

University of Suffolk

## SENATE

### Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 11 December 2019 at 14:00 hours in the Boardroom, Waterfront Building

**Chair:** Professor Helen Langton (Vice-Chancellor)

**Present:** Professor Mohamed Abdel-Maguid (Dean, School of Engineering, Arts, Science and Technology), Sarah Ali (Students' Union School Officer, School of Social Sciences and Humanities) until item 13 OSACC annual report, Dr Jenny Amos (University wide academic representative (School of Social Sciences and Humanities)), Dr Paul Andell (School of Social Sciences and Humanities representative), Sam Bolger (Students' Union School Officer, School of Health and Sport Sciences), Professor Emma Bond (Director of Research), Hannah Boyce (Students' Union School Officer, School of Social Sciences and Humanities), Dr Ellen Buck (Director of Learning and Teaching), Dr Sam Chenery-Morris (University wide academic representative (School of Health and Sport Sciences)), Dr Daba Chowdhury (University wide academic representative (Suffolk Business School)), Professor Mohammad Dastbaz (Deputy Vice-Chancellor) until item 12 Academic Calendar, Georgia Downs (Students' Union President), Paul Driscoll-Evans (Dean, School of Health and Sport Sciences), Robert Ellis (School of Engineering, Arts, Science and Technology representative), Fiona Fisk (Academic Registrar), Dr Rachel Kirk (Assistant Principal (Higher Education), West Suffolk College), Dr Wendy Lecluyse (School of Social Sciences and Humanities representative), Professor Brian McCook (Dean, School of Social Sciences and Humanities), Brandon Orton (Students' Union School Officer, Suffolk Business School), Dr Harvey Osborne (School of Social Sciences and Humanities representative), Lois Seddon (School of Health and Sport Sciences representative)

**Apologies:** Marianne Flack (Director of Quality, Teacher Development, Student Progress and Foundation Learning, Suffolk New College), Robert Price (Suffolk Business School representative)

**Secretary:** Alison McQuin (Head of Validation and Exams)

**In attendance:** Polly Bridgman (Director of External Relations), Tim Greenacre (Registrar and Secretary), Dr Mark Lyne (Head of Quality Enhancement), Jane Murray (Assistant Registrar (Registry Services)), James Nial (Head of Planning and Management Information), Deborah Odell (University and College Union representative), Stuart Tinsley (Director of Finance and Planning) until item 7 OfS update

### Minutes of previous meeting held on 4 July 2019

19/013 The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 4 July 2019 were approved as an accurate record.

### Matters Arising

Student attrition 2018/19 (from minute 18/157)

19/014 The tariff points for 2021 have now been agreed by the Dean of Health and Sport Sciences.

Policies and procedures – RiME processes (from minute 18/186)

19/015 The updated RiME processes were sent to the SU President for agreement and have been published.

### **Chair's report**

19/016 The Chair's report was received.

### **Students' Union report**

19/017 The Students' Union report was received, noting that both staff and students were encouraged to use the new SU shop.

19/018 The new online student feedback system, SOFIA, had been launched and the Students' Union were working closely with Associate Deans to respond to the feedback provided so far. It was suggested that better identification of modules within the system, duplication of feedback with course committees and the use of a minimum number of entries as part of the reward scheme were included as part of the review of the pilot scheme.

### **Qlik Sense metrics dashboard**

19/019 A demonstration of the new Qlik Sense system was provided to members, explaining that information was drawn from other systems such as SITS to allow staff members to easily access up-to-date information. Licenses for 150 staff members had been approved and training would be provided from January 2020.

19/020 The system was being developed by the Planning and Management Information Team and so could be designed to meet specific University needs. The system allowed data to be reviewed across multiple years, locations and student characteristics as well as providing more specific data. It was confirmed that some existing reports would still be held within the SSRS system.

19/021 The system would also enable teams, Schools and Directorates to better measure progress against institutional KPIs.

### **OfS update**

19/022 The OfS had published two new Regulatory Advice documents and a report on key themes arising from the registration process.

19/023 Potential reportable events were discussed by the Executive, reminding colleagues that the University needed to ensure that all judgements relating to submission were evidenced.

