**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SENATE**

**Held on Wednesday 10th October 2018**

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

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed Senators to the meeting, in particular new members of Senate Professor Robert Ladrech (HOS SPIRE), Professor Clifford Stott (Assoc Dean of Research FNS), Dr Shalini Sharma (HumSS Rep), Dr Martyn Parker (FNS Rep), Mrs Yvonne Flood, Dr Lisa Dikomitis, Dr Audrey Skidmore (FMHS Reps). The Vice-Chancellor also welcomed the new student representatives, Elliot Lancaster, Ele Fisher, Amy Holden and John Wootton. Dr Thomas Neligwa, Dr Awol Allo, Dr Hesham Abdalla, Caroline Farnell-Smith and Zoe Hollingsworth were welcomed to the meeting as observers.

**1.      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**2.      MINUTES AND ACTIONS**

   a)   Minutes
        The minutes of the meeting held on 20th June 2018 and the minutes from the Senate Approvals Group meetings held on the 6th July and 14th August 2018 were agreed as an accurate record.

   b)   Actions List
        All actions for the previous meeting were completed. It was noted that Professor Sullivan would be bringing an update on the Lecture Capture project to the December meeting. It was also noted that high-level data on the TRAC return would be made available to Senate members on the KLE.

**3.      MATTERS ARISING**

No further items raised.

**4.      QUESTIONS FOR THE VICE-CHANCELLOR**

 Twelve questions were submitted to the Vice-Chancellor. The full questions are outlined in the paper and the responses offered as an annex to the minutes.

In response to a question from the Students' Union, further discussion was held regarding the protocol on teaching on Wednesday afternoons. It was noted that free time to engage on Wednesday afternoons to engage with extracurricular activities improve student mental health and wellbeing and provide opportunities for enrichment activities. It was noted that much of the University's timetabling is completed locally within Schools, and so whilst central timetabling aim to adhere to the protocols this may differ across the institution. It was noted that the SU officers had written to Heads of Schools urging them to advocate keeping Wednesday afternoons free. The Chair urged Heads of Schools to provide a response to the letter, to help inform the discussion at the next Timetabling Steering Group meeting.

In response to a Senate question from Dr van Loon, further clarification was requested regarding research applications, whereby some applications may be prioritised over others. It was confirmed that research applications are prioritised according to Faculty research aims, and that larger grant applications were prioritised as they require more resources to complete.

**PART 1 – STRATEGIC DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**5.        ACADEMIC STAFFING STRATEGY**

The Chair opened this item by reading a statement submitted from Ceri Morgan on behalf of UCU:

*"While consultation with UCU has begun on School-level AREs, no formal consultation has been undertaken with respect to the proposed new academic staffing strategy at School or University levels. In a February meeting with UCU, AREs were described as working 'in tandem' with current academic role profiles, nevertheless informing decisions around probation, promotion and progression. Clear guidelines setting out the status and use of AREs--including how they will inform decisions around probation, promotion and progression--have been requested by UCU".*

Professor Shane O'Neill then delivered a presentation on the development of the University's new Academic Staffing Strategy, as part of its ongoing consultation process. It was noted that following further consultation, the three key elements of the strategy covered by the paper under consideration would be brought to the December Senate meeting for final approval.

The paper and presentation outlined the work of the Academic Staffing Strategy group, chaired by Professor O'Neill. He described the remit of the group as to review the University's current staffing profile in line with the University's ambitions to achieve excellence in teaching, research and external engagement, and to refresh thinking due to ever-changing external environments. One main aim of the project was to fully embed engagement within academic roles and to place equal recognition on research and scholarship as complementing the core academic responsibilities of education and citizenship.

It is proposed that a new academic job family, 'Education and Scholarship' (E+S) would be created to run concurrently with the 'Education and Research' (E+R) job family. This new career route aims to eliminate 'perceived hierarchies' between scholarship and research and to ensure a parity of esteem in all respects between these two job families. It was also proposed that a 'translation' process would be offered to facilitate colleagues who are currently on the 'Teaching Fellow' or E+R career paths to apply to move on to the new E+S career path. It is envisaged that translation between these families, in either direction, will be possible in future to facilitate developing career plans, but that such changes are not anticipated to become routine.

The accompanying Academic Role Expectations (AREs) aim to provide clear guidance to staff in academic roles (whether E+R or E+S) and provide understanding of what good performance of a role looks like. This will better enable colleagues to plan their career development by ensuring that they can align their contributions to their role expectations. Within the AREs, the expectations relating to education and citizenship are identical for both E+S and E+R families, with complementary differences clarified in the expectations for research and scholarship.

It was made clear that the AREs were not designed as a checklist as it was not possible for staff members to meet every expectation that is set out in the document. They must be used holistically so that each School can be confident that they can address all of the work they need to attend to in their pursuit of excellence. It was stressed that the process for translating to job families was an applicant-led process and that no other mechanisms (e.g. REF Audit) would be determining the outcome of this process.

