

Senate

Minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2024 at 13:30
Oak Suite 1 and 2 MINUTES

Members

Ex-officio:

President & Vice-Chancellor	Prof Max Lu
Provost and Senior Vice-President [Chair]	Prof Tim Dunne
Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Education [Secretary]	Prof Emma Mayhew [interim]
Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Research & Innovation	Prof Lisa Collins*
Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Executive Dean, FASS	Prof Annika Bautz
Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Executive Dean, FEPS	Prof Bob Nichol*
Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Executive Dean, FHMS	Prof Paul Townsend
Vice-President, Global	Patrick Degg
Associate VP, External Engagement (International)	Prof Amelia Hadfield
Associate Dean, Education, FASS	Assoc Prof Mark Ashton [interim]
Associate Dean, Education, FEPS	Prof Esat Alpay
Associate Dean, Education, FHMS	Dr Dynatra Subasinghe
Associate Dean, Research & Innovation, FASS	Prof Rachel Brooks*
Associate Dean, Research & Innovation, FEPS	Prof Jin Xuan
Associate Dean, Research & Innovation, FHMS	Prof Deborah Dunn-Walters
Chief Student Officer	Kerry Matthews
Academic Registrar	Glenn Moulton [interim]
Director of Surrey Institute of Education	Prof Naomi Winstone*
Director of Library & Learning Services	Paul Johnson
Director of Research, Innovation & Impact	Gill Fairbairn
Dean of the Doctoral College	Dr Ruan Elliott
President of the Students' Union	Jo Yau
VP Voice of the Students' Union	Kiara Kataike

Nominated (FASS):

School of Law	Assoc Prof Dr Joshua Andresen
School of Literature and Languages	Assoc Prof Dr Constance Bantman
School of Sociology	Prof Karen Bullock
Guildford School of Acting	Prof Anna McNamara*

Nominated (FEPS):

Computer Science & Electrical Engineering	Dr Mariam Cirovic
Computer Science & Electrical Engineering	Prof Philip Jackson
Mechanical Engineering Sciences	Assoc Prof Dr Tan Sui
Sustainability, Civil & Environmental Eng	Dr Martin Walker*

Nominated (FHMS):

School of Biosciences	Dr Mohammad Asim
School of Biosciences	Dr Terri Grassby
School of Psychology	Dr Charo Hodgkins
School of Health Sciences	Claire Tarrant

In attendance:

Secretariat Coordinator [minute taker]	Kelley Padley
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By invitation:

Senior HR Business Partner (Academic)	Lois Moor [item 23/025]
ECR Lead and Chair of Astrophysics	Prof Justin Read [item 23/028]
Head of Governance Services	Ros Allen [item 23/029]

* denotes absence

1 INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

23/021 Apologies for absence

- .1 Apologies were received from Rachel Brooks, Lisa Collins, Anna McNamara, Bob Nichol, Martin Walker and Naomi Winstone.
- .2 The Chair welcomed Sir Philip Rutnam, external member of Council, attending to observe.
- .3 The Chair welcomed the following ex-officio members:
Deborah Dunn-Walters – Interim ADRI, FHMS
Dynatra Subasinghe – Interim ADE, FHMS

23/022 Minutes of the last meeting, 23 October 2023

- .1 The Board **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2023.

23/023 Vice-Chancellor's Update and Performance Report [paper 23-SEN-17 received]