19/024 Members noted that the institutional KPIs are and would be set higher than the published OfS baseline figures. A Quality Standards Review could take place for institutions who do not meet the OfS baseline figures.

### **Degree outcomes statement**

- 19/025 The University was expected to publish an evaluative 'degree outcomes statement' in 2019/20. Members were provided with guidance on producing the statements from the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment (UKSCQA) and noted that they would be used to assure Senate and the Board, through an institutional review process, that the institution had sound processes for determining degree outcomes.
- 19/026 A review of degree classification algorithms across the sector had already taken place to inform this process with members noting the University was comfortably within sector benchmarks.
- 19/027 The degree outcomes statement would be presented to the March 2020 Senate for approval prior to formal sign-off by the Board in April 2020.

**Agreed action:** The Head of Quality Enhancement to present the degree outcomes statement to the March 2020 Senate meeting.

### **TEF subject level pilot**

- 19/028 The outcomes from the TEF subject level pilot were provided, with particular attention being drawn to the importance of the narratives submitted alongside the metrics.
- 19/029 The outcome from the independent review of the TEF, led by Dame Shirley Pearce, was awaited, which may result in future changes to the TEF.
- 19/030 Members were reminded that the pilot ratings were confidential and should not be published or shared externally.

### **Student recruitment update**

- 19/031 The final 2019/20 enrolment figures were provided to members.
- 19/032 It was noted that External Relations would be further monitoring attrition and continuation rates for students who had received unconditional and conditional offers against benchmarks across the sector.
- 19/033 While current application numbers were provided to members, more accurate figures for comparison would be available after the 15 January 2020 UCAS deadline.

### **Student attrition 2018/19**

- 19/034 The final student attrition figures for 2018/19 were provided to members, with the School Executives undertaking monthly monitoring. The figures for 2017/18 had also been placed within the new School structure to allow some comparison between years. The figures were as close to non-continuation rates as the University were able to achieve as the number of students who transferred to other institutions was unknown.
- 19/035 It was reported that additional sub-categories for personal reasons for withdrawal were being explored to provide better information for analysis.

**Agreed action:** The Director of Learning and Teaching, the Head of Quality Assurance and the Head of Planning and Management Information to review the withdrawal data for academic failure and provide further information at the March 2020 Senate.

### **Academic calendar**

- 19/036 The 2020/21 academic calendar was presented for approval. Changes made to the template were in response to feedback from the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee and from the Timetabling and Space Management Operational Group.
- 19/037 While members liked the inclusion of a marking/assessment week at the end of December, it was suggested that the semester 1 re-sit week be moved to earlier in the year to allow sufficient time before semester 2 assessments were due.

**Agreed action:** The Academic Registrar and Students' Union President to meet by the end of December 2019 to agree the timing of the exam weeks prior to approval on Chair's action.

### **Office for Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct (OSACC) annual report**

- 19/038 The annual OSACC report was provided to members.
- 19/039 There was an increase in the number of appeals and complaints received, which has been seen sector-wide. It was suggested that this might be because students were more aware of their consumer rights and were linking the cost of studying with value for money. More students were citing mental health difficulties, and in complaints expressing dissatisfaction with their course, more students were now naming individual staff members. Where individual staff were named in complaints, it was suggested that Human Resources should monitor any links with their protected characteristics.
- 19/040 The OSACC action plan identified a number of initiatives to handle the increasing number of cases to ensure that they were concluded wherever possible within OIA timescales. It was suggested that as well as looking at ways to manage the increase, consideration should also be given to trying to reduce the number of complaints being submitted.
- 19/041 It was requested that any feedback on the format or detail contained with either the annual report or quarterly reports, such as including the student's academic level in the timing of complaints, be provided to the OSACC team.
- 19/042 Members thanked the OSACC team and academic staff members who helped support this work.

### **Annual quality reporting arrangements**

- 19/043 New annual quality reporting arrangements were proposed, reflecting changes to the OfS regulatory framework. While members were supportive of the changes, it was noted that a review of the third-attempt re-sit week was being undertaken, which could allow the annual report to be completed earlier in future years.