It was confirmed that the next steps for consultation were to continue to discuss the proposals further with the Staff Reference Group that was established by the Academic Staffing Strategy Group, as well as to have consultative meetings with UCU. Further consultation in Faculties and Schools will also be

encouraged before a firm set of proposals will be brought back to Senate in December for approval. Documents relating to appraisal and promotions processes were due to be reviewed and developed to ensure that all elements are mutually supportive.

A number of Senators spoke in support of the proposals, but others expressed concerns over the potential for the criteria to be misused, and more clarity was requested on how AREs were to be used, how staff will be encouraged to translate, and the types of support which will be made available.
In response, the preamble of the AREs was emphasised as indicating that these documents must be used in a holistic way, something that the Executive Deans will be keen to underpin in consultation with Heads of School. Advice will be provided at every level regarding the proposed translation process, including some institutional Town Hall Meetings to be facilitated by UEC members of the Strategy Group.

It was queried whether AREs would create a divide between research and scholarship and whether the new proposals would 'trap' staff down specific routes or create a gender divide. It was clarified that the two roles types were to be seen as complementary, covering a range of activities that each School needed to attend to. The boundary between them was to be permeable, thereby facilitating possible translation between them.

It was highlighted that staff across the institution were unaware of the full remit of the AREs and that this was creating apprehension amongst staff. It was noted that communication is key to ensure all staff are supportive of the proposals, and the commitment to ongoing consultation by the Academic Staffing Strategy Group was reinforced.

The question as to what would happen to Teaching Fellows who do not choose to translate to the 'E+S' family. The Strategy Group decided not to propose an automatic process of translation from TF to E+S since it did not want to force all current colleagues on the TF path to translate. The Strategy Group will review again the future of the TF career path after the initial translation process has been completed.

Representatives from the UCU expressed dissatisfaction that they felt that they had not been appropriately consulted on the proposals. Professor O'Neill expressed his regret that the UCU felt that way but it was noted that there had been some discussion between UCU and the Staffing Strategy Group already. There was a shared commitment to ensure that further consultation with UCU and other stakeholders takes place in the coming weeks.

It was agreed that equality and diversity considerations were paramount to ensure that the proposals do not adversely affect specific groups. It was affirmed that an Equality Impact Assessment had been carried out and that it will be revised further as the strategy evolves. It was noted that women are disproportionately represented in Teaching Fellow roles and that the proposals, specifically the equalization of all terms and conditions between E+R and E+S families, may facilitate progress in relation to gender equality.

It was noted that clarification should be provided for staff who conduct educational research rather than scholarship. It was also noted that training should be provided for Heads of Schools and other senior members of staff involved in the annual appraisal process to ensure AREs are used appropriately.

6.      PROPOSAL TO RENAME KEELE MANAGEMENT SCHOOL AS KEELE BUSINESS SCHOOL

Professor Kurt Allman, Director of Keele Management School, gave a presentation regarding the proposal to rename Keele Management School as Keele Business School. The presentation highlighted the gradual shift over time from Economics and Finance departments to Business Schools to highlight the extended remit of the School by providing support to business in the local area. It was noted that the new name would coincide with the opening of the new Smart Innovation Hub building on the Science and Business Park which would house the School alongside entrepreneurial activities. Professor Allman also highlighted new developments regarding the undergraduate and postgraduate curricula, by providing year in industry placements for all programmes and by looking to introduce 'entrepreneurial years' in addition to placement activity.

Therefore it was proposed that Keele Management School would be renamed as Keele Business School from September 2019, and that Ordinance VI be amended to reflect this change.

**Senate resolved to recommend to Council:**

**That** the amendment of Ordinance VI to reflect the renaming of Keele Management School to Keele Business School be **approved,** to come into force from September 2019**.**


**PART 2 – REPORTS**

**7.      VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT TO SENATE**

Senate received the Vice-Chancellor's report.

It was questioned why the University does not increase the marketing budget for PGT programmes, in the light of the University's lower than expected recruitment of these students. It was noted that at the UEC away-day in October, the marketing budget was discussed and it was agreed that PGT and international activity would be refocused.

**8.      ADMISSIONS REPORT**

Senate received the Admissions Report noting that the University has achieved highly this year by achieving a 6% uplift in Home Undergraduate student intake in comparison to a slump in the sector by 15% according to UCAS. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor commended all those behind the recruitment and admissions cycle for achieving this uplift despite a difficult sector market. It was noted that more work must be done to improve Keele's PGT provision and to review the portfolio in the coming years, in light of a slight dip in recruitment against last year.


**9.      STUDENT OFFICER REPORTS**

**Report of KeeleSU**

Senate received the report from the Union Democracy and Development Officer, Mr Tom Snape. Mr Snape brought to the attention of Senate that following the NSS results, KeeleSU is ranked as the 5th best Students' Union in the UK.

Attention was drawn to the research conducted by Ipsos MORI regarding 'Generation Z' which is the new generation of 18 year olds entering higher education from 2018. The research shows that only 25% of these students feel that they can have a good career without a university-level education. Mr Snape highlighted the impact that this notion may have on the mental health of students who put so much pressure on their university education.