- .1 Senate noted that 2024 is a general election year and consideration was given to some of the more immediate implications for the sector, and for Surrey, dependent upon the outcome of the election (for instance, immigration policy and its impact on international recruitment and the direction of travel for the Sciences). The University would continue to actively engage on these issues with both major political parties.
- .2 The continuing conflict in the Middle East was noted and Senate were advised the University has developed an action plan to ensure we continue to support our community as the conflict evolves whilst balancing our obligation to safeguard freedom of speech.
- .3 The measures the University deployed to address the challenges faced in student recruitment, specifically international student recruitment, were showing positive signs of impact with student recruitment for February 2024 exceeding the Daphne Plan. However, the ability to hit the Daphne Plan target would depend upon the attrition rate.
- .4 The VC advised Senate that Surrey would be facing financial challenges during 2024 and noted the situation was mirrored across the UK HE sector. The University is actively working through options to both reduce costs and leverage income.
- .5 The University's appeal against its Silver TEF award had resulted in several categories being upgraded to 'outstanding': increasing from 2 out of 13 areas being rated as outstanding to 5 out of 13 areas being rated as outstanding (all other remaining areas 'very high quality'). However, despite these re-gradings the University did not meet the required number of outstanding in either Student Experience or Student Outcome to be rebadged as Gold. The TEF Silver award had therefore been confirmed.
- .6 The Module Evaluation Questionnaire (MEQ) results across all years recorded the highest level of satisfaction achieved since MEQs were introduced (85.2%) with level 6 recording 86%. This level of student satisfaction bode well for the upcoming NSS and the VC thanked staff for the work that had been undertaken, most notably in improvements made to assessment feedback.

23/024 Chair's Action/Business

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

2 ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

23/025 Optimising Academic Achievement – School Roles and Leadership Structure [paper 23-SEN-18 received] [Presentation received – uploaded to Convene Document Library post meeting]

- .1 Lois Moor, Senior HR Business Partner (Academic) attended to present the item.
- .2 The rationale for review was outlined, noting that changes in Departments, Schools and Faculty structures over time had resulted in inconsistencies in leadership roles, expectations and in some cases remuneration. The convened Task and Finish Group had proposed a common framework for School-level academic leadership roles to ensure some consistency across the University without imposing a one size fits all approach.
- .3 The key principles in the review process were summarised and included: drive for consistency; benchmarking of allowance levels; finite appointment periods for school leadership roles (roles fixed term in nature). Senate noted that benchmarking allowance levels against peers evidenced that Surrey's Head of School roles were under-remunerated. The proposal put forward an increase in allowance for this role to bring it into alignment with Russell Group Universities.
- .4 In parallel to the OAA work on role consistency and structure, FASS had been consulting on plans for changes that include amendments to its structure which would result in several large multidisciplinary Schools. The work on the two streams had not been undertaken in isolation and feedback arising from the FASS proposals and from consideration by the Academic Leaders Forum (ALF) had revised the proposed structure to include the option for each Faculty to retain Associate Head of Subject/Discipline roles where it deems it appropriate. FASS had indicated that given the proposed shift to larger multidisciplinary Schools retention of the Associate Head of Subject/Discipline role would help to support the retention of discipline identity.
- .5 The proposed structure also allowed for additional roles at the discretion of the Head of School and the PVC Executive Dean; Senate noted this flexibility was key to enable some diversity in the structure to recognise, for instance, the requirements of PSRBs pertinent to the individual Faculties. Therefore the structure proposed three mandatory roles which would be consistent across all three Faculties and the opportunity for additional roles at the discretion of the PVC, Executive Dean.
- .6 Senate discussed how the School Roles and Leadership structure had been consulted on and developed. The Task and Finish Group had incorporated staff from each Faculty and the proposal, which had been under discussion for approximately three months, had been out for consultation and socialisation primarily with existing leaders and those with experience of leadership issues (for instance the EB Academic Leaders' Group and the wider Academic Leaders' Forum). The proposal had been revised in response to feedback received.
- .7 Senate discussed the proposed fixed term time-frame of 1-3 years for the Associate Head Roles. The intent was to give a notional period rule that could work under different circumstances. The upper time limit of 3 years was proposed as it would avoid a post-holder becoming stuck in the

role and would ensure that more staff were afforded the opportunity to gain experience in leadership roles.

- .8 Senate moved to a vote on the proposal. Those members who had sent apologies had been given the opportunity to submit their vote in advance of the meeting.

The Chair, for the avoidance of doubt, summarised the key points that Senate were being asked to vote on:

- Open recruitment for Head of School posts
- Establishment of 3 mandatory posts (Associate Head of Education, Associate Head of Research and Innovation, Associate Head of Research and Innovation) with the flexibility for additional roles and/or Associate Head of Subject Discipline roles where required and at the discretion of the PVC ED
- Remuneration for the Heads of School with the *option* for the PVC ED and HoS to *request* remuneration for Associate Head of Discipline/Subject area where they have opted to continue these roles in their Faculty structure (agreement to remunerate Associate Head of Discipline/Subject area roles would be subject to agreement of the PVC Executive Dean)
- All other posts to be non-remunerated and recognised / rewarded through workload allocation plans

- .9 The outcome of the vote was verified as:

- 19 in favour
- 10 against
- 5 abstentions

The proposal was approved with 19 out of 34 votes in favour. Senate **approved** the Optimising Academic Achievement proposal regarding the new School Leadership Structure.

