UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL   **SENATE (1015)**

MEETING OF THE SENATE

27 March 2019

Present: The Vice-Chancellor (in the Chair), Pro-Vice-Chancellors Professor Birch, Professor Brown and Professor Hollander, Executive Pro-Vice-Chancellors Professor Beveridge and Professor Kenny, Interim Chief Operating Officer Mrs J Tucker, Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellors Professor Clegg, Professor Endfield, Professor Sheffield, Professor Spelman-Miller, Professor Williams and Professor Williamson, Professors Atkinson, Balogun, Barr and Bennett, Dr N Berry, Professors Bowcock, Buse, Chalus, Comerford, Coomber and Cosstick, Dr E Drywood, Dr R Fererro, Professors Foxhall, Gibson, Guillaume, Harris, Hertz-Fowler, Langfeld, Leek, MacEwan, McGowan, Mello and Morris, Dr S Parameswaran, Dr G Pentassuglia, Professors Sanderson, Sheard and Speed, Dr L Swan and Professor Tackley.

The Deputy President of the Liverpool Guild of Students and the student representatives from the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Faculty of Science and Engineering were present as representatives of the student body.

In attendance: The Director of Strategic Planning and Governance and the Governance Manager.

Apologies for absence were received from 13 members of the Senate.

1.   Disclosures of Interest

   i.   Members were asked to disclose any interest that could give rise to conflict in relation to any item on the agenda. No such interests were disclosed.

2.   Minutes of the Previous Meeting

2.1   Minutes of the Meeting Held 30 January 2019

       AGREED:

   i.   The minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2019 should be approved as an accurate record, subject to amendment of the minute regarding the Equality and Diversity Green Paper (minute 5) to include reference to the discussion regarding diversity and equality module content.

3.   Brexit

       RECEIVED:

   i.   An oral report from the Vice-Chancellor on Brexit.

       REPORTED:

   ii.   UUK and Russell Group lobbying continued.

iii. The University's Exiting the EU Working Group continued to meet regularly to review developments and approve appropriate action, and staff and student communications would continue to be issued.

STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION/DECISION

4. **Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 Code of Practice: Update on Development**

   RECEIVED:

   i. A presentation by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Impact providing an update on the development of the REF Code of Practice (CoP) since submission of the Green Paper to Senate in January and in advance of submission of the White Paper to the additional meeting of Senate scheduled for 30 April 2019.

   REPORTED:

   ii. Key developments since January included:

   - REF guidance on submissions and panel criteria had been published in final form on 31 January 2019. Changes relevant to the development of the CoP included criteria for Independent Researchers, outputs of redundant staff, and individual staff circumstances.
   - Further national guidance had been issued on CoP requirements and expectations.
   - Ongoing dialogue had been undertaken with staff representative bodies, e.g. Research Staff Association, UCU, and Equality Network.
   - An all staff consultation had been conducted from 1 February to 10 March 2019.
   - There had been ongoing Faculty development of key processes, committees and membership, standardised where possible across the Faculties.
   - There had been developments in relation to equality and diversity, including the arrangement of bespoke training for decision-makers.

   iii. Planned changes included:

   - The key principles would be provided up front and embedded throughout (diversity considerations inform all preparations, the University will seek to maximise the quality of the REF return, selection of outputs for the REF is based entirely on judgements of quality, and responsible use of metrics).
   - Changes would be made to the format, to include less repetition.
   - There would be more certainty around timescales/criteria/training plans.
   - The position in relation to former staff would be clarified.

   iv. Next steps included ongoing development of the REF CoP, and sharing of the key points of the revised draft with representative bodies ahead of the discussion of the White Paper at Senate on 30 April 2019.

   AGREED:

   v. The following statement in respect of the outputs of former staff who had been made redundant should be approved:

"We will not include the outputs of any former members of staff who were made redundant whilst on a permanent contract or part-way through a fixed-term contract but do consider it appropriate to submit former staff whose contracts ended as per a scheduled date".

