

# KEELE UNIVERSITY

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SENATE

Held on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2012

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed Harry Scarbrough, Christine Armstrong, Penelope List, Nicholas Reyland, Nicholas Seager, Nigel Cassidy, Sue Sherman, Frederick Tripet, Joe Turner, Ally Bird, Alex Clifford, David Plant, Rachel Hodgkinson and Andy Irwin to their first meeting. He also welcomed Jo Sylvester who was attending as an observer prior to taking over as Minute Secretary from Fiona Dumbelton with effect from the next meeting.

For a record of apologies and absences, please see the attached list.

### 1. MINUTES AND ACTIONS

(a) Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2012 and the minutes of the meeting of the Approvals Group held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2012 were approved and signed.

(b) Actions List

Senate received a sample actions list, which is being introduced for Senate and all other governance Committees this academic year.

## A POLICY AND STRATEGY ISSUES

### A1. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT TO SENATE

Senate received the report from the Vice-Chancellor on issues which had arisen since the previous meeting, including the revised induction programme to welcome new students to Keele and the introduction of the Distinctive Keele Curriculum to support our students' personal, professional and academic development.

He provided an update on the national admissions position, reporting that the number of students securing places through Clearing had risen by approximately 1,600 on last year and that the total student population has reduced by 7.4% (about 32,300 applicants). According to UCAS there are more than 26,000 university courses with empty places compared with 20,000 at the same time last year, including at one quarter of the Russell Group's 24 universities.

Keele hosted for the first time the Universities UK (UUK) Annual Members Conference from 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> September 2012, which included a key note speech by David Willetts, Minister of State for Universities and Science highlighting issues such as cyber security, student visas, the new fees regime and the Research Excellence Framework.

### A2. STUDENT OFFICERS REPORTS

(a) Report of the President of the Students' Union (SU)

Senate received the report from the President of the Students' Union, which included the planning and preparations for welcome week and fresher's events, a set of campaigns for the academic year, the redevelopment of the union building and preparations for the Quality Assurance Agency's Institutional Review. Mr Turner also added that Keele SU had been shortlisted to host the NUS Conference next year and urged the university to discourage teaching on Wednesday afternoons as has previously been agreed. It was agreed that the Deans would reinforce the

University's position but that some professionally accredited courses are the exception to the rule.

(b) Report of the President of the Keele Postgraduate Association (KPA)

Senate received the report from the President of the Keele Postgraduate Association, which included support for a number of projects, for example, English language provision for non-native speakers, Dyslexia Guidelines for Staff that were recently approved by the University Learning & Teaching Committee and Personal Tutoring for postgraduate taught students. He also encouraged Senators to advertise the KPA Bursary to students.

A3. UK/EU 2012 ENTRY ADMISSIONS UPDATE REPORT

Senate received an overview of the admissions position for UK/EU students for 2012-2013 entry, which showed that the current HEFCE intake number is 1,240 against a student number control of 1,234 and an internal target of 1,260 (to provide some allowance for students who fail to enrol or withdraw within the first two weeks).

AAB+ recruitment has been challenging for both Keele and the whole of the sector and early indications are that the AAB+ population has decreased by 15%, which has had severe consequences for the AAB+ policy and particularly institutions who recruit mainly these students. Keele had its student number control reduced by 129 as a result of this policy and has actively tried to recruit beyond this number. The current figure stands at 114, however, with the 15% drop in the AAB+ population this is a resilient recruitment performance. [**Secretary's note:** The likely final AAB total for Keele had increased to 129 as at 12<sup>th</sup> October 2012].

The full-time postgraduate taught intake is currently 246, with the number of conditional offers taking the overall intake potentially close to the intake target of 281. Part-time postgraduate taught and modular courses start at various points in the academic year, therefore, it is too early to comment on the recruitment position at this stage.

The postgraduate research intake position remains fluid as they can enrol at any point in the academic year, although around 70% start in September/October. The position as at 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2012 is 46, which is broadly similar to our position this time last year.

