

University of Suffolk

SENATE

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 8 July at 14:00 hours via Zoom

Chair: Professor Helen Langton (Vice-Chancellor)

Present: Professor Mohamed Abdel-Maguid (Dean, School of Engineering, Arts, Science and Technology), Daniel Betts (Students' Union School Officer, Suffolk Business School), Holly Bowen (Admissions Manager), Dr Ellen Buck (Director of Learning and Teaching), Dr Sam Chenery-Morris (University wide academic representative (School of Health and Sports Sciences)), Dr Daba Chowdhury (University wide academic representative (Suffolk Business School)), Adam Clayden (School of Engineering, Arts, Science and Technology representative), Professor Mohammad Dastbaz (Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Paul Driscoll-Evans (Dean, School of Health and Sports Sciences), Fiona Fisk (Academic Registrar), Marianne Flack (Director of Quality, Teacher Development, Student Progress and Foundation Learning, Suffolk New College), Rose Gant (Students' Union School Officer, School of Engineering, Arts, Science and Technology), Daniel Goulborn (President, Students' Union), Rachel Heathershaw (University wide representative, School of Health and Sports Sciences), Professor Gurpreet Jagpal (Pro-Vice-Chancellor Business and Entrepreneurship), Dr Wendy Lecluyse (School of Social Sciences and Humanities representative), Professor Brian McCook (Dean, School of Social Sciences and Humanities), Dr Stuart McErlain-Naylor (School of Health and Sports Sciences representative), Reilly Willis (University wide representative, School of Social Sciences and Humanities)

Apologies: Professor Emma Bond (Director of Research), Kerry Payne, Head of Higher Education and Access, East Coast College, Robert Price (Suffolk Business School representative)

Secretary: Alison McQuin (Head of Validation and Exams)

In attendance: Stuart Agnew (Representative, University and College Union), Polly Bridgman (Director of External Relations), Tim Greenacre (Registrar and Secretary), Dr Mark Lyne (Head of Quality Enhancement), Chris Meredith (Executive Dean HE, West Suffolk College), James Nial (Head of Planning and Management Information), Andrew Smith (Independent Board member)

Minutes shown in ***bold italics*** should be treated as confidential and will be removed from the published set on the University website.

Minutes of previous meeting held on 25 March 2020

19/125 The minutes of the correspondence meeting were approved as an accurate record.

Matters Arising

Matters Arising – Partnerships management review (from minute 19/071)

19/126 The task and finish group have met and a report outlining the findings would come to the next Senate.

Agreed action: The Deputy Vice-Chancellor to provide a report from the Partnerships management review task and finish group to the October 2020 Senate meeting.

Matters Arising – Degree outcomes statement (from minute 19/072)

19/127 The degree outcomes statement was included on the agenda for approval, see minutes 19/150 to 19/153.

Policies and procedures

19/128 The following policies and procedures were approved by Chair's action, following comments received at the last meeting:

- Academic Appeals Procedure (from minute 19/084)
- Higher and Degree Apprenticeship Framework (from minute 19/091)
- Recognition of Prior Learning Policy (from minute 19/094)
- Student Charter (from minute 19/098)
- Student Complaints Procedure (from minute 19/102)

Any other business (from minute 19/122)

19/129 A series of all staff question and answer sessions for the University Vision and Strategy were provided in May.

Students' Union report

19/130 The Students' Union report provided a thorough reflection on the work of the Students' Union for the previous two years. Members thanked the outgoing President and Vice-President for their work.

19/131 In addition to the campaign pledges of the new Students' Union President and Vice-President, it was noted that there was an ambition, alongside current provision, to address student wellbeing through a less formal environment and to work with the National Union of Students (NUS) to create a 'Good Night Out', dependent on Covid-19 safety requirements.

19/132 Members discussed the use of lecture capture, agreeing that it could be used. There were issues raised by Union colleagues, and it was agreed that the Director of Learning and Teaching and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor would meet with Union colleagues to agree on a Framework.

Agreed action: The Director of Learning and Teaching, with input from the Schools, Students' Union and Trade Unions, to provide a discussion paper on the use of lecture capture to the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee.

Chair's update

19/133 The Chair reported that the speed of response to Covid-19 had differed across the HE sector and was thankful to all staff members who moved quickly and efficiently to online learning, as well as ensuring that students still had a positive experience and were able to complete the academic year and progress.