REPORTS OF THE SUB-COMMITTEES

Education Committee

5. The Senate received a report on the meeting of the Education Committee held on 13 March 2019.

6. **Academic Advising and Student Success: Report from the Task and Finish Group**

   RECEIVED:

   i. A paper summarising the work of the Academic Advising and Student Success Task and Finish Group, including the proposed new Student Success Framework, as well as the suggested next steps.

   REPORTED:

   ii. For many students the transition to higher education was challenging. This was particularly the case for students from under-represented groups and backgrounds. Effective and timely academic advising could make a significant contribution to student transitions, ensuring their experience was as positive as possible.

   iii. An audit of the University's academic advising model had been undertaken by the University's internal auditors, PwC, in 2017. The key findings of the audit illustrated that, while numerous examples of good practice existed, along with evidence of strong staff commitment in some Schools, uncertainty around the objectives of academic advising and insufficient staff training meant that the overall effectiveness of the model was limited.

   iv. To address these issues, in October 2018 a Task and Finish (T&F) Group had been established, chaired by the Director of Student Experience and Enhancement (SEE), to review the University's approach to academic advising and to make recommendations on how it might be enhanced, particularly in terms of supporting students during critical periods of transition.

   v. The outcome of the T&F Group was a new proposed four-pillar Student Success Framework based on the following team approach to providing academic advising and student support:

   a. *Academic advisers* – focusing primarily on providing academic related advice and guidance, directing pastoral and student support issues to student experience teams and peer mentors.

   b. *The role of student experience teams* – these teams were highly skilled and knowledgeable, particularly in terms of signposting students to key support services. Often available during office hours and accessed without appointment, student experience teams were a powerful resource for underpinning effective academic advising.

c. *Peer mentors* – all first year students were offered peer mentors, with particular consideration being given to underrepresented groups (e.g. WP, mature, commuting students, etc.). The programme would aim to support new students as they made the transition into the University during their first semester. All peer mentors would be trained by the SEE Student Success team and would be structured to complement (not replicate) existing peer mentoring schemes that currently existed in various Schools.

d. *The role of the student* – discussions with academic advisers had demonstrated the importance of students adopting a proactive, partnership approach to academic advising. This was particularly important if our students were to develop skills related to self-reliance and autonomy.

vi. The intention was to introduce the new Student Success Framework from September 2019.

vii. The Education Committee had agreed to recommend that the new Student Success Framework for academic advising should be approved, noting that the Director of SEE should take the lead on operationalising the Framework to ensure a smooth transition for next academic year and the importance of an effective communications plan and the provision of appropriate training.

NOTED:

viii. SEE would work closely with individual areas to operationalise the framework, recognising that one size does not fit all.

ix. As part of operationalising the framework, it would be beneficial to establish a forum to discuss different approaches, best practice etc.

x. Consideration should be given to how best to share information between the four pillars and how issues can be tracked.

xi. It would be important to provide appropriate training to Academic Advisers, members of the student experience teams and peer mentors to ensure clarity regarding remit.

AGREED:

xii. The new Student Success Framework for Academic Advising, for introduction from September 2019, should be approved.

7. Education Action Plan

7.1 Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Review Project

REPORTED:

i. The Education Committee had received a paper providing an update on the status of the VLE Review Project and the expected pathway.

ii. As part of the consultation phase, the project team had contacted a number of other HEIs who had completed, or who were undertaking, a similar journey to that of the University. The team had also carried out consultation with staff and students, including undertaking online surveys (which had resulted in combined response rates of over 3000) and delivering face-to-face workshops.

iii.   The work undertaken to date had been unable to identify differentiation in the supplier offerings to endorse one product as market leader. Therefore, further investigation was needed in order to determine the long term solution.

iv.   In light of this, the University's Senior Management Team had initially endorsed, in principle, the decision to extend the current project to include a restricted tender process. This proposal would also be discussed at the meeting of the Executive Board scheduled for 1 April 2019.

