action/Business

- .1 The Chair confirmed that no Chair's Action had been taken since the last meeting.

2. Item for Discussion

2.1 Surrey Online University Learning (SOUL)

RECEIVED PAPER 22/SEN/42

- .1 Following an introduction by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Academic (PVCA), the Director of SOUL, Michael Cotter, gave a presentation. "*Surrey Online Learning*". The draft vision was noted along with the five objectives. The current thinking was based around four strands/initiatives (online modules, stackable modules, prestige postgraduate qualifications and virtual short placements). The implications of these strands for students, academics/academic units and our bottom line were noted. We propose to use an Online Programme Management (OPM) partner to provide content development, marketing/recruitment, learning platform development and student support. There are c.20 large OPMs in North America and approximately 7 in the UK; the current preference is for EdX. Our aspiration is to start the journey with a partner to build capacity before transferring entirely to Surrey in 7-8 years' time. The presentation concluded with a summary of reflections made by the EB Academic Leadership Group.
- .2 The Chair invited comments, and the following observations were made:
 - Have we looked at the IT/digital side of delivery? Can we improve our IT to provide a flawless delivery? It was noted that some level of synchronicity is expected but this is not necessary as we will work predominantly on asynchronous delivery. EdX is the best platform in this area.
 - In terms of UG programmes, how can we manage the impact on employability? Students will still want to come to campus but we feel we can "mix" online choices with the campus experience. Some types of programmes (e.g. CPD, postgraduate) work well online. North America sees their workforce subscribing to online learning as a positive option.
 - Some concern was expressed over the "online" experience during COVID, noting that part of this was due to IT-related issues. Now that we are post-COVID, the in person campus experience is important. Harvard online is not the same as Harvard in person. We are not online educators, we are in person educators. This was believed to be one of our biggest challenges, and we will need to work hard to make it work.
 - On campus education is "gold standard" but this is an exciting initiative and one that colleagues hope to embrace.
 - How will we support/manage students who are online? Through the business case being prepared for EB, we are looking at resources. In addition, online support will be considered through the Seamless Student Journey workstream. The intention is to provide in person and online support to students. The PVCA also highlighted the online courses homepage at the London School of Economics (<https://www.lse.ac.uk/study-at-lse/online-learning>); we should think of online learning as a means to expand the market but not at the expense of in person learning.
 - The issue of compliance was raised. With selling our courses and research to the wider world, are we confident that we are complying with export controls and relevant laws? With a likely United Nations link to the Institute for Sustainability, it is probable that the UN would wish to commercialise opportunities; we need to be internationally compliant.

- In reading the paper, there is a possible perception that this initiative is being led by the education side of the portfolio and not in parallel with research, industry, CPD etc. The PVCA commented that this is a University initiative and the “stackable” strand would allow the industrial/CPD side to be included.
- People learn in different ways; this is an opportunity to address that need.

.3 The Chair summarised the discussion by noting this is an incredibly important initiative. With the Open University dominating the online market, there are limited UK providers and we see this opportunity to drive growth and increase revenue.

3. Items for Approval

3.1 A5 Force Majeure Contingency Regulatory Arrangements

RECEIVED PAPER 22/SEN/43

.1 The Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Academic (PVCA), presented the paper, noting that as a result of COVID in early 2020, the University had put into place a variety of measures relating to self-certification, emergency regulations, the Safety Net and adjustments to the minimum number of hours required for professional training placements. The proposed A5 Force Majeure Contingency Regulatory arrangements are designed as a last resource, invoked and revoked by the President and Vice-Chancellor only. They are based on sector-recognised national reference points, outcomes of the benchmark exercise (undertaken by Silver Command in January 2023), Surrey’s existing policies and exceptional COVID-19 regulatory amendments and a Business Continuity Plan first implemented in 2016.

.2 The Chair invited comments, and the following observation was made:

- As we are a public institution, does the Government need to declare a state of emergency before the VC could invoke the A5 Force Majeure Contingency Regulatory arrangements? The PVCA responded by stating the VC could invoke independently, depending on how the academic business of the University has been disrupted (e.g. flood, industrial action).