- 19/134 The response to the pandemic had been a learning experience for all staff and the Chair encouraged teams to record the positive changes that had occurred to ensure these were maintained in future years.
- 19/135 It was noted that during the pandemic there was an unprecedented volume of communication from the government and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRB).
- 19/136 The University was now focusing on how to re-open the campus whilst ensuring the health and safety of staff, students and the wider community and still maintaining a quality experience for students.

Covid-19 and recovery planning

Changes made as a result of Covid-19

- 19/137 A summary of changes to assessment as a result of Covid-19 was received and all staff members were thanked for their responsiveness and flexibility to adapt to these changes. Data from the completed Assessment Boards had been collected and a report would come to the spring 2021 Senate looking at whether some of the variations to the assessment regulations would be retained.

Agreed action: The Academic Registrar to submit a report to the spring 2021 Senate on the impact of the assessment changes to Assessment Boards.

Graduation

- 19/138 It was confirmed that the 2020 graduation ceremonies had been postponed and that this had been communicated to all students. Discussions had also taken place with all partner institutions.
- 19/139 Separate ceremonies for 2020 and 2021 graduating students would take place and students had provided ideas of how the postponed ceremonies could best celebrate students' achievement, particularly with the disruption due to Covid-19.
- 19/140 Additional information regarding the ceremonies would be circulated to both students and staff, with staff also receiving a copy of the information circulated to students, during August.

Reshaping learning

- 19/141 The approved block learning pilot was provided to members. Whilst there was some concern that this had not previously been discussed at Senate it was noted that discussion had taken place at the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee, the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, the Senior Leadership Team and with the outgoing Students' Union President and Vice-President. There was also engagement with the wider sector.
- 19/142 The research found that block and blend learning was inclusive and flexible for students as it allowed students to access learning in their own time. Members queried whether this approach was also suitable for part-time students and it was noted that it should be beneficial to employers who could release part-time students from the workplace more easily. It was recognised that it would be more beneficial to deliver block learning to a cohort of part-time students to create a better student experience.
- 19/143 It was acknowledged that courses would have different approaches to block and blend learning to ensure it met the needs of the curriculum, whilst still meeting the needs of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). Course teams were encouraged to only make

changes where necessary during the pilot year as further changes could be made for September 2021 as lessons from the pilot were learnt.

Delivering excellence in blended learning

19/144 A framework of standards for the enhanced use of Brightspace was provided to members. It was confirmed that assessment briefs and schedules should be published from the first day of the module being delivered and that tutor feedback should be released as early as possible.

Recovery planning

19/145 The Academic Planning Group met regularly to review the delivery, timetable and approach to assessment for the 2020/21 academic year. It was confirmed that the academic calendar for 2020/21 had now been finalised and circulated to staff. Course teams were encouraged to access the training available from Learning Services to support teaching and learning for 2020/21.

19/146 The Recovery Planning Group also met regularly to coordinate the return to campus, focusing on operation capacities and ensuring the health and safety of staff and students. It was noted that, in the future, staff members would need to complete a mandatory return to campus course before allowed on-site and members were reminded that currently only designated staff were allowed on campus. The Group were working with the Chief Executive of the Students' Union to discuss whether a student version of a safe return to campus course could be created.

19/147 The Recovery Planning Group were also reviewing commercial operations on campus, ensuring that student accommodation providers were complying with government legislation/guidance concerning Covid-19.

19/148 The Timetabling and Space Management Group were also working to ensure that the institution was ready for the academic year to start in September 2020.

University vision and strategy

19/149 Following discussion at a joint Senate and Board workshop as well as all staff question and answer sessions, the new University Vision and Strategy was presented for approval. Members noted some minor corrections that needed amending but supported the approval of the document for the 2020-2030 period.

Agreed action: The Deputy Vice-Chancellor to update the University Vision and Strategy with the following prior to publication and approval by Board:

- Update the International section to better reflect the current offer
- Replace the use of 'tolerance' within the Mission and Values section
- Correct any typographical errors

Degree outcomes statement

19/150 As part of the sector's ongoing commitment to protecting the value of degree qualifications over time, all universities were required to publish a Degree Outcomes Statement. The statement was in two parts, one for publication and one for internal review, which would help inform the next review of the assessment regulations.

19/151 It was confirmed that the data used covered the period to the end of the 2018/19 academic year, so was not affected by Covid. The data for the years previous to the

School restructure were mapped to the current School structure so that comparisons could be made between years.

19/152 The results of the statement reassured members that a range of classifications were used at the University and these continued to be monitored through the RiME processes.

19/153 Members were supportive of the statement and thanked the Quality Project Manager for their work in producing the statement but noted some minor amendments were required to ensure consistency in the presentation of the graphs.