It was also noted that Welcome Week was very successful this year, but it was highlighted that the SU building capacity is impacting the society sign-up fair. The SU are looking into alternative arrangements for next year.

The 10th October was World Mental Health day, where the University and Students' Unions were both involved with activities, including the University sports teams wearing green boot laces to raise awareness and the counselling team running events. It was also highlighted that it was Dyspraxia Awareness Week and that the SU were raising awareness of the condition and the support available.

The Student Voice Representative (SVR) programme has been very positive this year with over 366 candidates for subject level SVRs. Also as a result of the strike fund from 2018, funding has been approved for several exciting student led projects.

**Report of the Keele Postgraduate Association (KPA)**

Senate received the KPA report from the President of the KPA, Mr George Blake. Following a restructure of the KPA induction process, the KPA have found that that the support they offer is more accessible than previously. However, as a result there has been a significant increase in the volume of PG students reporting issues. It was noted that PG students are under increasing pressure due to sector changes, noting that the majority of students are now working alongside their postgraduate study to balance their finances.

## 10. RESEARCH REPORT

Senate received the Research Report. Professor David Amigoni noted that the University's annual grant applications has increased to £91m, an uplift of £21m since 2016/17. The number of applications have remained stable, indicating that the applications are for larger sums of funding. It was noted that research income was not meeting targets, but it was moving in the right direction. The Research Committee will be scrutinising the research income on a faculty by faculty basis.

Over the summer, the REF team released a large amount of guidance regarding REF2021. The guidance documents are currently out for consultation, and Keele held a town hall event in September to coordinate the University's response ahead of the October deadline.

Professor Amigoni also highlighted the launch of the new Institute for Sustainable Futures event which was held on 3 October 2018. It was noted that the event was successful and the prospects for the new institute were exciting.

## 11. EDUCATION REPORT

Professor Helen O'Sullivan presented the report, highlighting that a full update on Lecture Capture would be provided at the next meeting. It was noted that the University has approved and commenced its first degree apprenticeship, the Foundation Degree (FdSc) Nursing Associate programme. Professor O'Sullivan commended the staff who contributed to the development of the programme for their collegiate and collaborative efforts.

Two items were brought to Senate for approval, the proposed new Examinations Code of Practice and changes to the committee arrangements for programme approval and withdrawal.

> Senate **resolved:**
>
> **That** the Examinations Code of Practice be **approved.**
>
> Senate **resolved:**
>
> **That** the amendment to the sub-committee arrangements in relation to programme approval and withdrawal routes be **approved**.

## 12. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY ANNUAL REPORT

Mrs Rachel Adams attended the meeting to discuss the report, which forms the University's statutory annual reporting process to the Office for Students. In comparison to previous years, the 2017/18 annual report is improved in terms of presentation and content. The report goes above and beyond the statutory requirement and aims to showcase the ongoing work on all aspects of equalities. Notable activity in the last academic year includes the successful submission to Athena Swan, a successful Race Equality Charter submission, the launch of the University's People Strategy, and recognition as a Disability Confident Employer. The report outlined key objectives and ongoing initiatives.

## 13.    SENATE EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW

Dr Galbraith presented the report which was revised following discussion at the June Senate meeting. The report outlined work undertaken to review the effectiveness of Senate and brought forward proposals for discussion and approval.

It was noted that following discussion at the previous Senate, the current elections process for electing academic staff to Senate will remain but that more work will be undertaken to promote the benefits of sitting on Senate. Better communications will aim to provide more opportunities for engagement with the nomination and voting processes, in particular by encouraging staff from underrepresented groups to nominate themselves for positions.

**Faculty Representation**

The method of faculty representation was discussed and options brought forward to adjust the split of faculty representation to ensure that no faculty becomes underrepresented due to changes in staff numbers within faculties. It was recommended that there should be a minimum number of staff (i.e. 4) per faculty, and the remaining number of staff be allocated by faculty size. This would result in FNS having 8 members, HumSS having 7, and FMHS 9 members elected to Senate for the 2019/20 academic year.

> Senate **resolved:**

> **That** the new method of faculty representation outlined above be **approved**.

**Senate members of Council**

It was also proposed that members of Senate who are elected to Council should be able to complete their full 4-year term on Council regardless of whether their term on Senate has ended, to maintain the lines of communication and representation between Senate and Council.

> Senate **resolved to recommend to Council**:

> That Senate members of Council retain membership of Senate for their term on Council be **approved**.

**Standing Orders to Senate**

The Standing Orders to Senate have been substantially rewritten to provide greater clarity to Senate members of their responsibilities, and to clarify the elections process and the communication of Senate business around the University.

> Senate **resolved:**

> **That** the amendments to the Senate Standing Orders be **approved.**


## 14.    USVC ANNUAL REPORT

Senate received the report, and Dr Anne Loweth presented the Student Alcohol Policy for approval. One query was raised as to why the KPA and SU bars have differing maximum alcohol by volume percentages for beverages. It was agreed that all bars on campus would have the same restrictions, where alcohol will be of no higher than 50% ABV.