**Outcome:** Approved.

## Policies and procedures

### Framework and Regulations for Undergraduate Awards

19/044 It was proposed to amend the Framework and Regulations for Undergraduate Awards to incorporate reference to the Higher and Degree Apprenticeship Framework and the QAA Characteristics Statement, and to make explicit that apprentices must meet the requirements of the gateway in order to progress to the end-point assessment.

**Outcome:** Approved.

### Higher and Degree Apprenticeship Framework

19/045 It was proposed to amend the Higher and Degree Apprenticeship Framework to reflect recommendations made by an external consultant, and ensure it continued to align with ESFA funding rules and to the new QAA Characteristics Statement for Higher Education in Apprenticeships. Members were supportive of the changes but requested that the amended framework be reviewed by the external consultant prior to approval.

**Agreed action:** The Head of Quality Enhancement to seek feedback from the external consultant on the proposals by the end of January 2020 with any amendments to be approved by Chair's action.

## Honorary Awards Committee

19/046 The Honorary Awards Committee proposed one honorary doctorate and four honorary degrees for the 2020 graduation ceremonies. An honorary award was not required at every ceremony, and it was noted that there were three additional nominations to be considered for either the 2020 or 2021 graduation ceremonies.

**Outcome:** Approved.

## Quality Committee terms of reference

19/047 The amendments to the Quality Committee terms of reference, including changes to the membership, articulation of attendance expectations, articulation of decisions made outside the meeting and clarification of options available in the event of the meeting not being quorate were approved.

**Outcome:** Approved.

## Partnerships

### LSC London quality review

19/048 An update on the Quality Review process with LSC was provided, noting that an action plan had been put in place.

### Partnerships update

19/049 An update of partnership activity was received, highlighting additional accommodation facilities for LSC students, the intake of the first cohort of students at the Global Banking School (GBS) and the proposed date for the first cohort of UNICAF students.

### **Course Design Blueprint**

- 19/050 Members received the course design blueprint and review, approved by the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee and developed in consultation with the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching.
- 19/051 Courses would be RAG rated, based on a variety of data sets, to determine whether they met the expectations of the course design blueprint or whether a course modification or course re-approval was required. While members found the trend data useful, they also noted that yo-yoing trends should also be flagged.

### **Access and Participation Plan**

- 19/052 It was noted that guidance from the OfS for the 2018/19 monitoring return was delayed but expected shortly.
- 19/053 The new Access and Participation Plan (APP) Group had oversight of the 2019/20 and the new 2020-2025 plans. It was noted that the APP would be the focus of the December Learning & Teaching Day.

### **Senate terms of reference**

- 19/054 The final approved terms of reference, circulated to members electronically for approval, were provided for information.

### **REF 2021 and RDAP update**

- 19/055 A paper on progress towards a potential REF 2021 submission and RDAP was received for information.

### **Course proposals**

- 19/056 The list of approved course proposal forms was received.

### **Course suspension and discontinuations**

- 19/057 The list of approved course suspensions and discontinuations was received.

### **Course validation/re-approval outcomes 2018/19**

- 19/058 The list of validated and re-approved courses, approved on behalf of Senate, was received.

### **Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) reports**

- 19/059 Recent correspondence from PSRBs was received for information.

### **Partnership register**

- 19/060 Members received the list of international and UK partners, outside of the Partner Colleges, that have signed or were proposing to sign a memorandum of understanding.

**Reports from sub-committees**

Academic Appointments and Promotions Committee

19/061 The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2019 were received.

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee

19/062 The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2019 were received.

Quality Committee

19/063 The confirmed minutes from the meeting held on 2 October 2019 and the unconfirmed minutes from the meeting held on 20 November 2019 were received.

Research and Enterprise Committee

19/064 The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2019 were received.

School Academic Committee

19/065 The minutes from the Art, Design and Humanities School Academic Committee held on 24 April 2019 were received for information.

19/066 The minutes from the Science, Technology and Engineering School Academic Committee held on 15 May 2019 were received for information.

**Any other business**

19/067 Senate thanked those members whose term of office was ending for their contribution to the work of the committee.

**Date of next meeting**

19/068 The date of the next meeting is to be held at 2.00pm on Wednesday 25 March 2020 in the Boardroom, Waterfront Building.

**Alison McQuin**

**Head of Validation and Exams**