Agreed action: The Head of Quality Enhancement to ensure consistency in the presentation of the graphs prior to publication on the website.

Policies and procedures

Academic Misconduct Policy

19/154 The Academic Misconduct Policy was reviewed as part of the normal cycle of reviews. Members queried why Assessment Boards were able to reduce but not increase penalties for infringements and it was confirmed this was due to the potential of Assessment Boards having additional information about a student's extenuating circumstances that would not be available to the Academic Misconduct Panel. It was also explained that in paragraph 48 a serious incident of academic misconduct could be escalated to a formal allegation.

Outcome: Approved

19/155 It was confirmed that further guidance on storing information and PSRB confidentiality could be provided to academic staff but noted that there could be different practice across Schools and PSRBs.

Admissions Policy

19/156 The Admissions Policy was reviewed annually and it was noted that separate contractual arrangements were in place to cover partner institutions.

Outcome: Approved.

Apprenticeship EPA Procedure

19/157 The new Apprenticeship End Point Assessment Procedure was provided to members.

Outcome: Approved.

Dignity at Study

19/158 The Dignity at Study Policy was reviewed as part of the normal cycle of reviews with minor amendments proposed.

Outcome: Approved.

Extenuating Circumstances Policy

19/159 Minor changes were proposed to the Extenuating Circumstances Policy. A full review would take place during 2020/21, drawing on research from colleagues.

Outcome: Approved.

General Regulations

19/160 The General Regulations were reviewed annually.

Outcome: Approved.

Intellectual Property (Commercial and Exploitation)

19/161 The revised Intellectual Property (Commercial and Exploitation) policy was provided to members. Members queried whether the policy also related to postgraduate students and whether the heading at paragraph 15 contradicted paragraph 5. It was agreed that further work was required to separate the policy into sections for research students, staff and students.

Agreed action: The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Business and Engagement) to update the policy with sections for research students, staff and students and submit by 31 August 2020 for approval via electronic circulation.

Online Behaviour Policy

19/162 As part of the cyclical review process, updates had been made to the Online Safety Policy, including a change to the title.

Outcome: Approved.

Reflective Peer Review Scheme: Code of Practice

19/163 The Reflective Peer Review Scheme had been updated following discussions at Quality Committee and CELT.

Outcome: Approved.

Re-approval procedures

19/164 It was proposed to make minor amendments to the Re-approval procedure to make the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy more explicit.

Outcome: Approved.

19/165 While members were supportive of the proposed changes they recognised the need to streamline procedures while still meeting QAA requirements. It was suggested that a review of the learnings during Covid on quality procedures be brought to a future Quality Committee.

Agreed action: The Head of Quality Enhancement to provide a report to the February 2021 Quality Committee on streamlining quality processes in light of lessons learnt during Covid.

Research Ethics Framework

19/166 The revised Research Ethics Framework was discussed with members querying the terminology used within the document, suggesting that the term human 'subjects' should be changed to 'participants'. Members also suggested that the sub-heading under the 'Roles and Responsibilities' section be updated to show that it has a broader remit than human participants.

Agreed action: The Director of Research to update the Framework with the following:

- Change terminology from human 'subjects' to 'participants'
- Update sub-heading under roles and responsibilities to show that it has a much broader remit than human participants

The revised Framework should be submitted by 31 July 2020 for approval on Chair's action.

Research Misconduct Policy

19/167 The proposed changes to the Research Misconduct Policy were supported by members.

Outcome: Approved

RiME Procedure

19/168 Minor changes were proposed to the RiME Procedure to reflect the use of Qlik Sense.

Outcome: Approved

Student Discipline Procedure

19/169 The Student Discipline Procedure was reviewed as part of the normal cycle of reviews. Members queried whether paragraph 122 taking criminal sanctions into account prior to internal sanctions resulted in a cumulative sanction. It was explained that no changes had been made to the content of the paragraph and that the student would not receive a cumulative sanction but the outcome of the criminal sanction may have a bearing on the internal processes.

Outcome: Approved

Student Protection Plan

19/170 The Student Protection Plan was reviewed annually with changes made in response to feedback from the Office for Students (OfS).

Outcome: Approved

Tutorial Policy

19/171 The minor revisions to the Tutorial Policy were approved.

Outcome: Approved

Partnerships

CECOS

19/172 A new franchise partnership with CECOS was proposed. Members were supportive of the proposal but queried the increase in the turnover and income. It was explained that the increase was due to the additional programmes, which were a part of their trajectory of growth.

Outcome: Approved.

