

Senate

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2025 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 Eunice Ma
Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Research & Innovation	Prof Lisa Collins
Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Executive Dean, FABSS	Prof Annika Bautz
Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Executive Dean, FEPS	Prof Bob Nichol
Acting Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Executive Dean, FHMS	Prof Roberto La Ragione
Vice-President, Global	Patrick Degg
Associate VP, External Engagement (International)	Prof Amelia Hadfield*
Associate Dean, Education, FABSS	Prof Emma Mayhew
Associate Dean, Education, FEPS	Prof Esat Alpay
Associate Dean, Education, FHMS	Dr Dynatra Subasinghe
Associate Dean, Research & Innovation, FABSS	Prof Glen Parry
Associate Dean, Research & Innovation, FEPS	Prof Jin Xuan*
Associate Dean, Research & Innovation, FHMS	Prof Deborah Dunn-Walters*
Acting Chief Student Officer	Emma Rowsell
Director of Academic Performance, Quality & Governance	Nick Moore
Director of Research, Innovation & Impact	Gill Fairbairn
Director, Institute for People-Centred AI	Prof Adrian Hilton
Director, Institute for Sustainability	Position vacant**
President of the Students' Union	Liam White
VP Voice of the Students' Union	Luana Vasconcelos

Nominated (FABSS):

School of Law	Assoc Prof Dr Joshua Andresen
School of Literature and Languages	Assoc Prof Dr Constance Bantman
School of Music and Media	Dr Femi Adeyemi-Ejeye
School of Sociology	Prof Ranjana Das*
School of Law	Claire Lillywhite
School of Economics	Prof Ricardo Praca Cavaco Nunes

Nominated (FEPS):

Computer Science & Electrical Engineering	Dr Mariam Cirovic
Sust, Civ and Env Eng	Dr Ana Andries
Computer Science & Electrical Engineering	Dr Rizwan Ashgar
Sust, Civ and Env Eng	Dr Lirong Liu
Mechanical Engineering Sciences	Prof Mahmoud Shafiee
Chemistry and Chemical Engineering	Dr Michael Short

Nominated (FHMS):

School of Biosciences	Dr Mohammad Asim
School of Biosciences	Dr Terri Grassby
School of Psychology	Dr Charo Hodgkins
School of Psychology	Dr Eleanor Ratcliffe*
School of Veterinary Medicine	Dr Giovanna Nalesso
School of Veterinary Medicine	Dr Charlotte Maile

Nominated (PGR Student)	FEPS PGR Student	Chunlin Chen*
Alternates:	Co-Director, Institute for Sustainability	Monique Raats [alternate for Director of Institute for Sustainability]
In attendance:	Governance Officer [minute taker] VP Strategy, Planning and Performance Head of Governance Senate Open Observer Seat	Kelley Padley Martine Carter [24/028] Ros Allen [24/031] Dr Sarfraz Jeraj

* denotes absence

** denotes absence, but represented by an alternate

1 INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

24/023 Apologies for absence

- .1 Apologies were received from Amelia Hadfield, Jin Xuan, Deborah Dunn-Walters, Ranjana Das, Eleanor Ratcliffe and Chunlin Chen.
- .2 The Chair welcomed the following to Senate:
Prof. Monique Raats – Co-Director of the Institute for Sustainability (alternate for the vacant Director for Sustainability post);
Dr Sarfraz Jeraj – holder of the Senate Open Observer Seat for this meeting.

24/024 Minutes of the last meeting(s)

- .1 The Board **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 30 October 2024.
- .2 The Chair noted the following items from the 30 October 2024 minutes:
 - The School of Engineering successfully came into existence on 1 December 2024 and thanks were expressed to the academic leads;
 - The University has secured a list of 380+ nominees that have agreed to complete the QS survey and thanks were expressed to staff for providing contacts.

24/025 Vice-Chancellor's Update and Performance Report

- .1 ML presented his paper.
- .2 Following nine years of service, ML would step down at the end of May to take up the role of Vice-Chancellor and President of the University of Wollongong in Australia. The Provost & Senior Vice-President would be Acting Vice-Chancellor & President whilst the recruitment process was undertaken.
- .3 Senate noted the Government's AI Opportunities Action Plan announced on 13 January. ML confirmed that a Senior Leaders Forum would be held on 25 January with input from Jon Ward, CIO, and Adrian Hilton, Director for Institute for People-Centred AI.