.3 Senate unanimously APPROVED the proposed A5 Force Majeure Contingency Regulatory Arrangements for taught programmes 2022/23 with immediate effect.

3.2 Academic Freedom & Freedom of Expression

RECEIVED PAPER 22/SEN/44

.1 The Chair presented the paper, advising that after two years in the making, the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill received Royal Assent and is now an Act. The legislation requires the University to comply with the three requirements of the Act. To ensure we are “legislation-ready”, a series of recommendations are proposed which include establishing (i) a Task & Finish Group, co-chaired by the Provost and Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Academic and (ii) a Senate Sub-Committee on Academic Freedom & Freedom of Expression.

.2 The Task & Finish Group will have a ToR which includes:

- Reviewing key clauses in the Charter/Statutes for consideration by Council and Executive Board – a need to distinguish Academic Freedom (for academic staff) and Freedom of Expression (for all staff);
- Drafting an external facing position statement – to set out the principles the University is seeking to uphold for Academic Freedom (AF) and Freedom of Expression (FoE);
- Reviewing/updating the *Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech (2016)*;
- Reviewing/modifying AF statements in HR documents;
- Reviewing/modifying what we say about AF and FoE in educational documents;
- Reviewing what we say about AF and FoE in our partnership arrangements;
- Ensuring we meet the UK and worldwide requirements of AF and FoE.

- .3 In terms of the Senate Sub-Committee (SSC) on AF and FoE, proposed ToR were circulated at the meeting. The context section summarises some of the obligations that Act imposes on us. It was noted that the Sub-Committee would need to be agile as some decisions would need to be taken at short notice.
- .4 The Chair invited comments, and the following observations were made:
- The Act has removed reference to “area of expertise”. This could now be a “grey” area.
 - In terms of the institution, who says what is important. AF, FoE and being civil to one another is also important.
 - Academic Freedom is a “privilege” afforded to all academics. Core activities to which AF applies are research, publication and teaching. Freedom of Speech plays a huge role within AF.
 - Kathleen Stock has been invited by Oxford Union to give a talk on gender on 30th May 2023. As an expert in their field, their right to speak on controversial topics needs to be accepted.
 - Everyone (staff and students) has the right to Freedom of Expression. FoE is not limited to the spoken word, it includes social media and other non-traditional forms of communication.
 - Some personal websites are directly linked to the University websites. Would/should these personal websites be reviewed by the SSC?
 - The context is important. If one is talking about defining people, that could be problematic. But if one is delivering a credit bearing module to students on a contentious topic, that could be acceptable. If we can define what activity is taking place, that might prove to be useful.
 - The promotion process/criteria are currently being amended to include an AF clause. We cannot promote someone if we don’t like their teaching or if they present something in a manner we dislike.
 - There should be a safe space in University accommodation for notices to be posted.
 - Guests/external visitors are also covered by the Act if they are speaking on University property.
 - The place, the audience and the credibility of message are important. How is research represented in SSC membership? In addition to the Provost and PVCA, there are three academic representatives from Senate.
 - There are potential reputational issues outside of the Act in partnerships with corporate sector, philanthropists, governments and partnerships.
 - The SSC is advisory to the Vice-Chancellor; others still remain accountable for their portfolios as prescribed by our delegations framework.
 - There is no mention of Prevent Duty in the ToR; this should be added as a regulatory requirement.
 - Would individuals know they are being referred to the SSC? There is no right of appeal. We should consider adding a clause to the ToR on the level of transparency.
- .5 Following the conclusion of discussion and noting the two suggested additions to the ToR, Senate unanimously APPROVED the proposed ToR for the Senate Sub-Committee on Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression. The Chair advised that the ToR would be revised following the meeting and re-circulated to members.
- .6 The Chair summarised the discussion by thanking everyone for their contributions to this very important topic. Further discussions with Council were planned for tomorrow.

4. Closing Items

4.1 Any Other Business

- .1 The Chair thanked members for their contributions to the discussions.

4.2 Date of next Senate meeting

28th June 2023, 1330 to 1630 hrs

/eh