v.   This activity would be governed by the existing project board and would take approximately three months. Activities would include:

- Ensuring ongoing business as usual opportunities were exploited.
- Establishing technical design and business needs, including resources and governance structures.
- In parallel, building the development of a business case to design and implement a new/updated VLE.
- Seeking final Executive Board approval to proceed once a preferred partner/product had been selected and costs fully evaluated.

vi.   Opportunities to potentially integrate the new VLE platform with the University's new online education partner, once confirmed, would be considered. Avoiding a fragmented experience for students would be a top priority.

vii.   In addition to functionality, the usability of the new VLE platform would be an important consideration.

viii.   The Education Committee had agreed that a parallel strand should be established that considered the educational and cultural requirements for both staff and students in terms of training, induction and transition requirements to a new VLE platform.

7.2   Education Strategy Action Plan Progress

REPORTED:

i.   The Education Committee had received a paper providing a brief update on the progress towards the Education Strategy Action Plan, together with a copy of the priorities and activities for 2019/20. [This paper was made available on the Senate members' intranet.]

ii.   Good progress was being made across all areas of the action plan.

iii.   There were currently a number of different data-related projects being progressed and the importance of ensuring a joined up approach was highlighted. Effective communication and coordination between those responsible for each project would be key to ensure there was a clear understanding of how activities complemented one another.

iv.   Progress was being made with the objectives of the recognition and reward theme and draft promotions criteria would be submitted to a future meeting of the Education Committee.

8. **Annual Learning and Teaching Space Update**

   REPORTED:

   i.   The Education Committee had received a presentation from the Interim Director of Facilities, Residential and Commercial Services on University learning and teaching space enhancements. [The presentation was made available on the Senate members' intranet.]

   ii.   The presentation had focused on:

   - Design guide updates for learning and teaching spaces.
   - Achievements to date, including the rolling plan.
   - Chadwick lecture theatre enhancements.
   - Quick wins that had been completed over the last year.
   - Building 502 lecture theatre.
   - Proposed area improvements to the Liverpool Guild of Students' garden area.
   - Plans for the new Centre for Arts and Humanities.
   - Fusion modelling.
   - Timetabling analysis.
   - Active and planned capital projects.
   - Equality and diversity matters.
   - Development of Estates Strategy and Masterplan 2026.

   iii.   The Committee had learned of a University that had made its whole campus a non-smoking environment.

   iv.   The Committee had noted the importance of considering how enhancements in technology could impact not only the future use of campus buildings, but also the traditional method of delivering lectures in large lecture theatres.

   v.   Significant improvements had been made to the University campus over recent years and exciting plans were in development.

9. **NSS Action Plans: Targeted Subjects – Progress Updates**

   REPORTED:

   i.   The Education Committee had received a paper providing progress updates on the NSS action plans for the Departments of English, Mathematics, Sociology, Social Policy and Criminology, and the School of Medicine. These four areas had been selected on the basis of feedback received from students during the previous NSS.   To help prepare for the 2019 NSS, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and the Director of Student Experience and Enhancement had been meeting with the Deans of the four academic areas to offer support as well as to identify and implement appropriate action plans.

   ii.   The plans contained examples of activities to address 'quick wins', but also activities that would take longer to implement and see the benefit of.

   iii.   It would be important that all the work and enhancements that had been achieved continued in future years.

iv. Overall, progress was being made with the action plans. A key focus moving forward would be to evaluate the impact of the activities undertaken.

10. Update on the Graduate Outcomes Survey

REPORTED:

i. The Education Committee had received a paper providing an update on the University's response rate to the Graduate Outcomes (GO) Survey.

ii. *(Detail redacted due to commercial interest.)*

iii. Since its introduction, the GO Survey had been beset by a number of challenges. These had related to IT problems, data management issues and low response rates across the sector. Nevertheless, given the importance of GO data to TEF and institutional league tables, it was essential that the University performed as successfully as possible in the Survey.