Members asked for comparative grades on entry since 2009 and a review of where our AAB+ students are coming from geographically and it was agreed that this would be presented to the next meeting.

A4. INTERNATIONAL 2012 ADMISSIONS UPDATE REPORT

It was reported that the admissions position for international recruitment as at 25<sup>th</sup> September 2012 for undergraduates was 199 (226 at 12<sup>th</sup> October 2012) against a target of 294 and for postgraduates 231 (251 at 12<sup>th</sup> October 2012) against a target of 293. There are still approximately 100 students who may arrive and the University is maintaining regular contact with them and doing all it can to ensure that they arrive before 12<sup>th</sup> October, after which point it would be too late for them to commence their studies this academic year. It was agreed that the Director of Marketing & Communications would inform schools which subjects the 100 students were intending to study.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor added that the University had its routine visit from the UK Border Agency (UKBA) on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2012 and was awaiting the report.

#### A5. NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY 2012

Senate received the outcome and institutional response to the 2012 National Student Survey (NSS). It was reported that Keele had achieved an excellent response rate of 67.5% and that the overall satisfaction of students scored highly at 91%, which is the best we have achieved to date and compares to a national average of 84%. This puts Keele in the top five mainstream universities for student satisfaction.

Keele scored above the sector average in six of the seven question groups in the main bank of questions, which related to the teaching on my course, assessment and feedback, academic support, organisation and management, personal development and overall satisfaction. We scored lower than the sector average on learning resources, which should improve next year as the Library has since started opening 24 hours a day, seven days a week during term time and that this should reflect positively in the NSS 2013.

It was noted that one of the annexes was missing and would be circulated with the minutes.

Senate endorsed the proposed NSS review process and all staff and students officers were congratulated on the results of NSS 2012.

#### A6. INTERNAL QUALITY AUDIT HANDBOOK

Senate received the Internal Quality Audit (IQA) Handbook, which had been substantially revised and will support the IQA process in 2012-2013. The key revisions to the process are emphasising the enhancement aspect by including the Head of the Learning Professional Development Centre as an *ex officio* member on IQA panels, strengthening the focus on academic programmes and the externality of the process, reducing the burden on schools, ensuring more timely outcomes and formal feedback on the effectiveness of the process.

Senate approved the handbook for use in the 2012-2013 academic year.

#### A7. POLICY ON ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING

Senate received a new policy, which is to be adopted across the University to ensure that all students are considered in an equitable manner when they apply for accreditation of prior learning (APL) or advanced standing on a programme of study.

The key points to note were that APL is limited to a maximum of 50% of the taught credit required to achieve an award but that Schools may choose to set levels below this threshold or in exceptional circumstances allow APL of greater than 50%, that the process is now that Schools consider the claim and make a recommendation to the Directorate of Planning & Academic Administration who will then communicate the decision to the applicant or student and there is recognition that 'double counting' is acceptable in specific and rare cases at M-level.

Senate **resolved to recommend:**

**That** the Policy on Accreditation of Prior Learning be approved by the Council.

#### A8. REPORT OF THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

A report of the meeting of the Research Committee held on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2012 was received, which included the record research income for the institution in 2011-2012 (an 8% increase on the previous year), the forthcoming booklet to promote research

undertaken at Keele, applications for European funding and preparations for the Research Excellence Framework (REF).

Research grant award highlights from the period July 2012 to September 2012 were presented and it was particularly noted that Dr Maria Heckl from the School of Computing & Mathematics had been awarded €3,730,000 (c.£3,000,000) from the EU Framework 7 Marie Curie Initial Training Network, which was a significant achievement.

#### A9. REPORT OF THE UNIVERSITY LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE

Senate received a report of the meeting of the University Learning and Teaching held on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2012 and an oral update of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2012. It was reported that the Committee had considered English language support for international postgraduate taught students, the Times Higher Education Student Survey 2010-2011 in which Keele had moved up from 46<sup>th</sup> to 36<sup>th</sup>, the extenuating circumstances process and new guidelines on the Management of Students with Dyslexia.