> Senate **resolved:**

> **That** the Student Alcohol Policy be **approved, subject to the above amendment.**

**15.    SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Dr Galbraith presented the report which included various items for approval as detailed below.

FOR FORMAL APPROVAL BY SENATE

The papers detailing the Awards and Prizes associated with this minute can be found on the Senate section of the KLE.  If you require sight of the paper and are not able to access this page, please contact the Governance Office in the first instance.

**(i) Academic Awards**

Senate **resolved:**

**That** the awards as set out in the papers, including the amendments to awards submitted to the Governance team between the time that the papers were circulated and the time of the meeting (details of the awards amended were outlined in the reserved minutes) be **approved**.

**(ii) University Prizes**

Senate **resolved:**

**That** the award of prizes and funds, as listed in the paper, be **approved**.

**(iii) External Examiners**

Senate **resolved:**

**That** the nominations for examiners for taught and research degrees, set out within the paper, be **approved**.

**(iv) Award of Honorary Titles**

Senate **resolved:**

**That** the award of honorary titles set out within the paper be **approved**.


FOR RECOMMENDATION OF APPROVAL TO COUNCIL

**(i) Senior Appointments**

Senate **resolved to recommend to Council:**

**That** the senior appointments set out within the paper be **approved**.

**(ii) Amendment to Statutes, Ordinances and Regulations**

Senate **resolved to recommend to Council:**

**That** the amendments to the Regulations and Ordinances set out within the paper be **approved**.

**(iii) Review of Ordinances**

Following the implementation of the new Keele Academic Regulations and Policies (KARP), which came into effect from September 2018 as part of the Regulations Review, there has been a first-stage review of

the University's Ordinances, to ensure they remain fit-for-purpose, are compliant with the University's Charter and Statutes, and that they are in a complementary format to the new KARP.

Senate **resolved to recommend to Council:**

**That** the outlined changes to the ordinances as a result of the review be **approved**.

**(iv) Amendments to the University Schedule of Delegation**

As outlined in the Education Report and Senate Effectiveness review report, amendments have been made to the Schedule of Delegation.

Senate **resolved to recommend to Council:**

**That** the outlined changes to the Schedule of Delegation be **approved**.

**(v) Amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Audit and Risk Committee**

Senate **resolved to recommend to Council**:

**That** the amended Terms of Reference of the Audit and Risk Committee be **approved**.

**Council Report to Senate**

Professor Nick Forsyth, Senate member of Council, presented the annual report on Council's Activities. Professor Forsyth highlighted the increasing requirement of Council to be oversee academic matters due to the new requirements of the OfS, and was impressed by their attention to detail and level of scrutiny in all matters. Dr Foysyth expressed his thanks to Mr Ralph Findlay, the outgoing Chair of Council for his contribution to Council and dedication to the University, and wished to welcome Dame Jo Williams to the role as his successor.

Senate noted the remaining items detailed in the paper for report.

16.     **STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**


17.     **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS**

No further items raised.

18.     **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

No further items raised.

**SENATE**

**ATTENDANCE – 10<sup>TH</sup> October 2018**

*(a)*     ***The Vice-Chancellor***
Professor Trevor McMillan

*(b)*     ***Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost; and the Pro Vice-Chancellors and the Deans (including the Chairs of the Boards of Studies and Faculties)***

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Professor Mark Ormerod | Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost |
| | Dr Anne Loweth | Pro Vice-Chancellor (Students) |
| | Professor David Amigoni | Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & Enterprise) |
| | Professor Pauline Walsh | Dean of the Faculty of Health and Pro Vice-Chancellor |
| | Professor Shane O'Neill | Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and Pro Vice-Chancellor |
| A | Professor Jonathan Wastling | Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Postgraduate Studies) |
| | Professor Richard Luther | Dean of Internationalisation |

*(c)*     ***Academic Registrar and Director of Student and Academic Services***
Dr Helen Galbraith          Academic Registrar & Director of Student and Academic Services

*(d)*     ***Librarian***
Mr Paul Reynolds          University Librarian

*(e)*     ***Heads of Schools:***

School of Computing and Mathematics: Professor Peter Andras
A     School of Social Science and Public Policy: Dr Rebecca Leach
Keele Management School: Professor Kurt Allman
School of Health & Rehabilitation: Professor Anand Pandyan
School of Humanities: Dr Timothy Lustig
A     School of Law: Professor Alison Brammer
School of Life Sciences: Professor David Hoole
School of Medicine: Professor Andrew Hassall
School of Pharmacy: Dr Katie Maddock
A     School of Nursing and Midwifery: Dr Pat Owen
School of Physical and Geographical Sciences: Professor Christopher Fogwill
School of Chemical and Physical Sciences: Professor Mike Watkinson
School of Politics, Philosophy, International Relations & Environment: Professor Robert Ladrech
School of Psychology: Dr Jim Grange