- .4 The increase to the fee cap for domestic undergraduate study taking effect from 25/26 was noted. The increase in employers' NI contributions will also take effect from April 2025 and it was acknowledged that, at a high level, these roughly cancel each other out in 25/26.
- .5 ML advised Senate that the University is tracking towards its £8m planned surplus (£10m surplus renegotiated with Council to £8m further to cost of paying the cost of living increase). In comparison to the sector as a whole, the University is in a relatively stable position and the changes made through the financial resilience programme had placed Surrey ahead of the curve in terms of managing the financial challenges.
- .6 ML and Senate extended their congratulations to:
- Staff promoted through the recent Academic Promotions round;
 - The inauguration of CIFAL Surrey (a new UN training centre based at the University of Surrey to help address climate change) and to Prof. Amelia Hadfield on her appointment as the new Director of CIFAL Surrey;
 - Emma Rowsell, as she takes up the position of Acting Chief Student Officer;
 - Prof. Emma Mayhew, ADE FABSS, on her appointment as PVC (Education and Student Experience) at Royal Holloway;
- .7 Senate noted some of the work underway to diversify income streams:
- In-country TNE opportunities;
 - Surrey's potential role in providing CPD and other professional training in AI;
 - Research commercialisation – Managing Director of ISL has been recruited and significant steps are being taken to secure seed funding for research incubation.

24/026 SU Update

- .1 Liam White, the USSU President, provided a verbal update to Senate.
- .2 Pulse 1 survey data results had recently been received and evidenced that overall satisfaction with the Students' Union was the highest it had been for a number of years (64% satisfaction – 17% up from the previous year).
- .3 There had been a minor decrease in student awareness of the Course Representation system and it was noted that the restructure may have impacted upon this (the Course Representative scheme no longer has individual members of University staff working as 'Rep Contacts' in Faculties). It was acknowledged that communicating the Course Reps and their function is an area for focus / improvement. Senate were also advised that 23 Head Reps had been recruited and that 'Course Rep of the month' had been launched in November (with 28 nominations received for that inaugural month).
- .4 The increase in the Independent Academic Advisor's workload was discussed. There had been an increase in the number of queries submitted for academic advice and in the number of complaints received: they had already received 70% of the caseload received for the entirety of academic year 2023/24. It was hoped that, once some of the self-serve aspects of the Seamless Student Journey are in operation, the number of queries may reduce.
- .5 LM advised Senators that the Student Voice Co-ordinator (Networks) had commenced in role on 6 January and had been funded from the money the University receives for Access and Participation (APP funding).

24/027 Chair's Action/Business

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

2 ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

24/028 Recommendations for Pan-University Institute (PUI) Model

- .1 The Chair, VC & President, PVC R&I, PVC Executive Dean (FEPS) and VP Strategy, Planning & Performance presented. It was noted that an optional Senate drop-in session had been held on 13 January and the Chair thanked those Senators that were able to attend for their useful feedback.
- .2 Senators were presented with an overarching PUI framework to:
- Support the operation of the University's two existing PUIs (Institute for Sustainability, Institute for People-Centred AI) and;
 - Enable the expansion from two to five PUIs as outlined in the University's Vision 2041.
- Should the framework be approved, more detailed work with relevant staff across the University would be undertaken to work through the operational details of implementation.
- .3 The presentation provided a summary of the work undertaken to shape the proposed PUI model presented. The PVC R&I chaired the Task and Finish Group (3 ADRIs, 2 existing PUI Directors, representative Heads of School, 1 DoFO, independent academic representatives, and colleagues from HR) and presented a paper to EB in November 2024. EB approved a number of recommendations therein and agreed there were two key areas that needed further consideration: the resourcing and staffing of PUIs.
- .4 A sub-group, led by EB members, had been tasked with considering the financial model and staffing model of the proposed framework ahead of the Farrer Planning Round. A resulting proposal was presented to, and approved by, EB in December 2024. It detailed:
- A shared staffing model wherein all academic staff have a home school and may be seconded from their home school to spend a defined period (fixed term) of their academic career collaboratively working with a PUI. It identified two categories of formal shared staff and one category of informal, adjunct staff. The model stipulated the percentage share for the School and PUI for each formal category (Core and Inter-Disciplinary¹).
 - A shared funding model in which PUIs are treated in the same way as academic schools (rather than as professional services) providing greater transparency and placing PUIs on an equal footing with schools in relation to their costs, income and contribution.
- .5 Senate noted the proposed PUI model was aimed at enabling the scale required for success – shared revenue, shared cost and shared success. Putting in place a framework that enables the University to pull together the right resources and staff to compete for the larger scale research bids and to ensure that such bids benefit both the school(s) and PUI.
- .6 Senators explored whether staff could continue to contribute to more than one PUI under the proposed model. TD explained that where staff were 'adjunct fellows' with no formal FTE allocation they could continue to contribute to more than one PUI. Should a project that the adjunct fellow is working on proceed to a sizeable project/bid and the academic accept the offer to become a Core or Inter-Disciplinary Research Fellow then, in the interest of the academic, PUI