#### A10. REPORT OF THE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION STRATEGY COMMITTEE

Senate received the first report of the new Library and Information Strategy Committee, which included the minutes of the meetings held on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2012 and 12<sup>th</sup> September 2012.

The Chair of the Committee, Professor Shepherd, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Library & Information Strategy) reported that the Committee had been established to ensure a formal reporting structure for the Library and learning resources and that there are four Sub-Groups beneath it. It was noted that the Committee did not include an off-campus/hospital representative so it was agreed that this would be considered when the Committee reviews its constitution and terms of reference on an annual basis and that in the meantime issues can be fed through the Health Faculty representative.

The Committee had considered reports from the Library & Information Technology Group and the IT Security Group, an update on the migration of staff to Google Mail, a paper on information management and legislative compliance and the proposal for a new HR & Payroll system.

### **B FORMAL APPROVALS BY SENATE**

#### B11. ACADEMIC AWARDS

Senate approved the awards as set out in the papers presented:

(a) *Taught degrees, diplomas and certificates*

Senate approved the awards presented with the exception of the awards which were withdrawn from the list and the amendments presented under the reserved areas agenda.

(b) *Postgraduate Research Awards*

Senate approved the awards presented.

#### B12. POLICY ON ACADEMIC WARNINGS

It was reported that the University's policy on Academic Warnings was last updated in 2008 and, therefore, was due to be reviewed during 2012. The policy is designed to

ensure that all students demonstrate sufficient engagement with their studies and maintain a satisfactory standard of work. A draft of the revised policy was endorsed by the University Executive Committee on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2012 when it was noted that the proposed changes were significant in terms of compliance with the UK Border Agency (UKBA) requirements to ensure the University retains its status as a Highly Trusted Sponsor. The proposals were also considered by the University Learning & Teaching Committee at its meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2012. In addition to the proposed changes to the policy, the requisite amendments to the University Regulations and a letter from Uniac, the University's internal audit services, outlining the importance of revising the policy were received.

A number of minor revisions were proposed to the existing policy and associated forms to bring its structure and presentation in-line with other University policies, to articulate more clearly the process for issuing academic warnings and the responsibilities of staff in Schools and Planning & Academic Administration and to reflect the current structure of the University's administration.

In addition, it was proposed that the time-limit for responding to an academic warning should be revised from four weeks to two weeks for each warning (upto a maximum of three) and, therefore, lower the overall time-limit from a potential of 12 weeks to six weeks. This element of the proposal was informed by feedback from Schools on challenges with the current timescale and will enhance the University's compliance with the current UKBA requirements. The proposals have been reviewed by Uniac and it fully endorses the proposed changes and recommends that they are necessary to ensure that the University is compliant with new UKBA requirements.

There was considerable debate in Senate about the proposal to reduce the timescale from 12 weeks to six weeks for all three stages of the warning process. The student representatives argued strongly that this was too short and that students needed longer to re-engage with the University and were concerned that the informal first stage was open to inconsistency across the University. Some academic colleagues argued that it was in the students' best interest to require attendance as soon as possible and that two weeks was a fair proposal and not too much to ask. It was noted that there may be disciplinary differences and that non-attendance over a period of a few weeks in some subjects would not be as critical as in a lab-based subject that has regular compulsory sessions.

The following drafting amendments were proposed:

Paragraph 1.1 Re-word the definition as the policy relates to engagement and not academic achievement, for example, "Failure by a student to engage appropriately with his/her studies"

Paragraph 2.1 Remove the word "Persistent"

Paragraph 4.2 Re-word to say "Head of School or nominee"

Paragraph 4.4 State that requests for a third warning can only be made following the failure to comply with the requirements of the first and second warnings

Paragraph 4.5 Include the reason for the warning at all stages

It was also recommended that the process for the informal first stage should be set out in the Programme Regulations so that students know what to expect and they can be tailored to the specific requirements of each programme and that a review of the position for postgraduate research students should be undertaken.

