

Academic Board

12 December 2018



Actions

Ref	Action	Lead	Due Date
18/143	Submit a more detailed proposal on the proposed restructuring to Council	PJL	10 November
18/144	Consider the establishment of a Council oversight group to monitor the implementation of the new School structure.	DA	12 December
18/144	Submit a report to Academic Board in December to outline how risk will be mitigated during the implementation of the new structure while protecting 'business as usual'	DA	12 December
18/44	Provide regular updates on the progress of the implementation to Academic Board during the academic year.	PJL	Ongoing

Action from current meeting

Action completed since last meeting

Academic Board

12 December 2018

M18/168-211



Minutes

Present: Professor P Layzell (Chair), Prof K Normington, Prof K Badcock, Prof R Deem, Prof J Fiadeiro, Prof M Humphreys, Prof D Gilbert, Prof H Nicholson, Prof J Knowles, Prof J Adam, Prof G Agyemang, Prof J Brown, Prof A Chevalier, Prof K Cooper, Prof P Crang, Prof C Hanretty, Mr R Jago, Mr S Kendrick, Prof J Parker-Starbuck, Prof B Rankov, Prof K Rastle, Prof R Schack, Prof E Scott, Prof C Townsend, Prof S Wright, Prof C Bradley, Dr M Gee, Prof M Gold, Dr J Murdoch, Prof C Rees, Dr H Rui, Dr S Wolthusen, Prof E Schafer, Mr C Jones, Mr J O'Neill, Ms H Hughes and Ms W Wong

Secretary: Mr R Hall

In attendance: Dr D Ashton, Mr D Brown, Prof B O'Keefe, Dr M Beck (Assistant Secretary),

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and noted that apologies had been received from Prof S Ansari, Prof J John, Prof B Fitzgerald, Prof M Eschrig, Prof V Jansen and Dr Y Zheng. 18/168

2. Membership

It was NOTED that no nominations were received for the vacant position for a tenth elected member on the Board. 18/169

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

Minutes of the meeting on 24 October 2018 were AGREED as a correct record. 18/170

4. Matters arising

It was NOTED that the first three listed actions would be dealt with elsewhere on the agenda. The fourth is ongoing. 18/171

5. Actions taken by the Chair

It was NOTED that the Chair had approved an updated Quality Assessment report to reflect the Office for Students requirements in terms of the Annual Accountability Statement relating to quality of academic provision. 18/172

6. Unstarring of items

The Chair explained that where members of the Board required more information in relation to the content of a starred paper, they should contact the Secretary or Assistant Secretary in the first instance rather than requesting unstarring. Where the unstarring of a paper could provide for a substantive discussion of a matter relating to academic provision or research 18/173

matters, this would be approved. In the light of this, the Chair agreed the unstarring of AB/18/88.

It was NOTED that Item 17 and paper AB/18/ 77 had been withdrawn. 18/174

7. **Principal's Report**

The Principal provided an oral update highlighting firstly that Professor Wann, Department of Psychology, had been honoured on the UK Best Breakthroughs list for his work on road safety and that the Global Challenges Strategy developed by the Deputy Principal (Academic) had been highly commended. 18/175

The Chair noted the ongoing concern about the impact of Brexit. The Deputy Principal (Operations) is chairing a College group which will be assessing the impact on the College. As part of its commitment to supporting EU staff, the College has also signed up for such staff to take part in the pilot EU settlement scheme. 18/176

The Augar Review report is due out in February. Currently there is speculation on the outcome in terms of the level of student fees and the possible re-introduction of student control numbers. The College has done some modelling of the possible impact of such changes, which will create challenges going forward. UUK has been involved in correspondence with the government on the review and has requested that any proposed changes are well thought through and do not result in unintended consequence for the HE sector. It was hoped that more information on the review would be available for the Senior Management Team Away Day in February. 18/177

8. **Reports from the Senior Management Team**

The Senior Vice-Principal (Academic Strategy, Partnerships and Resources) noted that Heads of Department should have received invitations to budget round meetings in January. The academic planning process for 2019-20 would be pared back and he would then be working with Heads of School designate during the year to produce longer term strategic School plans, which would form the basis for future planning. 18/178