- .10 The Chair **agreed** the next meeting of Senate would receive a brief paper outlining the duties envisaged for the Head of Discipline role where these roles are the Faculty-preferred option for large multi-unit Schools.

Action: Provost to report back to Senate

23/026 Senate Governance and Terms of Reference [paper 23-SEN-19 received]

- .1 The Provost presented the paper.

Membership of Senate

Senate considered each of the proposed changes to Senate membership:

.2.1 Removal of four ex-officio posts and introduction of two Directors of Institutes

Senate **agreed** with the removal of the four highlighted posts which would continue to play a key role in Senate's sub-committees and agreed that it was appropriate that the two Institutes (People-Centred Institute for AI and Institute of Sustainability) be represented on Senate.

.2.2 Increase number of nominated Faculty representatives to 6

Senate **agreed** with the proposal to increase the number of nominated representatives from 4 per Faculty to 6 per Faculty with the stipulation that 1 of those 6 would be for 'Early Career' academics.

- .2.3 Trial of nominated PGR Student Representative
Senate **agreed** with the proposal to trial the addition of a nominated PGR Student Representative noting that the Student Union would be instrumental in the nomination process and in supporting the appointed representative.
- .2.4 Pilot the addition of 1 all staff Open Seat (different incumbent for each Senate meeting)
Senate recalled that the original purpose of the Open Seat when discussed previously at Senate, had been to demystify Senate to the wider University community, enabling members of the community to express an interest in attending to see for themselves how Senate operated, debated agenda items and reached decisions. Senate agreed that an *observer* open senate seat should be piloted. Given the potential continuity issues (in that the individual in the open seat would not have been at prior meetings and have knowledge of items that were mid consideration by Senate), the open Senate seat would not have voting rights.
- .3 Senate **recommended** the proposed changes to Senate membership to Council with the proviso that the all staff Open Seat be revised to an all staff Observer Open Senate Seat without voting rights.
- .4 Senate Nominations Committee
Senate **approved** the presented terms of reference for the Senate Nominations Committee with the following condition:
- Revision of Term of Reference 4 to ensure greater clarity around the Committee’s responsibility to give greater consideration to the diversity of the constitution of Senate through nominations from neurodiverse staff or staff with a disability
- Action: Terri Grassby to consult the Purple Network and provide updated ToR wording to the Minute Secretary**

3 ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

23/027 SU verbal update

- .1 The President of the Students’ Union advised Senate of proposed amendments to Student Regulations. The following proposals, which had been discussed and formulated with colleagues from OSCAR, would be submitted for full consideration to the April meeting of Senate:
- (i) Requirement for students to declare previous expulsions from HEI’s when they apply to join Surrey (the University of St Andrews was given as an example of a University that already requires this declaration).
 - (ii) Provision in the Disciplinary Regulations to *exceptionally* allow for disciplinary proceedings to continue after a student’s registration has ended (in some cases this could lead to the rescission of a Surrey award).
 - (iii) Proviso in the Procedure for Hearings by Panel confirming that requests to postpone or adjourn a Panel hearing will not normally be agreed where the student cites health issues relating to the process itself / relating to attending the hearing (reasonable adjustments would be considered).
- .2 In broad terms, Senate supported in principle the proposed amendments advising that the University Secretary and Legal Counsel should be consulted in the wording of any proposed amendments. The proposals would be considered in detail at a future Senate meeting.