Research and Impact Committee

11. The Senate received a report on the meeting of the Research and Impact Committee held on 14 March 2019.

12. Chair's Report

12.1 Science and Technology Committee

REPORTED:

i. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Impact had recently given evidence at a House of Commons Science and Technology Committee on regional research and innovation funding, at which he had stressed the effectiveness of N8 HEIs and had promoted the North West as the most appropriate location in England for a research cluster to facilitate the growth of GDP.

12.2 UKRI Strength in Places (SiP)

REPORTED:

i. The Committee had discussed progress with the three Strength in Places bids with an announcement of outcomes expected before the end of March.

12.3 Minute redacted due to commercial interest

REPORTED:

i. *Minute redacted due to commercial interest.*

12.4 UKRI Future Leader Fellowships

REPORTED:

i.   The Committee had discussed progress with three Fellowship applications with an announcement of outcomes expected soon.

ii.   The Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Impact in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences had been invited to sit on the next UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship panel.

13.   Grant Funding Data

REPORTED:

i.   The Research and Impact Committee had received a presentation on grant funding data.
ii.   *(Detail redacted due to commercial interest.)*

iii.   *(Detail redacted due to commercial interest.)*

14.   Researcher Development

14.1 Making an Impact Event

REPORTED:

i.   An event entitled Making an Impact Week had run last year, which had involved 36 different sessions and the participation of approximately 400 staff members. Feedback from participants had been positive but staff had asked that the event take place over a longer period of time than one week in the future. This year's event would therefore commence on 13 May and run until 28 June. Higher Education Innovation Funds (HEIF) had been received to support the event.

ii.   There would be a mix of various activities for different groups of staff, all of which would be related to research and impact, particularly REF2021 preparations. Detailed event information was currently available on the Academy Researcher Hub.

iii.   The keynote would be delivered by Mr Ben Cowell, Director General of Historic Houses, and the event would be badged under the themes of heritage as well as making an impact.

iv.   Activities included intensive boot camps, sessions focusing on use of social media and a competition involving the production of videos.

v.   A communications plan was being put in place. News stories would be released announcing sessions that were not full to encourage enrolment. It was planned that a small film crew would be onsite at the event to interview attendees.

14.2 *(Detail redacted due to commercial interest)*

REPORTED:

i. *Minute redacted due to commercial interest*

ii. *Minute redacted due to commercial interest.*

iii. *Minute redacted due to commercial interest*

iv. *Minute redacted due to commercial interest.*

v. *Minute redacted due to commercial interest*

Postgraduate Research Committee

15. The Senate received a report on the meeting of the Postgraduate Research Committee held on 6 March 2019.

16. PGR Examinations and Assessment: Disagreement Between Examiners

REPORTED:

i. The PGR Committee had received a paper recommending:

− Creation of a new Annexe to the existing PGR Exams Policy to clarify the process for managing PGR viva examinations in situations where the examiners are unable to unanimously agree an examination outcome.
− Amendment to 00 PGR Code of Practice and Appendix 8 PGR Exams Policy to make reference to the new Annexe. A further amendment to section 7.1 of the PGR Exams Policy confirmed that an independent chair must be appointed in all cases where a candidate was undergoing re-examination as a result of prior disagreement between examiners.

REPORTED:

ii. It was proposed that in situations in which examiners could not agree, an independent external examiner should be nominated who would assess the thesis and give his/her own recommendation. The recommendations and reports of the original examiners would not be made available to the independent external examiner and a viva would not be mandatory in this process. However, it was queried if a viva should be mandatory in the case of first submissions.

iii. The PGR Committee had noted that:

• Candidates should not be disadvantaged by the process. In addition, the decision making process would need to be auditable.
• The candidate would need the opportunity to defend his/her thesis at viva to any further examiner.
• If a viva was carried out, it should comprise the new independent external examiner and an independent chair.
• A second internal examiner would not be required in addition to the independent external examiner.