The Deputy Principal (Academic) reported that the internal REF review had been completed and thanked all staff for their work. The focus of work in the New Year would be on making strategic decisions about which units of assessment research should be submitted to in order to maximise successful outcomes for the College. A report on the review would be presented to the next Academic Board in March. 18/179

A working group, under the leadership of the Deputy Principal (Academic), has been meeting to develop an assessment strategy for the College. A draft will be considered by the Faculty Teaching Committees in the Spring term with a view to bringing a final version to Academic Board for approval in March. 18/180

The review of the College's postgraduate taught portfolio is progressing well. It is clear that future developments of the portfolio will need to focus on how the portfolio responds to the needs of applicants. 18/181

The Vice-Principal (Teaching Innovation and Equality and Diversity) reported that a working group to consider the implementation of lecture capture would be meeting early in the New Year and reporting to the Board in due course. 18/182

9. **Report from the Students' Union President**
- The President reported that the Vice-President (Education) had been involved in discussions with students to gauge their views on the academic restructuring and together with the Vice-President (Welfare and Diversity) was also involved in discussion with the College as regards the Student Success Strategy. 18/183
- The President announced that the first student representative award had been made to a joint English and Classics undergraduate. The first 'You're valued' award for academic staff would be made in January. 18/184
10. **Report from the Council**
- 10.1 Prof Shafer provided a brief report on the Council meeting held on 22 November 2018, which was led by the incoming Chair, Dame Margaret Hodge. 18/185
- 10.2 The minutes of the Council meetings held on 4 July (AB/18/70) were RECEIVED and NOTED. 18/187
11. **Student Wellbeing**
- The Vice-Principal (Student Experience) introduced the discussion on student wellbeing. Over the past year he has been working closely with the Students' Union and the Head of Student Engagement and Sports to improve the student experience in various areas, e.g. Health Care provision has been reviewed, the Extensions policy has been revised to permit students to self-certify, Medicine has been refurbished, the Jane Holloway Hall has been repurposed to accommodate exercise classes and the School of Management and the Students' Union had been working closely to better understand and respond to the needs of commuting students. A paper on commuting students would be presented to the Board before the end of the current academic year 18/188
- The Director of Academic Services continued the presentation noting that part of the College's 'promise' to students relates to the friendly and supportive environment, the personalised individual experience and the sense of community. For this reason the promotion of Student Wellbeing is of strategic importance to the College. The presentation focussed on the four strands of wellbeing work currently undertaken by the Students' Union, and overview of the number of students who received support from Support and Advisory Services, and work done to date, which included an external review. Key findings are that the College should reflect on the way in which it communicates individual/personal information to students; take a whole institution view of managing students' wellbeing and mental health and consider how all staff who work with students are trained. 18/189
- Board members raised particular concerns about the welfare of commuting students, who were not clearly identifiable in College statistics about attainment, amongst others, and the challenge of balancing their needs with those of non-commuting students, e.g. with respect to timetabling and use of facilities. It was noted that the data the College currently has does not include any measures of wellbeing and there is no baseline against which to measure improvement. The challenges of training all frontline staff was discussed with a suggestion that mandatory online training be introduced. 18/190
- The Director of Academic Services noted that *Fit to Study* and *Fit to Reside* policies would be brought to Academic Board in due course for consideration. Appropriate training for all staff is being reviewed and the College is also reviewing the wording of letters that are sent to students, in particular formal warning letters. Finally it was noted that the College needs to be mindful of the fact that the students most at risk are not those in receipt of support, but rather those who are not known to the College and therefore do not avail themselves of the support available. 18/191