*(f)*     ***Academic Departments (Research Institutes):***

Faculty Research Office for Natural Sciences: Professor Clifford Stott
Institute for Social Inclusion: Professor Derek McGhee
A     Institute for Applied Clinical Science: Professor Simon Davies
A     Institute for Primary Care and Health Sciences: Professor Christian Mallen
Institute for Science and Technology in Medicine: Professor Nick Forsyth

**Associate Deans for Learning and Teaching**
A     Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences – Dr Julie Green (interim)
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences – Mr Kelvin Johnstone
Faculty of Natural Sciences – Dr Katie Szkornik

*(g)*      ***Members of the Electoral Roll elected by the Electoral Roll***

      *Elected by the Faculty of Health*

|   | | |
|---|---|---|
|   | Dr Gary Moss (Pharmacy) | 2016-2019 |
|   | Dr Karen Adams (Medicine) | 2016-2019 |
|   | Dr Sarah Aynsley (Medicine) | 2016-2019 |
|   | Dr Claire Stapleton (Health and Rehabilitation) | 2016-2019 |
|   | Dr Gordon Dent (Medicine) | 2017-2020 |
| A | Dr Clare Jinks (IPCHS) | 2018-2021 |
|   | Mrs Yvonne Flood (Nursing) | 2018-2021 |
|   | Dr Lisa Dikomitis (Medicine) | 2018-2021 |
|   | Dr Audrey Skidmore (Medicine) | 2018-2021 |
|   | *Vacancy* | |

      *Elected by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences*

|   | | |
|---|---|---|
|   | Dr Elizabeth Poole (MCC) | 2016-2019 |
|   | Dr Sorcha Uí Chonnachtaigh (Law) | 2016-2019 |
| A | Dr Teresa Oultram (KMS) | 2016-2019 |
|   | Dr James Peacock (Humanities) | 2017-2020 |
|   | Dr Mariangela Palladino (Humanities) | 2017-2020 |
| A | Dr Philip Morgan (Humanities) | 2017-2020 |
|   | Dr Sophie Allen (SPIRE) | 2017-2020 |
|   | Dr Shalini Sharma (Humanities) | 2018-2021 |

      *Elected by the Faculty of Natural Sciences*

|   | |
|---|---|
| Dr Helen Price (Life Sciences) | 2016-2019 |
| Dr William Kirk (Life Sciences) | 2017-2020 |
| Dr Chris Stiff (Psychology) | 2017-2020 |
| Dr Zoe Robinson (GGE) | 2017-2020 |
| Dr Jacco van Loon (CPS) | 2017-2020 |
| Dr Martyn Parker (Computing and Mathematics) | 2018-2021 |

*(h)*      ***Student Representatives: Elected Officers***

|   | |
|---|---|
| Mr Tom Snape (Development and Democracy Officer) | 2018-2019 |
| Mr Elliot Lancaster (Education Officer) | 2018-2019 |
| Ms Ele Fisher (Welfare and Internationalisation Officer) | 2018-2019 |
| Mr Sam Gibbons (Activities and Community Officer) | 2018-2019 |
| Ms Amy Holden (Athletic Union and Sport Officer) | 2018-2019 |

      *Keele Postgraduate Association*

|   | |
|---|---|
| Mr George Blake - President | 2018-2019 |
| Mr John Wootton – Vice-President | 2018-2019 |

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE**

| | |
|---|---|
| Ms Dorothea Ross-Simpson | Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct, SAS |
| Dr Rafe Hallet | Director of Keele Institute of Innovation & Teaching Excellence |
| Mr Simon Rimmington | Director of Foundation Year |

**OBSERVERS**

| | |
|---|---|
| Ms Zoe Hollingsworth | Deputy Head of Development & Supporter Engagement, RIE |

Dr Thomas Neligwa                    Lecturer, Computing and Mathematics
Dr Hesham Abdalla                  Senior Lecturer in Clinical Leadership and Management
Mrs Caroline Farnell-Smith       Policy Officer, Equality & Diversity, SAS

**SECRETARIAT**

Miss Claire Baily                     Governance Support Officer, Governance, SAS
Miss Laura Harrison               Governance Support Officer, Governance, SAS

*Questions from Keele SU:*

**1. Congratulations are in order for Keele's performance in the NSS this year. What is your current understanding of the cause of this quite significant jump in ranking and what work is being done to better understand this?**

*Looking across the last 5 years, we have been at/very near the top apart from 2017, so perhaps the question is more - what happened last year, not what happened this year? New questions may have influenced the 2017 result but also all schools and programme teams have worked hard since then to respond to students' views.*

*One good indication of why our performance is strong can be drawn from the open comments, which highlight students' recognition of the outstanding levels of support and guidance that the majority of staff provide for their students. The campus, the quality of our courses and learning opportunities, including placements, all featured in the positive comments, as did our level of well-being support.*

*Obviously, there were negative comments too, which often reflected the same areas as the positive, where a number of students experienced some lack of consistency in the levels of support from staff.*