iv.   The PGR Committee had agreed that a viva should be mandatory in the case of an examiner disagreement regarding a first submission. In the case of a resubmission, it would be at the discretion of the independent external examiner as to whether or not a viva was required.

v.   The PGR Committee had agreed to recommend that the following should be approved: a new Annexe on PGR Examinations and Assessment: Disagreement Between Examiners, subject to revisions being made following further consultation with PGR Committee members; the amendment to 00 PGR Code of Practice and Appendix 8 PGR Exams Policy; and a further amendment to section 7.1 of the PGR Exams Policy.

AGREED:

vi.   The new Annexe on PGR Examinations and Assessment: Disagreement Between Examiners (the revised version of which had been made available on the Senate members' intranet), the amendment to 00 PGR Code of Practice and Appendix 8 PGR Exams Policy to make reference to the new Annexe, and a further amendment to section 7.1 of the PGR Exams Policy confirming that an independent chair must be appointed in all cases where a candidate was undergoing re-examination as a result of prior disagreement between examiners should be approved.

17.   Alternative Format Thesis Submission

REPORTED:

i.   The PGR Committee had received a paper recommending:

   –   Creation of a new Annexe to the existing PGR Thesis Submission Policy to clarify the expectations associated with incorporating publications into the thesis in lieu of standard format chapters.
   –   Amendment to 00 PGR Code of Practice and Appendix 7 PGR Thesis Submission Policy to make reference to the new Annexe.

ii.   The regulations currently allowed the inclusion of the student's published material in theses, but the guidance was limited. The proposed Annexe provided greater depth and clarity to PGR candidates and staff. The regulations on Alternative Format Thesis Submission had not been changed.

iii. The PGR Committee had agreed to recommend that the new Annexe to the existing PGR Thesis Submission Policy and the Amendment to 00 PGR Code of Practice and Appendix 7 PGR Thesis Submission Policy should be approved.

AGREED:

iv.   The new Annexe to the existing PGR Thesis Submission Policy (which had been made available on the Senate members' intranet) and the Amendment to 00 PGR Code of Practice and Appendix 7 PGR Thesis Submission Policy to make reference to the new Annexe should be approved.

OTHER ITEMS FOR APPROVAL/ENDORSEMENT

18.   Revision of the University Ordinances

RECEIVED:

i.   A paper proposing a number of revisions to the Ordinances.

REPORTED:

ii.   The Charter and Statutes were the 'top level' of the University's statutory framework and embodied the principles governing the University's work and activities. Any changes which the University wishes to make required the approval of the Privy Council.

iii. Beneath the Charter and Statutes were the Ordinances. These provided more detail on the regulation of matters covered by the Charter and Statutes and contained provisions relating to matters not covered in the Charter and Statutes. Amendments to the Ordinances were approved by Council.

iv.   An exercise had been undertaken in 2013 to modernise governance arrangements and the Charter, Statutes and Ordinances had been comprehensively revised, simplifying provisions and clarifying roles and responsibilities.

v.   Changes to the University's Ordinances were made on an ongoing basis as relevant approvals were granted by Council, but a thorough review was undertaken every five years to ensure that all Ordinances remained up to date and fit for purpose.

vi.   The Privy Council had recently approved further revisions to the Charter and Statutes, the majority of which related to the outcomes of an external effectiveness review of the University's Council conducted by Professor Ella Ritchie OBE, former Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Newcastle University, in 2017. Following this review, Council agreed that:

•   As the specific roles undertaken by the Pro-Chancellor and two Lay Officers were limited, and in order to increase transparency, the roles should be disestablished.
•   As the Professional Services constitute a significant proportion of the University's workforce, a Professional Services representative should be appointed to serve on Council.

