



SENATE

Minutes of the meeting held at 14:15 on 9 October 2024, in the Main Hall, International Politics Building.

Voting members: Professor Jon Timmis, Vice-Chancellor; Dr Otar Akanyeti; Mr Tom Bates; Dr Hanna Binks; Professor Hazel Davey; Dr Sarah Davies; Professor Iain Donnison; Dr Patrick Finney, Interim Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences); Mr Jonathan Fry, Chair of AU Branch of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol; Professor Neil Glasser, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Earth and Life Sciences); Professor Angela Hatton, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation); Dr Aloysius Igboekwu; Professor Anwen Jones, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience); Dr Ffion Jones; Dr Alex Mangold; Dr Julie Mathias; Mr Will Parker, Undeb Aberystwyth Academic Affairs Officer; Ms Jen Phipps; Dr Alexander Pitchford; Dr Samuel Raybone; Professor Phillipp Schofield; Professor Qiang Shen, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Business and Physical Sciences); Dr Alistair Shepherd; Dr Lucy Trotter; Mr Bayanda Vundamina, Undeb Aberystwyth President; Professor Reyer Zwiggelaar Head of Graduate School;

Non-voting members: Professor Iain Barber; Professor Nigel Copner; Mr Prysor Davies; Dr Thomas Jansen; Dr Gwion Evans; Dr Olaoluwa Olusanya; Professor Huw Morgan; Professor Charles Musselwhite; Professor Helen Roberts, Director of Research Excellence and Impact. Dr Steve Thompson;

In attendance: Mrs Kim Bradick, Deputy Registrar (Secretary); Ms Michelle Dickson, Academic Registrar; Mr Tim Davies, Head of Information Services; Mrs Jean Jones, Head of the Vice-Chancellor's Office; Mr Ian Munton, Director of Student Services; Dr Gwawr Taylor, University Secretary;

Apologies for absence had been received from Prof Andy Evans, Miss Elain Gwynedd, UMCA President. Professor Mererid Hopwood, Dr Kim Knowles, Professor Louise Marshall, Ms Jackie Sayce, Dr Anoush Simon, Professor Catrin Webster.

1. WELCOME

Welcome was extended to the following as a non-voting Head of Department: Mr Prysor Davies, Interim Head, Department of Education; Dr Gwion Evans, Interim Head, Department of Mathematics; Professor Huw Morgan, Interim Head, Department of Physics; Professor Charles Musselwhite, Head of Psychology; Dr Olaoluwa Olusanya, Interim Head, Law and Criminology. Dr Alistair Shepherd (already a voting member of Senate) was noted as Interim Head, Department of International Politics; Ms Michelle

Dickson, Academic Registrar and Mrs Kim Bradick, Deputy Registrar (Secretary), were noted as attending their first meeting of Senate.

It was noted that the following Senate representatives had been elected to sit on the Council: Dr Sarah Davies and Dr Aloysius Igboekwu.

2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared in relation to the business to be transacted during the meeting.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RECEIVED

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2024 (SEN2425-003).

RESOLVED

1. To correct the minutes to record Professor Andy Evans as a voting member and Professor Helen Roberts a non-voting member.
2. That the minutes be confirmed as a correct record.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

RECEIVED

A log setting out the progress made in taking forward decisions and actions agreed at the most recent Senate meeting, and outstanding actions from previous meetings (SEN2425-004).

NOTED

That changes to the 2% Window of Opportunity had been brought in for students starting in 2024/25 rather than as had originally been proposed for students starting Part Two in 2024/25.

RESOLVED

To confirm approval of the change to the 2% Window of Opportunity for students starting in 2024/25.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

NOTED

Correspondence from the Department of Mathematics in relation to timetabling.

RESOLVED

To refer the correspondence in relation to timetabling for further consideration to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) and Academic Registrar to discuss

with the department and to report back to Senate. [**Action:** Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) and Academic Registrar]

6. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

RECEIVED

Vice-Chancellor's Report (SEN2425-005)

NOTED

1. The report consisted of two parts: a highlight report and an update on Recruitment and Planning.
2. The changing political landscape and conversations around tuition fees. Medr was now fully operational and their strategy was out for consultation with the sector.
3. Thanks to all colleagues involved through the clearing period and welcome week; over the next few months staff and students would be invited to evaluate the substantially revised induction process and welcome activities.
4. Learning and teaching update.
5. Research highlights including two consecutive cover papers in Nature by Prof Nick Pearce and Prof Richard Bevins and by Prof Andrew Thomas.
6. Senate members were encouraged to get involved in the transformation work; the Strategy would be discussed with Council later in the week.