LSC Egypt

19/173 An additional delivery site was proposed to the existing partnership that the University had with LSC. While members were supportive of the proposal in principle they noted that additional information about regulatory requirements was required.

Outcome: Approved in principle subject to additional information about regulatory requirements to be submitted by LSC.

Assessment moderation for UNICAF

19/174 A variation to the University's standard approach to the moderation of marking was proposed for the UNICAF programmes. Members queried the approach but were supportive of the changes as it was recognised that UNICAF operated an intensive delivery model.

Outcome: Approved

Research and Enterprise Committee terms of reference

19/175 The minor revisions to the Research and Enterprise Committee terms of reference were supported.

Outcome: Approved

Honorary Awards Committee

19/176 The nominations for honorary awards were supported by members.

Outcome: Approved

Access and Participation Plan

19/177 An update on the current and 2020-2025 Access and Participation Plan was provided to members along with the completed outcome chains. It was confirmed that CPD opportunities would be available for course teams to develop staff awareness and, where appropriate, approach to identifying students within specific groups.

19/178 It was recognised that Covid would impact the targets set across the sector. The Access and Participation Plan would be brought to Senate regularly to review progress on the targets.

Vice-Chancellor Senate member nominations

19/179 The potential Vice-Chancellor nominations for Senate membership were discussed, with suggestions including drawing membership from BAME staff, newer staff members or those with less committee experience, a member of Professional Services staff with expertise in either online learning or mental health, an academic member of staff from the School of Engineering, Arts, Science and Technology or the Professor of Education and Social Mobility. Members were supportive of the suggestions, particularly drawing membership from BAME staff and where possible combining some of the proposals, as this would provide the Senate membership with greater balance and diversity and could provide further expertise on some key issues that Senate needed to focus on.

Agreed action: The Chair to approach staff members to fill the Vice-Chancellor member vacancies, with new members to be in place for the 2020/21 committee cycle.

Student recruitment update

19/180 Clearing started the week commencing 6 July 2020. Members were reminded that everyone within the institution contributed to the success of student recruitment.

19/181 While student recruitment at West Suffolk College was currently lower than expected, it was noted that recruitment tended to occur later in the academic year but the

College would expect a slight overall decline in student numbers due to the challenges related to Covid-19.

Student attrition

19/182 The student attrition data showed a better position compared to the same point in the previous year but it was noted that a large number of students were withdrawn after last year's assessment boards. The data was being closely monitored with the Partnership Groups monitoring partner data.

Student surveys

19/183 It was reported that publication of the National Student Survey results had been delayed until 15 July. The impact of Covid-19 on the completion rate of the internal student survey was noted.

Academic calendar 2020/21

19/184 The academic calendar for 2020/21 was provided to members, noting that the science related courses within the School of Health and Sports Science were no longer part of the block learning pilot. It was queried whether the academic calendar would be published to students.

Agreed action: The Academic Registrar to consider publishing the academic calendar to students with an update provided at the October 2020 Senate meeting.

Partnerships update

19/185 An update on existing and new partnerships was provided to members for information.

OIA annual statement

19/186 Members received the 2019-20 OIA statement for information.

Course proposals

19/187 The list of approved course proposal forms was received.

Course suspension and discontinuations

19/188 The list of approved course suspensions and discontinuations was received.

Course validation/re-approval outcomes 2019/20

19/189 The list of validated and re-approved courses, approved on behalf of Senate, was received.

Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) reports

19/190 Recent correspondence from PSRBs was received for information.

Partnership register

19/191 Members received the list of international and UK partners, outside of the Partner Colleges, that have signed or were proposing to sign a memorandum of understanding.

Chair's action

19/192 The items approved on Chair's action since the last meeting was provided for information.

Reports from sub-committees

Quality Committee

19/193 The confirmed minutes from the meeting held on 4 March 2020 and the unconfirmed minutes from the meeting held on 17 June 2020 were received.

Research and Enterprise Committee

19/194 The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2020 were received.

School Academic Committee

19/195 The minutes from the Engineering, Arts, Science and Technology School Academic Committee held on 26 February 2020 were received.

19/196 The minutes from the Social Sciences and Humanities School Academic Committee held on 19 February and 3 June 2020 were received.

19/197 The minutes from the Suffolk Business School Academic Committee held on 19 February and 10 June 2020 were received.

Any other business

19/198 There was no further business.

Date of next meeting

19/199 The date of the next meeting is to be held at 2.00pm on Wednesday 14 October 2020.

Alison McQuin
Head of Validation and Exams