Other changes related to:

•   The need to reflect recent changes in staffing in the University, namely the departure of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the replacement with a Chief Operating Officer role.
•   Removal of the wording 'on an annual basis' from Clause 7.1 of the Statutes as Council is no longer required by the OfS to appoint the external auditor annually.

vii.   Other changes were proposed as a result of consultation with relevant areas to bring the Ordinances up to date (Academic Quality and Standards Division, External Relations, Human Resources and Student Administration and Support Division).

NOTED:

viii.   Senate's membership would be reviewed as part of the next Senate effectiveness review, which would be undertaken following the next full effectiveness review of Council in 2021.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND:

ix.   The various amendments to the Ordinances should be approved.

19.   **Annual Complaints Monitoring Report for the Academic Session 2017/18**

RECEIVED:

i.   The annual summary report on student complaints.

REPORTED:

ii.   It was a requirement that an annual summary report on complaints considered under Stages 1 and 2 is made to Senate and Council.

iii.   A new Appendix A had been added to the Policy and Procedure during Session 2017/18, setting out a 'Procedure for Student Complaints in the Event of Major Disruption'. In Session 2017/18, the procedure had been activated during and in the aftermath of industrial action.   Only one complaint substantively about industrial action had been made under Stage 1 and none at Stage 2.

iv.   The 2017/18 level of Stage 1 complaints was up on those for 2016/17 and 2015/16, but in line with those from earlier years. 69% were upheld in full or in part (broadly in line with previous years). Complaints about academic matters had increased, with key issues appearing to be around assessment and feedback although there had also been four complaints from one area (Veterinary Science) around erroneous perceptions of unfairness about progression rules. Complaints about discrimination and human rights had also increased – this was suspected to be because the Policy on Student Conduct and Discipline had been revised with a new version being introduced from 1 August 2017 which opened the possibility for students to bring forward allegations against other students on issues which previously they would have been advised to pursue through the police or other external organisations. As a result, more Stage 1 complaint forms had been received relating to issues which previously would not have been handled in the University. A number of these were then dealt with under the University's disciplinary procedures rather than simply as Stage 1 complaints.

v.   Despite the increase in Stage 1 complaints received in 2017/18, the number of Stage 2 complaints had remained more or less static since 2014/15. It should be noted that Stage 2 complaints also included the possibility of complaints from students who had exhausted the Laureate Online Education Complaints Procedure – therefore the percentage of students raising Stage 2 complaints was extremely small when overall student numbers from both campus-based and online programmes are taken into account. There were no substantive changes

in trend with regard to the types of issues being raised. 67% of complaints at Stage 2 were upheld in full or in part. However, this was often in relation to minor procedural irregularities or delays or oversights at Stage 1 rather than the upholding of substantive issues previously not upheld at Stage 1.

vi. The number of students completing the equalities monitoring forms remained too small for any clear statistically significant trends to be identified other than a possible over-representation of students with a disability. This probably reflected the number of complaints where mental health may have played some part either directly in the student's issues of complaint or in the student's decision to pursue matters to Stage 2.

vii. Students may take complaints to the OIA in relation to appeals, discipline or fitness to practise decisions and not solely in relation to complaints. Therefore, the numbers who go to the OIA remained very low and were significantly lower than that of the comparable band median.

20.   Academic Compliance Report for the Academic Session 2017/18

RECEIVED and **NOTED**:

i. The annual anonymised summary of the cases brought before the Assessment Appeals Committee, the Research Degree Appeals Board, the Board of Discipline and the Board of Appeal, the Fitness to Practise Panel and the Senate Committee on the Progress of Students during the 2017/18 academic session.

21.   Date of Next Meeting and Dates for 2019/20

REPORTED:

i. The next meeting would be an additional meeting to be held at 1pm on Tuesday 30 April 2019.

ii. The final meeting of this session would be held at 2pm on Wednesday 26 June 2019.

iii. The schedule of meetings for 2019/20 was as follows:

Wednesday 6 November 2019 – 2pm
Wednesday 29 January 2020 – 2pm
Wednesday 25 March 2020 – 2pm
Wednesday 24 June 2020 – 2pm