

University of Suffolk

## SENATE

**Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 9 October 2024 at 15.00 hours in room A206, Atrium Building**

**Chair:** Professor Jenny Higham (Vice-Chancellor)

**Present:** Dr Marco Beato (University wide representative, School of Allied Health Sciences), Professor Emma Bond (Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Knowledge Exchange), Dr Sam Chenery-Morris (Dean, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Public Health), Dr Mary Cornelius (Head of Educational Development and Digital Innovation, Vice-Chancellor's nominee), Professor Mohammad Dastbaz (Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Jo Divers (School of Nursing, Midwifery and Public Health representative), Professor Stuart Harmer (Dean, School of Technology, Business and Arts), Dr Ross Kemble (University wide representative, School of Technology, Business and Arts), Professor Paula Kersten (Dean, School of Allied Health Sciences), Professor Brian McCook (Dean, School of Social Sciences and Humanities), Abigail Morgan (OSACC Manager, Professional Services representative), Laura Pennie (Interim Academic Registrar), Danielle Ramsey (School of Allied Health Sciences representative), Dr Pallawi Sinha (School of Social Sciences and Humanities representative), Dr Marco Spada (University wide representative, School of Technology, Business and Arts), Ann Teemal (Lecturer, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Public Health, Vice-Chancellor's nominee), Jacob Weeks (Students' Union School Officer, Allied Health Sciences), Dr Reilly Willis (University wide representative, School of Social Sciences and Humanities), Lewis Woolsten (Students' Union President of Education)

**Apologies:** Dr Ellen Buck (Director of Learning and Teaching), Dr Adam Clayden (School of Technology, Business and Arts representative), Stuart Lipscombe (Representative, University and College Union), Shannon Pilsworth (Students' Union Officer, School of Technology, Business and Arts)

**Secretary:** Alison McQuin (Head of Quality)

**In attendance:** Associate Professor Stuart Agnew (Director, Centre for Academic and International Partnerships), Amy Carpenter (Associate Director, Careers, Employability and Enterprise), John Cavani (Director of Marketing, Communications and International), Fiona Fisk (University Secretary and Interim Director of London Centre), James Nial (Head of Planning and Management Information)

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

24/001 The minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2024 were approved as an accurate record.

## **Matters arising**

Access and Participation Plan (from minute 23/129)

24/002 A summary of the University's Access and Participation Plan (APP) would be published on the Hub following receipt of feedback from the Office for Students (OfS).

24/003 All actions had been completed, were due for completion at a future date or were included on the agenda.

## **Students' Union report**

24/004 It was reported that there was a high-level of engagement in Freshers' week activities, with future Students' Union (SU) activities including the National Union of Students (NUS) and local MP Jack Abbott being on campus.

24/005 By-elections were scheduled for the end of October, with both SU Presidents and an external company supporting students throughout the process. An international student representative post had been created to support the increase in the international student population.

24/006 It was confirmed that the SU were working with the Interim Dean of the London Centre to support the student experience when the London Centre opened.

## **Chair's report**

24/007 The Chair's report was received, noting that the agreements with the London School of Commerce (LSC) Malta and Sri Lanka had now been signed.

## **Senate structure**

24/008 The structure of the Senate meetings was discussed and it was agreed that a seminar agenda item was not required at every meeting.

## **Terms of reference**

24/009 The terms of reference were reviewed annually. Members were supportive of the changes, noting that a correction to a job title and committee name were required. It was agreed that the Director of Centre for Academic and International Partnerships should be included in membership.

**Agreed action:** The Secretary to correct job titles and committee names and update membership list by 11 October for inclusion on the Board papers.

24/010 It was noted that the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) guidance was being reviewed for Board and that any changes may be filtered down to Board sub-committees.

## **Policies and procedures**

Apprenticeship sub-contracting handbook

24/011 A new Apprenticeship Sub-contracting Handbook was proposed. While the handbook had been through the sub-committee structure and met the needs of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) requirements, members queried how the document aligned with existing University policies and procedures such as the Student Protection Plan and wanted to avoid duplication with existing University

documents. It was also noted that the handbook covered areas from both the Academic and Executive governance branches and so wanted to be assured that consultation with the Executive arm had been undertaken. It was agreed that further discussion with the Apprenticeship Hub was required before Chair's action could be taken.

**Agreed action:** The Interim Academic Registrar to discuss Senate feedback with the Apprenticeship Hub, prior to submitting a revised handbook by end of November 2024 for approval on Chair's action.

#### Peer Review and Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework

24/012 Minor revisions were proposed to the existing Peer Review and Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework. Members approved the changes.

**Outcome:** Approved

### Partnerships

#### ChangeSchool Partnership

24/013 After considerable investment of time and due diligence, a new partnership with ChangeSchool and Korkyt Ada Kyzylorda University to deliver dual awards was proposed. It was confirmed that this was a low-risk partnership due to the regulatory requirements within Kazakhstan and that student numbers would start low and rise to a maximum of 200 students.

**Outcome:** Approved to proceed to validation

24/014 In response to member queries, it was confirmed that approximately half of the student population and PhD staff members were female. It was also confirmed that the standard marketing protocols would be followed by all institutions.

24/015 It was noted that Transnational Education (TNE) requirements for data returns were changing and so this would be used as an opportunity, with further discussion outside of Senate with relevant teams, to ensure processes were aligned and efficient.

24/016 Going forward, there would be a wider conversation surrounding alignment of partners with the University's brand and who/how the University chooses to partner with.

