

# Senate

Minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2024 at 11:30

Treetops, Wates House, 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]**
Academic Registrar	Camilla Davies [alternate for Glenn Mouton]
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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\* denotes absence

\*\* denotes alternate nominee attended

## 1 INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

### 23/036 Apologies for absence

- .1 Apologies were received from Max Lu, Bob Nichol, Paul Townsend, Esat Alpay, Rachel Brooks, Jin Xuan, Paul Johnson, Ruan Elliott, Jo Yau, Anna McNamara, Mariam Cirovic, Tan Sui, Mohammad Asim, and Glenn Moulton - Camilla Davis was attending as his nominated alternate.

## 2 ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

### 23/037 FASS Change Plan

- .1 Annika Bautz, PVC Executive Dean (FASS), provided a presentation to Senate (which has subsequently been uploaded to the document library in Convene). Senate were advised that the FASS Change proposal outlined in the presentation would be received for approval at Council on 7 February. Senate were advised that the proposal was confidential until approved by Council and communicated formally to the wider University community.

#### Consultation on FASS Change Plans

- .2 An initial presentation on FASS plans had been shared with Senate at its meeting in October 2023 and subsequently, in November 2023, more detailed proposals were circulated to all FASS colleagues that formed the basis for a Faculty-wide consultation on the Change Plan. A number of mechanisms were deployed to facilitate the feedback during the consultation period, including an asynchronous feedback form, Q&A sessions for each current School/Department led by the PVC ED, and workshops led by HoS/DoFO. In summary:
  - 81 individual consultation responses were received.
  - Each School/Department submitted a response generated through workshops.
  - A joint response from 9 former Heads of School who are still working at Surrey was received.

All comments received were very carefully considered and contributed to the final version of the plans.

- .3 A Response to the concerns raised during consultation would be circulated to FASS colleagues summarising the concerns raised, alongside giving suggested mitigations for those concerns. The paper would also outline how the suggestions for alternative groupings had been considered in the finalisation of the plans.

- .4 AB's presentation summarised the Why? What? How? of the proposed FASS Change Plan.

#### Why?

- .5 Two key drivers for *why* the Faculty needs to change were outlined and data provided to contextualise those drivers:
  - to achieve financial sustainability.
  - to sustain and increase excellence across research and education in all FASS areas while increasing income.
- .6 Senate noted that the number of new entrants to FASS had declined by 29% and FASS market share had decreased from 1% to 0.6%. Home UG fees had remained fixed from 2017 (and would likely be fixed for at least 3 more years) meaning that the real value of that fee had decreased

significantly (to less than £6,000 in 'real money'). Tuition fees make up 83% of FASS's income currently.

#### What?

- .7 The key cornerstones of *what* FASS were proposing to do to enable growth were summarised:
- Optimise programme portfolio.
  - Redesign delivery to build economies of scale.
  - Ensure research power and excellence is safeguarded.
  - Create mechanisms that support greater interdisciplinarity across activities.
  - Build critical mass with industry partners.
- .8 The following three workstreams had been identified:
- Workstream 1: Implement a new mission and value proposition.
  - Workstream 2: Undertake a holistic, market-informed optimisation of our programme portfolio.
  - Workstream 3: Reimagine FASS's structure.

#### How?

- .9 Onus would be placed on ensuring a clear, distinct but lean portfolio of programmes. AB explained the programme review would be led by Schools following three key principles:
- Attractiveness and leanness of our suite of degrees.
  - Optimised award titles.
  - Review sector trends for gaps in offer
- .10 The existing 9 Schools / Departments would be brought together into 3 larger multi-discipline Schools. AB explained that feedback had been received during the consultation phase on the proposed groupings of subjects for the Schools. The grouping contained in the presentation, and that would be proposed to Council for implementation on 7 February, was the configuration that the Faculty Executive Board and the FASS Change Steering Committee believed worked best for the Faculty as a whole.