*The negative comments tend to be much more specific about the areas of the course that were less satisfactory and included issues such as timetabling, assessment styles, marking and feedback.*

*The strike was also mentioned by more than a few but it's a credit to the efforts staff made to minimise the impact of this on students that this issue didn't feature more prominently or impact more on the overall outcome.*

*This was a great result but it's important that we continue to reflect and improve. Schools have been provided with a detailed question-by-question analysis of the NSS outcome for them to reflect on each programme's performance and their responses will be considered at a meeting of TEXSO later in October. We are also asking schools to consult their incoming final year students about the 2018 results to get their insight into the feedback received so that improvements in weaker areas can be made.*

*Finally, I think it's would be good to refer to the "What's the one thing you'd change about your Keele experience?" responses - approx. 14% of comments referred to how they'd change their own level of participation in university life and wider activities - especially from year 1. I think this is a really powerful message to get across from our exiting students to our incoming cohort.*

**2. Every year every pretty much every University is seeking to grow their student numbers in order to balance their books and Keele is no different. Not every University can succeed at this. Is this growth sustainable over the long term? What steps are being taken to ensure the University has the capacity to ensure high quality teaching, research and student experience in the context of this growth?**

*This is a very pertinent question. We are aware that during this recruitment round several Universities have experienced significant drops in the intakes this year and for those institutions; widespread sector growth will be a significant concern.*

*Our plans to grow are focused on the need to be able to invest in our staff and students, whether through capital programmes, additional staffing support, new facilities, funding research activity or simply in development and training programmes. Without generating funds to do this, it becomes harder for us all to do our jobs well and therefore, growth is needed..*

*Although the whole sector is seeking to grow, Keele has been in the top 10 institutions that have seen a percentage growth in their student intakes. This puts us in a much stronger position to be sustainable in the medium-long term.*

*Last week UEC had an away day to discuss the size, shape and financial sustainability of the institution. At this away day, we confirmed that a growth strategy is the only viable option for Keele, if we are to maintain financial sustainability.*

*However, we also agreed that this growth will primarily need to come from enhanced international and PGT activity and cannot continue to come solely from Home Undergraduate recruitment, as we have seen in the last few years. As an outcome of the away day, Deans and other colleagues of UEC, will therefore be reflecting on what this means for the University and how we can respond to this challenge.*


**3. Having free time in Wednesday afternoons allows students to live a healthy and active lifestyle, pursue their interests, hold down regular part time work and generally have some time where they can take a break from their studies. All of these things can contribute to the wider wellbeing of students.**

**KeeleSU have recently dug up papers from as late as 2003 where we were asking the same things and getting the same mixed and unclear responses as we received this year. This is despite the University having guidance on its own website stating: "Wednesday afternoons shall be free of all teaching (except modern languages)" ( source: https://www.keele.ac.uk/timetabling/staffinformation/blocktimetable/ ) .**

**This lack of clarity around whether Wednesday afternoons are kept free has gone on for long enough. Not only is it confusing and causing many students to not be able to live a healthy and active lifestyle, it also leads the University potentially open to a challenge through the Consumer and Markets Authority. We are in the process of setting up a Vet School, which is constrained by some of the strictest regulatory requirements in existence and that has still been able to fit in keeping Wednesday afternoons free.**

**Will the Vice Chancellor commit to the University having actual policy on the provision for free time on Wednesday afternoons?**

Further Clarity was sought from the SU on the specific issues and the following was confirmed:

"Amy has spoken to the Timetabling Manager and he said that when he came into post there was no policy on Wednesday afternoons. He proposed a policy which was rejected. Our understanding is that this was used as a 'protocol' but this isn't a binding policy. There are schools that timetable on a Wednesday afternoon - our understanding is that this happens in Nursing & Midwifery, some parts of Life Sciences and Medicine but there may be more.
Amy and Elliott wrote to all the heads of school about this in early September and have only had responses from a handful of schools.
Schools seem to say it's a Timetabling issue and Timetabling seem to say it's a schools issue. Often the schools will say there isn't an alternative time when they teach on a Wednesday afternoon - this is not the case."

*It is difficult for the University to commit to a Policy on Wednesday afternoons fully as there are a number of reasons and demands on the University timetable, staffing and specialist rooms that require Wednesday afternoon activity to be scheduled. However, the University is committed to keeping teaching activities on Wednesday afternoons to a minimum and optional wherever possible.*

*Senate members will remember that the current University Timetabling protocols were discussed and approved in March 2017. These protocols state:*

> *2.8 On Wednesday, the core working day for all undergraduate courses offered in the full time mode shall be 9am to 1pm. The University aims to minimise teaching on Wednesday afternoons. However, in certain circumstances some teaching must be scheduled on Wednesday afternoons, these include postgraduate teaching, enrichment activities e.g. languages and some laboratory teaching.*