23/028 Early Careers Researchers (ECR) Academy [Presentation received – uploaded to Convene Document Library post meeting]

- .1 Prof Justin Read, ECR Lead and Chair of Astrophysics , attended to give a presentation.
- .2 Recognising that early career researchers (ECRs) play a vital role in R&I at Surrey key to success in REF, and that ECRs have distinctly different needs from PhD students, the University shifted from siting ECRs in the Doctoral College to siting them in a bespoke ECR Academy.
- .3 The pan-campus ECR Lead, Prof Justin Read, was appointed in October 2023 and much work has already been undertaken on the journey towards delivery of a new strategic plan for ECR support in March 2024.
 - ECR Working Group established and ECR Lead in process of refreshing ECR Forum
 - Definition of an ECR in place
 - ECR Survey conducted (closed 18 December)
 - Established new ECR bring-your-own drop-in coffee every Wednesday morning
 - Established package of training for our Surrey Future Fellows (a pilot for training to roll out to the wider ECR community in 2024)
- .4 The next steps were summarised:
 - Launch a new ECR 'one-stop-shop' information sharing site
 - Collect data analytics to quantify the success of the ECR Academy
 - Seek funding opportunities to support the ECR Academy
 - Prepare the HREiR Submission
 - Write and submit ECR Academy Strategic Plan to EB in March
 - Continue to deliver the SFF Training Programme (using this to inform the broader ECR training strategy)
- .5 Senate discussed the scope for senior colleagues to invite top academic leaders to become involved, to some extent, with the ECR Academy (be it through joining a Wednesday morning coffee morning or through involvement in some of the planned training). Senate agreed that where such individuals were already in a relationship with Surrey and scheduled to attend campus it would make good sense to collaborate with the ECR Lead to maximise the potential of that relationship.

23/029 Charter and Statutes Review
[paper 23-SEN-09 received]

- .1 Ros Allen, Head of Governance Services, attended to present the item on behalf of the University Secretary and Legal Counsel.
- .2 Senate noted that the Charter and Statutes require King's Privy Council approval for any amendments whilst the Ordinances require Council approval.
- .3 Surrey were principally undertaking a review to amend the length of terms for lay Council members and to respond to the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act. At the same time, it was sensible to review the Charter, Statutes and Ordinances with a view to simplification. The high-level plan is to amend the Charter to only include the minimum requirements for a chartered institution, remove the Statutes entirely and amend the Ordinances to include the relevant clauses removed from the Charter and Statutes.
- .4 Senate discussed the four key proposed changes to the Charter which relate to Senate and academic matters:

- .4.1 Addition of two clauses on freedom of speech and academic freedom
Senate agreed with the proposed clauses, noting the draft wording had been proposed by Universities UK.
- .4.2 Wording of Clause 15 relating to Senate as a sub-committee of Council
Senate discussed the proposed use of the words ‘good management’ and ‘academic affairs’ and **agreed** the following statement to be a better reflection of the work Senate undertook as a sub-committee of Council:

‘There shall be a Senate of the University, to which Council shall delegate responsibility for the oversight and good governance of the academic mission as prescribed by Ordinances’.
- .4.3 Relocate the clause relating to the power of Senate to make, amend or repeal Regulations to the Ordinances
Senate **agreed** with the proposal to move the clause to the Ordinances.
- .4.4 Amalgamation of definitions ‘Academic Endeavour’ and ‘Academic Affairs’ into one all-encompassing definition
Senate **agreed** with the proposal to replace the two definitions with one all-encompassing definition and that consideration should be given to whether that term could be ‘Academic Mission’ (as discussed above under wording for Clause 15).

4 ITEMS TO NOTE

23/030 Education & Student Experience Report to Senate
[paper 23-SEN-22 received]

.1 The paper was noted.

23/031 Research & Innovation Report to Senate
[paper 23-SEN-23 received]

.1 The paper was noted.

23/032 Senate Sub-Committee Minutes
University Education Committee, 5th December 2023 [23-SEN-24]
University Research & Innovation Committee, 1st December 2023 [23-SEN-25]
Senate Nominations Committee, 8th December 2023 [23-SEN-26]

.1 The unconfirmed minutes were noted.

23/033 Items for future meetings

.1 The paper was noted

5 CLOSING ITEMS

23/034 AOB

.1 None

23/035 Dates of next Senate meetings 2023/24

.1 Wednesday 31st January 2024 [additional meeting]
Wednesday 24th April 2024
Tuesday 25th June 2024