#### London School of Business & Finance

24/017 A new partnership with London School of Business and Finance (LSBF) College Malaysia was proposed, confirming that numbers would be restricted within undergraduate courses to ensure the quality of provision, with long-term plans to grow student numbers and expand into franchising postgraduate provision once university status has been achieved by LSBF. It was confirmed that the cost per student was in line with the fees for similar provision in Malaysia.

24/018 While it was noted that there were concerns raised within the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) review report (2015), LSBF had been accredited with the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) and mitigations had been outlined on the associated risk register. Members were supportive of the new partnership.

**Outcome:** Approved to proceed to validation

## Student data

### Student surveys

- 24/019 The student survey results from the National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) and the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) were received
- 24/020 It was noted that there had been good progress in the NSS in some areas but further work was needed in relation to the course organisation and management questions. The PTES and PRES results were as expected, given the University's maturity in these areas, and the focus for improvements for the PRES were the research community as well as IT and facilities.
- 24/021 It was recognised that there would be fluctuations with the survey outcomes due to the small cohorts at the University, which could affect standings within the league tables.
- 24/022 Course teams were completing an action plan, which would go forward to the Student Experience Task Force and it was confirmed that professional services teams reviewed qualitative feedback for comments that were outside of the control of the course team.

### Graduate outcomes

- 24/023 The Graduate Outcomes data was received, noting this was used within the OfS student outcomes metrics as well as within league tables.
- 24/024 It was confirmed that the Business Engagement, Careers and Employability team would be collaborating with Registry Services and the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) to create a single action plan for course teams to use as part of the development of the new continuing monitoring dashboards.

## Academic framework and the Suffolk Experience

- 24/025 As part of the move to a new academic framework, as well as research on student belonging and evaluation of block and blend, there was an opportunity to develop and embed a new 'Suffolk Experience'. Members welcomed the project and draft concepts, noting the need to clarify how this would translate to the new London Centre and how it related to the Student Charter.

## Student recruitment

- 24/026 Members discussed student recruitment, noting there had been an increase in undergraduate students as well as a significant increase in postgraduate and international students. It was reported there was also an increase in the number of applications for the January/February 2025 intake at the University compared to previous years. While application numbers and recruitment had improved, there was still more to do to develop numbers at Ipswich over the next five years.
- 24/027 It was confirmed that a propensity model was now in place to better understand the conversion rate, with members suggesting that information about the trends over the previous five years would also be of benefit.

## Postgraduate research provision

- 24/028 The Doctoral College reported an increase in international applications due to postgraduate research provision entry points offered on a rolling basis.

- 24/029 A validation event with the University of Essex was taking place at the end of October for Essex to award the University's postgraduate research degrees, with Essex confirming that they would support the University through the Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAP) process.

### **External sector developments**

#### **OfS B3 student outcomes**

- 24/030 The latest OfS student outcome data was received, noting that challenges in the data were known and steps had been taken to address these, but due to the lag in data may take time for improvements to be seen.
- 24/031 It was reported that the University had been chosen by the OfS to be part of a pilot to publish partner student outcome dashboards. The University would respond to the consultation but were expecting the data to be published in November.

#### **UK Quality Code for Higher Education**

- 24/032 The new UK Quality Code for Higher Education, developed by the QAA, was highlighted to members.

### **Quality assurance reports**

- 24/033 A number of quality assurance reports had been consolidated and provided to members. It was confirmed that recommendations within the internal quality health-checks were being finalised and would be sent to the relevant managers for consideration, with a further health-check being scheduled to review progress made.

### **Partnerships update**

- 24/034 A partnerships update was provided, noting that the outstanding contracts had been signed. It was highlighted that the focus was now on expanding the existing portfolio rather than adding any new partners.

### **London Centre**

- 24/035 An update on the London Centre was received, noting the three risks of adding the site to the University's UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) licence, timetabling and staffing were being monitored and managed. Members thanked the Interim Director of the London Centre for their work on the project.

### **Senate elections**

- 24/036 The outcome of the recent elections to Senate membership were received.

### **Partnerships register**

- 24/037 The University's register of partnership arrangements was received.

### **Course proposal forms**

- 24/038 The list of approved course proposal forms was provided to members for information.

**Course suspension, discontinuation and re-instatement forms**

24/039 The list of approved course suspension and discontinuation forms was provided to members.

**Professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs)**

24/040 Activity involving PSRBs, since the last meeting, was provided to members for information.

**Senate Chair's action**

24/041 The items approved by the outgoing Vice-Chancellor since the last meeting were received.

**Register of attendance**

24/042 The register of members attending Senate meetings in 2023/24 was received.

**Sub-committees**

**Academic Appointments and Promotions Committee**

24/043 The minutes from the Academic Appointments and Promotion Committee held on 14 May 2024 were provided.

**Quality Committee**

24/044 The minutes from the Quality Committee held on 7 February and 15 May 2024 were received.

**Research and Enterprise Committee**

24/045 The minutes from the Research and Enterprise Committee held on 10 June 2024 were provided.

**School Academic Committee – Nursing, Midwifery and Public Health (NMPH)**

24/046 The minutes from the Nursing, Midwifery and Public Health School Academic Committee held on 22 February and 23 May 2024 were provided.

**School Academic Committee – Technology, Business and Arts (TBA)**

24/047 The minutes from the Technology, Business and Arts School Academic Committee held on 29 May 2024 were provided.

**Any other business**

24/048 There was no further business.

**Date of next meeting**

24/049 The next meeting is the joint Senate and Board workshop, to be held at 09:00 on Wednesday 27 November 2024 in room W120, Waterfront Building.

**Alison McQuin**  
**Head of Quality**