¹ The names of the 3 categories of shared staff are indicative in the paper and subject to confirmation but are used as presented in the paper for the purpose of these minutes

and School involved, there will need to be some control imposed (to save an over-allocation of the individuals time). An academic can be an adjunct fellow of more than one PUI but not a Core or Inter-Disciplinary of more than one.

- .7 Senators queried whether the framework would support dependencies and relationships between the PUIs and were assured it would. It was noted that the two existing PUIs already have a Research programme that straddles the Institute for Sustainability and the Institute for People-Centred AI.
- .8 Senators discussed how a programme driven by a PUI would operate. The Director of the Institute for People-Centred AI explained that there was a precedent for this and that an existing programme was in operation. Such programmes sit within the School and utilise the apparatus of quality assurance that exists within the School (Faculty Boards, Exam Boards etc). The PUI is involved in the caretaking of the programme (and possibly the Director for Programme may be in the PUI) and some staff from the school may be involved in teaching on the programme. Income from the programme is split between the PUI and the School.
- .9 The Chair emphasised that the model allowed for two categories of formal sharing of academic staff: Core Disciplinary (50/50% share with Schools) and Inter-Disciplinary (30/70% share with Schools). It would not be possible to negotiate a myriad of alternative sharing ratios for individual staff. Senators acknowledged the commitment to review the shared staffing percentages within 24 months.
- .10 Senators raised some of the operational aspects relating to the HR function. The Chair advised that HR colleagues, in collaboration with key University staff (i.e. Heads of School, PUI Director, impacted staff) would be involved in the next steps required to operationalise the framework and that this would include consideration of:
- Supervisory requirements (notably of ECR who are publishing REF returnable work and may need support in an advisory capacity);
 - PDR process to decide shared workload arrangements and goals
 - Appropriate process for recruiting staff especially to the new PUIs
 - Shared delivery of PS functions to existing and new PUIs – needs to be scaleable.
- .11 Senate moved to a vote. The outcome of the vote, announced by the Senate electoral officer, was verified as:
- 28 in favour
 - 3 against
 - 3 abstentions
- The Chair announced that the revised Pan-University Institute model was **approved** with 28 out of 34 votes in favour.

24/029 Our Research & Innovation Policy Statement

- .1 The PVC R&I presented.
- .2 Senate **endorsed** the Our Research and Innovation Policy Statement to Executive Board for approval subject to the following:
- Insertion of hyperlinks where applicable;
 - Appropriate incorporation of, or reference to, sensitive jurisdictions / trusted research in the Statement (to be agreed between PVC R&I and PVC Global).

24/030 Academic Quality Framework – Exceptions to A1 Regulations for taught programmes (due to PSRBs)

- .1 The PVC Education presented.
- .2 The key changes to the Exceptions to the A1 Regulations for Taught Programmes were summarised:
 - .2.1 *BVMSci programmes in the Vet School, which are accredited by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS)* - all written assessments that are high stakes must be standard set, therefore the existing exemption for the BVMSci programme (granted by the University in 2018/19) should be applied to the late summer assessment period as well. The proposal is to extend this existing exception to cover all written assessments that are high stakes (initial or reassessment attempts).
 - .2.2 *UG Nutrition programmes, which are accredited by the Association for Nutrition (AfN)* - AfN have relaxed their Standards and the proposal is to reflect this in the relaxation of the programme requirements. This means Surrey no longer requires an alternative exit award for the BSc Nutrition programme, as previously approved by Senate. The amendment will apply to all new students who registered from 2023/24 and onwards on the accredited by AfN undergraduate programmes in Nutrition (i.e., Level 5 in 2024/25).
- .3 The proposed changes had been discussed and endorsed by UEC at its meeting on 10 December. Senate **approved** the amendments to the regulations.