#### Result

- .11 The following four key measurable outcomes/results were summarised:
- Achieve growth in research power and excellence (grant capture, % research active staff, gains in REF performance)
  - Maintain, or achieve above, current high performance on education-related metrics (NSS at 86%, Graduate Outcomes at 85%)
  - Significant growth in overall student population (approx 20% over 3-years) and higher % of overseas students (45% in 3 years)
  - Achieve financial sustainability, aiming for a Faculty margin of +50% (up from current 36%)

#### Senate feedback and discussion

- .12 In response to concerns that the changes in structure would be costly and increase or duplicate middle management roles AB advised Senate that whilst the Head of School role would be open both externally and internally the University would **not** be employing a recruitment agency and it was envisaged that the successful candidates could be either internal or external. AB also confirmed the purpose of the restructure is to avoid duplication rather than to create more of it: for example, the role of a Head of Discipline would be very different from a Head of School.

- .13 In discussing the rationale for restructuring into three schools, Senators were asked to reflect on whether the existing nine-school structure with a 15+ strong Executive Team was optimal: by comparison, FEPS comprises four Schools and FHMS is comprised of five.
- .14 Members queried whether there would be a cost saving on professional services. AB noted that as the School structure changes, the professional services in place to support Schools would also, inevitably, undergo some changes.
- .15 The fact that REF reporting will need to be undertaken at discipline level was discussed but the structure would not prevent this (disciplines were not being split between Schools).
- .16 Senate discussed whether similar change plan programmes were scheduled for FHMS and FEPS, and the Chair confirmed that there was currently no planned large scale review for either Faculty. It was acknowledged that both FHMS and FEPS had been undertaking more regular, smaller scale review and changes (i.e. with the introduction of the Vet School) whilst FASS remained unchanged in structure for several years.
- .17 Members were encouraged to think about how the restructure could enable / provide opportunities and discussed:
- how postgraduate numbers could be grown as a result of this interdisciplinary approach
  - how a bigger unit allows shared resources enabling better absorption of market shocks (under / over recruitment in different areas for instance or change in demand for a given subject area)
  - how fewer separate Schools will allow for a more fluid approach to adapting and changing curricula (the example given was the current hurdles being faced in implementing interdisciplinary modules).
- .18 The cost of teaching, a critical issue for the University and the sector as a whole, was discussed. The importance of cross delivering curriculum where appropriate and of ensuring smarter, better use of facilities was discussed (i.e. avoiding the use of a large capacity lecture theatre for small scale groups). However, it was also acknowledged that there is a place for, and pedagogical requirement, to retain an element of small class teaching where appropriate.
- .19 The VP Voice fed-back the importance of ensuring clear, proactive communication to existing students and to ensuring the experience of continuing students was not negatively impacted by the restructuring process. Senate noted that the PVC Executive Dean (FASS) and Associate Deans (FASS) would be meeting and working with the SU sabbaticals regarding the FASS change plans.
- .20 Senate discussed how the changes may impact upon applications and on how applicants will perceive the University's offer. The importance of the subject and of the programme itself were agreed to be foremost in terms of importance to students (rather than the Faculty or School that the programme sits within). The portfolio review envisaged as part of the FASS Change Plan, which would be led by the new Schools, would enable an optimisation of our offer, while the new value proposition would bring out the USPs of each course on offer.
- .21 Senate noted the FASS Change Plan would be submitted to Council on 7 February 2024.

## **5 CLOSING ITEMS**

**23/038 AOB**

- .1 The Chair advised Senate that the Academic Promotions Process 2024 had been delayed, not cancelled. The critical dates would be towards the end of the calendar year (in the last quarter of 2024).
- .2 The draft external facing version of the new University Strategy had been completed and would be circulated for information to Senate members via email (and uploaded to the Convene document library) on the afternoon of 31 January. If members would like to provide individual feedback on the strategy they should email the VP Strategic Growth, Martine Carter, by 21 February.

**23/039 Dates of next Senate meetings 2023/24**

- .1 Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2024  
Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2024