*Indeed there is not a timetable slot for undergraduates on a Wednesday afternoon past 1pm. But the majority of teaching on Wednesday afternoons is postgraduate (mainly due to student/staff availability - particularly for CPD students); enrichment activities (languages); and some limited undergraduate activities (e.g. Foundation year Chemistry/SH/DH Chemistry due to lab availability, occasional Liberal Arts field trips and other singular activities).*
*Health programmes teaching are again kept to a minimum on Wednesday afternoons but sometimes due to assessments and activities that bring the cohort together this slot is occasionally used.*

*So we need to keep on top of this and keep reinforcing the commitment to minimise it.*

*Use of the teaching space on campus however is an issue and part of the pressures on space, are because we are not using the full timetable (outside of Wednesday afternoons). In order to maximise this asset, further work will be required to make timetabling on campus more effective and I assume that Senate would endorse actions to this effect.*

***Questions from Jacco Van Loon on behalf of FNS:***

**[1] Does our Vice Chancellor endorse the joint expert panel's report on the USS pensions evaluation, and will he put pressure on UUK to do the same?**

*The University Executive Committee hold the view that Joint Expert Panel was well placed to consider the USS pensions evaluation and UEC are minded therefore to accept a different risk profile and a slightly higher contribution rate as a result of the JEP report.*

*However, I should stress that we have not had anything formally to approve and all decisions on this are subject to approval by University Council. Following discussion with Council, the University will respond to the UUK call for comments on the JEP, UUK will act upon the responses from the individual institutions and we await to see what other institutions say in response to the report and also how the trustee and regulator respond to this.*

**[2] Will the changes that are being made to the way grant applications are supported and approved mean that some research(ers) will be supported, and other research(ers) will not?**

*The changes over the last year increase the level of support for colleagues making grant applications.*

*How support is accessed is much clearer and information is now available via the web in a set of new pages, where previously colleagues had to figure out for themselves how to access support.*

*There are now clear processes in place and very clear information on who to contact. The majority of resources held in the central team have now been devolved into two faculty hubs (e.g. contract review is done there). This provides faculties with greater control over resources to support grant submission.*

*Two surveys of PIs submitting grants over the last 12 months shows a good level of satisfaction in the processes and the survey also enables us to identify common problems and resolve them as the new processes bed in.*

*Last academic year (the first year of the new support systems) colleagues applied for a record value of grants (£21m more than the previous year). There has always been a grant submission approval process in place - with approval previously sitting with Research Institute Director(s) and the Director of Research, Innovation & Engagement. This approval process has been revised and approval now sits with the Head of School and Dean as it is better that academic staff approve grant submissions.*

*The approval process ensures grant applications have been correctly costed and that the resources required to undertake the work are available, this aims to prevent delays if the grant is won. The approval process is electronic and part of a new research management system to make approval processes as quick as possible.*

*So what was aimed at making the process better and more efficient seems to be working but clearly will be kept under constant review.*

**[3] In relation to the previous question, the fundamental principle of academic freedom is the "questioning and testing received wisdom and putting forward new ideas - which may be controversial or unpopular." Can this be enshrined in the University's Statutes and Ordinances?**

*I believe this is already enshrined in the University Ordinances:*

*Ordinance XXI: Duties of the Academic Staff*

*1. It shall be the duty of Professors, Readers, Senior Lecturers, or Lecturers and members of the electoral roll to __devote themselves to the advancement of knowledge in their subjects,__ to give instruction therein to students, and to promote the interests of the University as a place of education, learning and research.*

*It would be impossible to advance the knowledge of a subject without "questioning and testing received wisdom".*

**[4] On the subject of the halls building programme, it is understood that the deal with University Partnerships Programme, which was to provide financing and management for the new halls of residence, fell through last autumn. What alternative methods of financing have been found? And what is the current situation regarding the building plans for the Horwood area?**

*Negotiations with new financial models are currently underway and at present, are not able to be publicly discussed, because of their commercial sensitivity. However, a key priority for the University is ensuring a sustainable provision and model of student accommodation for the medium to long-term and therefore, we remain committed to finding a solution for our accommodation that provides a high-quality service to those students who would like to access it.*

**[5] Students are unhappy with the parking provision. Would allowing them to use plot 7 offer some remedy?**

*As mentioned in the VC's report, accessing plot 7 is not possible for students this year due to the original covenant on the development site land. We intend to have this resolved for 2019 academic year which would enable students to park on plot 7. However, in the meantime, staff colleagues could help to alleviate the parking challenges we face, by using plot 7, which has consistently had vacant parking spaces since its opening.*

**[6] With the expansion of IC buildings etc., one could imagine the road access bottleneck into campus will get even more congested during busy times (e.g. going up Keele Bank at 8.30 in the morning). Has this been thought about?**

*Yes - indeed, the design of the then new entrance was intended to take the likely volume of traffic intended for the development site. Clearly this needs to be kept on top of and monitoring the use of the road network is done in partnership with the local Council. We undoubtedly need to work through transport onto campus in various ways and these will be incorporated into new transport strategies over the next year.*