3 ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

24/031 Proposed Changes to Ordinances

- .1 Ros Allen, Head of Governance, attended to present the paper.
- .2 Given the amendments to the Charter and the removal of Statutes, currently awaiting approval from the King's Privy Council, it had been necessary to amend the Ordinances accordingly. Council had approved the amended Ordinances via resolution on 20 December 2024 for implementation as and when the new Charter is approved and Statutes removed.
- .3 Senate had received updates on the changes to Charter, removal of Statutes and proposed amendments to Ordinances at its meeting(s) on 10 January 2024 and 30 October 2024, and had contributed towards the changing definition of the work Senate undertakes as a sub-committee of Council.
- .4 RA advised that a Senator had alerted her to a typographical error in the Ordinances which would be amended. She had also received a request to revisit the following paragraphs and confirmed that consideration of the below would be incorporated the next time that the Ordinances were reviewed:
 - 6.1.2 - Change the diversity statement to be in line with the updated Senate Nominations diversity statement on protected characteristics as well as academic position;
 - 6.3.1.2 – Review the language used on Exclusion, Suspension and Expulsion (consider whether a 'plain English' explanation can be appended).

24/032 Continuation, completion and attainment

- .1 Nick Moore, Director of Academic Performance, Quality & Governance presented the Report and provided Senate with a summary of key findings from the internal data on attainment, continuation and completion.
- .2 The internal data on attainment evidences a drop in attainment for the third consecutive year with good degrees dropping 5 percentage points to 73%. A comparison with the sector shows that the Wesley Group and Russell Group have seen similar drops. Senate discussed whether there may be a relationship between entry grades and exit profiles and were advised that a recent exercise was undertaken to consider Surrey data from across the University (from 2017 entrants – 2021 entrants) which found that there was only a very slight correlation between entry grades and attainment, continuation and completion. The data indicated there were other issues such as engagement and attendance that had a greater impact on performance. Senate noted the CSO would be leading a review of the Personal Tutor role as part of the actions agreed in the University APP.
- .3 The data raised two areas of notable concern to Senate which warranted further investigation and required addressing by the University:
- The inconsistency of the distribution of grading and awards across different courses at the University;
 - The Black continuation, completion and attainment gap.
- .4 Grading / attainment variances across courses
Senate noted the range of allocations of good degrees was of concern. The Schools showed a large level of variation in first class awards: none, for the second year, in Politics; 7% in Law; to 53% firsts in GSA. Whilst there was discussion as to whether this range could be partly explained by disciplinary norms that extend beyond the University, Senate agreed consideration should be given at a granular level to individual modules, assessment, standard of marking to ensure parity.
- .5 Black attainment gap
Widespread concern about this gap was noted by the Chair and by many Senators. Emma Rowsell, CSO, advised that the new OfS approved UoS APP outlined the University’s holistic institution-wide approach to addressing the gap noting that the actions identified concentrated on improving continuation first (and then attainment would follow on). Actions included, but were not limited to:
- Interventions, in terms of the curriculum;
 - Staff training;
 - Personal Tutor review and amends;
 - MySurrey engagement.

4 ITEMS TO NOTE

24/033 OSCAR Annual Report

- .1 The paper was noted.

24/034 Our Students Migration Plan

- .1 The paper was noted.

24/035 Our Research & Innovation Migration Plan

- .1 The paper was noted.

24/036 Recommendations of newly appointed Emeritus and Emerita

- .1 The paper was noted.

24/037 Research & Innovation Report

.1 The report was noted.

24/038 Senate Sub-Committee Minutes

University Education Committee, 10th December

University Research & Innovation Committee, 3rd December

Access & Participation Governance Panel 10th October

.1 The unconfirmed minutes were noted.

24/039 Items for future meetings

.1 The paper was noted.

4 CLOSING ITEMS

24/040 AOB

.1 None.

24/041 Dates of next Senate meetings 2024/25

.1 Wednesday 2 April 2025

Wednesday 25 June 2025