12. **Academic restructuring** 18/192
- Paper AB/18/71 was RECEIVED. The Chair reported that Council had approved the new School structure at its meeting on 22 November. Interviews had been held for the new Heads of School and an announcement would be made shortly. The Heads designate will join weekly work stream meetings in the New Year to contribute to the shaping of the new school structure. The role of the current Heads of Department within the new structure would be clarified shortly.
- The Deputy Principal (Operations) outlined the work of the Reference Group, which had included representation from each department (either Head or Department Manager) and had met regularly over a four week period to discuss the mapping of departmental processes into the new school structure. Planning and Resources Committee was due to consider the outcome of these discussions and decide whether to approve the recommendations to move forward. Discussions with the campus unions are due to take place before Christmas and will be followed by a six week consultation period in the New Year. The Reference Group would be meeting after this with the plan to finalise the new structures by the end of March. 18/193
13. **Annual Report on the College Board of Examiners' Executive Committee** 18/194
- Paper AB/18/72 was RECEIVED. The Deputy Principal (Academic) noted various aspects of the business of the College Board of Examiners' Executive Committee as set out in the paper. It was the view of the Committee that Chairs of departmental examination boards should not be in post for longer than five years. This was to ensure that knowledge on examination processes did not reside with only one person and also to provide opportunities for other departmental staff to take on this role. She also noted that the Committee annually receives equal opportunities reports on undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision. Of particular note was the continuing undergraduate attainment gap between BAME and non-BAME students, which the Student Success Strategy project will be tackling. Work was currently being undertaken by Strategic Planning and Change to identify commuting students to establish whether there was an attainment gap between them and other students. Identifying such students was proving challenging.
14. **Suspensions of regulations**
- 14.1 Paper AB/18/73 was RECEIVED. The Deputy Principal (Academic) noted that a large number of the suspensions were due to administrative errors, e.g. students being misadvised on progression requirements, students not being registered for the required number of credits. She expressed the hope that with the move to Schools the number of errors would decrease. 18/195
- 14.2 Paper AB/18/74 was RECEIVED. The Vice-Principal and Dean of the Doctoral School highlighted that a number of requests for extensions to submission deadlines were received very late, which left little choice but to approve them. She highlighted the ongoing concern about requests for backdated interruptions, particularly those requesting backdating into a previous academic year (after the submission of student data to HESA). Following on from the earlier item on student well-being she noted that there was also an increase in research students experiencing mental health difficulties, which is in line with increases in the sector. A College working group has been set up to consider ways in which such students can be supported. 18/196

15.	Student Recruitment	Paper AB/18/75 was RECEIVED. The Deputy Principal (Operations) congratulated staff on their recruitment efforts, which resulted in the College achieving its biggest student intake to date. The undergraduate headcount was 47 short of target and Home postgraduate taught numbers were 100 down; however, this decrease was offset by excellent overseas postgraduate recruitment, which exceeded target by 188. This year's intake put the College on track to meet its target of 10,500 by 2020.	18/197
		The new directorate of Marketing and Communications had, in its first year, focussed on improving the recruitment of Home undergraduate students and had strengthened the College's position. The team would now be focussing their attention on further strengthening overseas recruitment.	18/198
16.	Dates of term and graduation	Paper AB/18/60 was RECEIVED. The proposed dates of term and graduation from 2021 – 22 to the end of the 2024-25 academic year were APPROVED.	18/199
18.	Proposed changes to constitutions and terms of reference	Paper AB/18/61 was RECEIVED and amendments to the Terms of Reference of the College Board of Examiners' Executive Committee were NOTED.	18/200
19.	PDR Reports		
19.1	Paper AB/18/79 was RECEIVED.		18/201
19.2	Paper AB/18/80 was RECEIVED		18/202
19.3	Paper AB/18/81 was RECEIVED.		18/203
19.4	Paper AB/18/82 was RECEIVED.		18/204
19.5	Paper AB/18/83 was RECEIVED.		18/205
20.	Faculty Board		
	Paper AB/18/84 was RECEIVED.		18/206
21	Academic Board Executive		
	Paper AB/18/85 was RECEIVED.		18/207
22.	Academic Planning Committee		
	Paper AB/18/86 was RECEIVED.		18/208
23.	Collaborative Provisions Committee		
	Paper AB/18/87 was RECEIVED.		18/209

24. **Teaching and Learning Strategy Committee and Quality Assurance and Standards Committee**

Paper AB/18/88 was RECEIVED. In response to questions raised, the Vice-Principal (Equality and Diversity and Teaching Innovation) outlined for Board members the Student Success Strategy project, which was targeting four departments in the College where data had indicated a significant attainment gap between BAME and non-BAME students. A report on the project would be provided to the Board at a later date. The data are also being interrogated as part of the College's resubmission in 2019 for the Race Equality Charter Mark. 18/210

25. **Date of next meeting**

Wednesday 20 March 2018 at 3pm in the Moore Annexe Lecture Theatre. 18/211