The Chair noted that, as a consensus could not be reached, the Director of Planning & Academic Administration should convene a small group to discuss the matter further and bring back a proposal to the next meeting.

### B13. EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

Senate approved internal and external examiners for taught and research degrees, as set out in the list from Planning and Academic Administration.

### B14. APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES

Senate approved the appointment of Dr Sue Sherman to the University Learning & Teaching Committee for the three year term 2012-2015.

## C RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL

### C15. TRANSPORT AND PARKING MANAGEMENT POLICY

Senate recommend that the Transport and Parking Management Policy be approved by Council.

### C16. AMENDMENTS TO STATUES, ORDINANCES AND REGULATIONS

- (a) *Ordinance IV: Award and Conferment of Degrees, Diplomas etc.*

Senate recommended to Council that the amendments be approved.

- (b) *Regulation 2A: Modular Postgraduate Courses, Excluding Professional Doctorates And Research Degrees*

Senate recommended to Council that the amendments be approved.

- (c) *Regulation 8: General Regulations for University Examinations and Assessments*

Senate recommended to Council that the amendments be approved.

- (d) *8A: Viva Voce and Oral Examinations for Undergraduate Degrees*

Senate recommended to Council that the Regulation be deleted.

- (e) *Regulation 11: Residence on Campus*

Senate recommended to Council that the amendments be approved.

- (f) *Regulation 17.b.1: University Learning & Teaching Committee*

Senate recommended to Council that the amendments be approved.

- (g) *Regulation 17.b.2: Quality Assurance Committee*

Senate recommended to Council that the amendments be approved.

- (h) *Regulation 20: Student Discipline*

Senate recommended to Council that the amendments be approved.

- (i) *Regulation 26: Complaints Procedure*

Senate recommended to Council that the amendments be approved.

## C17. APPOINTMENTS

Senate recommended approval of the following appointments to Council:

- (a) Professor Harry Scarbrough as the Director of Keele Management School with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012.
- (b) Professor Nigel Ratcliffe as the Head of School of Pharmacy with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2012.
- (c) Professor Steve Cropper as Acting Head of School of Public Policy and Professional Practice with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2012.
- (d) And to note that on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2012 the Vice-Chancellor approved the appointment of Professor Alicia El Haj as Director of the Institute for Science & Technology in Medicine with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012 under Chair's action.

## C18. AWARD OF HONORARY TITLES

To recommend that the proposals set out in the **attached** paper be approved.

## D FOR REPORT

### D19. RESEARCH PLANNING AND RESEARCH LEAVE

Senate received a paper, which set out changes to arrangements for research planning in the Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences which intends to facilitate strategic research planning for both individuals and research groups/Schools while ensuring that research performance is robustly monitored and that, as in the current system, only high-quality research is supported through research leave.

The arrangements recognise the importance and benefits of planning over an extended time period. They also recognise that, while an institution of Keele's scale cannot afford the kind of 'entitlement' model by which some research-intensive universities grant leave to strong researchers on a regular and routine basis, the strong expectation of periodic research leave on the part of an active researcher is an important incentive for excellent performance in research within the broad research economy of the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Senate noted the report.

### D20. ATTENDANCE MONITORING OF SENATE AND ITS SUB-COMMITTEES

Senate received a report on attendance levels for the 2011-2012 academic year.

### D21. ANNUAL REPORTS FO THE EXECUTIVE LIAISON COMMITTEES 2011-2012

Senate received the annual reports from the Student Liaison Committee, Research Students Liaison Committee and the Keele Society Advisory Committee.

### D22. APPOINTMENTS, RETIREMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

A list of appointments, retirements and resignations was received.

### D23. CHAIR'S ACTION

Senate noted the actions that were approved between meetings under Chair's powers.