**[7] David Amigoni, on August 13, announced that Keele had been awarded funding by Research England "to undertake a series of eleven projects that aim to address some of society's most pressing global challenges in the areas of social inclusion, global health an sustainable futures." Could these be described, and details be given about the Keele Global Challenges Research Network which was announced will be launched?**

*This resource comes to us as part of Research England's (formerly HEFCE's) overall QR allocation to Keele: but it is important to remember that this element of QR (which in this year amounts to £280K) is ring-fenced and can only be spent on projects and researchers which have been identified by Keele's GCRF Strategy.*

*This is an unusual development for REF-generated QR funding but it is because it is monitored by OECD (Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development) and needs to be ODA (Official Development Assistance, Development Assistance Committee [DAC] ) compliant. The research must make an important developmental, capacity-building contribution to countries which have been identified under that commitment, by that committee.*

*Keele's GCRF Strategy was submitted in March: it is for a period of three years, and we shall need to monitor its delivery.*

*It was built around the development of Keele's three new research institutes: Social Inclusion, launched in June; Sustainable Futures, launched just last week; and Global Health, which is still under development but which speaks very powerfully to the GCRF aims.*

*In fact, this is evidence of the way in which Keele's institutes can produce ID research at scale, to address major societal and global challenges. The projects were identified either a) through existing GCRF funding successes, which have been significant; or b) through specific institute initiatives, developed with academic colleagues by ADRs and Institute directors. Research England formally approved Keele's Strategy in July 2018 -- which was the occasion of the email outlining this approval and the launch of the projects.*

*The resource was reasonably evenly distributed to the three faculties, as individual sponsors of the three institutes, to support a range of identified projects and researchers: Some indicative projects include; 'Identification and management of common mental health problems: working with partners in the Philippines' (FHMS, Global Health); 'Improving educational attainment among Syrian Refugee children in the Lebanon' (HUMSS, Social Inclusion); and 'Improving food security by reducing crop losses from insect pest and striga weed in smallholder farmer crops in Africa' (FNS, Sustainable Futures)*

*Clearly, given that this is a three-year strategy, and because renewed funding is dependent upon both performance, compliance, and further development (capacity building) we will monitor delivery of these projects carefully: The PVC R&E will use a Steering Group as an initial platform for establishing the Keele Global Challenges Research Network, to be fully established, with a programme of work and activities, from January 2019.*

**[8] Students are allowed to progress pending the pass of an outstanding assessment. If, however, they do not pass it then they jeopardise not only that past year but also their current year of study. Has this scenario been considered?**

*Progression rules are kept under ongoing review and have changed in a number of ways in recent years to reflect changes to programme structures, student intake characteristics, funding arrangements etc.*

*There is also a broader review of the progression rules currently being carried out by the regulation review groups which will report to Senate in due course.*

*With regard to the particular issue of a student being withdrawn after failing a module which was trailed from a previous level of study:*
- *Under the current progression regulations, students can progress to their next level of study with fewer than 120 credits provided they have a reassessment attempt remaining on those failed credits*

- *In their progression email in early July, all such students are strongly advised to undertake that reassessment during the August reassessment period, so that they know the outcome of that reassessment before progressing to their next level of study*
- *They are warned that if they delay taking the reassessment until the following academic year and then fail it, they will be withdrawn from their degree programme*
- *Despite this, some students choose not to do this, in the case of many students, including international students, to avoid having to physically travel back to Keele for the August reassessment period, when they have already met the credit threshold to progress to their next level of study*
- *Without achieving 120 credits per level of study, students will not be able to graduate which is why the trailed fail has to be passed. The only alternative would be either (a) to force all students to pass 120 credits per level before progressing to the next level of study which would affect our progression rates, or (b) to allow students to graduate with fewer than 360 credits which is against our degree algorithm and qualifications framework. However, your question and the possible remedies will be referred to the regulations review group to consider.*

**[9] Departmental exam boards cannot turn a qualified fail into a 38 F. This forces them to either pass or fail the student, without the option for the student to carry it forward as a failed, but condoned module. Why not simply allow exam boards to turn a qualified fail into a 38 F?'**

*Qualified fails are used typically where a particular assessment is a professional body requirement, an essential health and safety concern, or fundamental for work to be undertaken at the next level of study. A qualified fail is, therefore by definition, a fail which has to be redeemed before the student can be allowed to progress.*

*For students, failing a component set as a qualifying component means that failure to achieve the set pass mark for this component (which may be lower than the pass mark for the module overall) results in failing the module overall regardless of whether the module overall achieved a pass mark.*

*Students with a Qualified Fail will be deemed not to have completed a module successfully and will not receive credit for the module with the usual consequences for reassessment.*

*All Schools were alerted last year to the risk which is posed by including qualified fails on their modules and Schools were asked to ensure that all qualified fails which remain in place are absolutely essential and academically justified.*

*It is not clear why a School which has set such qualifying component would subsequently at its exam board wish to override this by turning it into a 38F? It is either an essential assessment which must be passed or it is not. Conversion seems to go against the original school decision and if conversion is acceptable then it probably means that the asessement is not as essential as originally deemed.*