7. ACADEMIC BOARD

7.1 Report from Academic Board

RECEIVED

Report by Kim Bradick, Deputy Registrar (SEN2425-006).

NOTED

1. There would be an opportunity to discuss the L&T Strategy in a workshop later in the meeting.
2. The latest version of the QAA Quality Code had been launched in June; this would be the framework under which AU would be reviewed through the next quality enhancement review in 2027/28. There were 12 Principles with associated Key Practices divided under three themes.
3. The University had formally responded to the annual student report and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) would continue to work closely with the 2024/25 sabbatical officers taking forward the issues outlined in the report.

4. The resit arrangements for Nursing schemes had been brought into line with other schemes and an exit award of BSc Healthcare Studies had been added.
5. Static deadlines for students to request translation of exam and assessment papers in Welsh on English medium modules had been agreed as 1 November for Semester One exams and 1 March for Semester Two exams.
6. The proposal to introduce of a Fit to Sit policy had been put in abeyance because of practical challenges relating to certain types of assessment and summer resits and concerns about student performance, marking workload and systems development.
7. Work had been undertaken to streamline the existing Special Circumstances and extensions processes which would be rolled out during the autumn. Requests for would be submitted via the student record, including submission of supporting evidence where it was available. Automated workflows would help with managing large volumes of sensitive information and facilitate a swifter decision-making process, greater consistency, and automated responses back to students.
8. The Final Review process had been amended to include an accelerated process for students to submit requests for Final Review against Support to Study and Finance Office exclusions on the grounds of unpaid debt, where expediency was necessary.

7.2 Learning and Teaching Strategy

RECEIVED

Learning and Teaching Strategy Final draft June 2024 (SEN2425-007)

NOTED

1. In the context of a fast changing HE landscape and AU's own transformation project, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) led a workshop inviting Senate members to look at again the Learning and Teaching Strategy, the draft having originally been presented to them earlier in the year.
2. Senate members were asked to consider three questions: 1) whether to move forward with a Learning and Teaching Strategy or adjust the emphasis and change to an Education and Student Experience plan; 2) whether the strands were still appropriate and 3) whether the strands identified the right aspects to achieve success.
3. Colleagues were given the opportunity to discuss each of the questions in small groups and report back to Senate as a whole. A note of the feedback was taken for the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) to use to help refine the strategy which would be brought back to Senate in the spring. In summary the following points were made:
 - i. The suggestion to move to an Education and Student Experience plan was warmly welcomed; this was an opportunity to capture more than the narrower remit of the L&T Strategy, link directly to NSS and the inclusivity agenda, and there was a strong desire to build upon partnerships with students and work with students to deliver

the future skill sets graduates needed. It was noted that a change in emphasis might impact on DLT roles.

- ii. In relation to the strands already identified, the *Student Voice and Partnership* strand was welcomed. It was suggested that the *Student Induction and Transition* strand could be broadened to include citizenship, retention should be seen as an outcome and *The Student Journey* might be a more appropriate title. In the context of the *Active and Effective Learning* strand, it was felt that as an institution AU was further along this journey than the strand currently conveyed. The *Enhancing a Contemporary Skills Portfolio* should also include reference to industry and that *Rationalisation of assessment and AI* might be absorbed into one of the other strands, but in any case, reference to assessment should capture harnessing the power of contemporary technology, not just AI. It was suggested that some thought might be given to adding a strand around research led teaching, particularly in third year modules, and also that the bilingual nature of AU was not evident.
- iii. In relation to achieving success, the feedback suggested that actions in the strands could be smarter and more precise, such as mapping the student journey more effectively, making reference to mental health, support systems, the personal tutor system and international student support. This was a long-term strategy which needed to be aspirational so actions should be exciting with clear connections made between the strands.
- iv. Overall, there was support for the strategy to be framed in the context of the student perspective. It should be clear about its target audience, influence the learning experience, empower students and encapsulate what made an AU graduate different, as well as make reference to civic mission and the AU community as a whole, and finally, the language used should be concise and accessible.
- v. The Vice-Chancellor thanked Senate members for their very positive engagement with the workshop approach to the discussion and said that where appropriate he would like to use the format again to encourage active discussion and constructive debate at future meetings.

RESOLVED

That the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) would take on board the feedback from the discussions and bring a refreshed strategy back to a meeting in the spring. [**Action:** Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience)]

7.3 Academic Committees September 2024

RECEIVED

Academic Committees September 2024 (SEN2425-008)

NOTED

1. Following the publication of a new version of the UK Quality Code by the QAA, the working of Academic Board and its subcommittees had been reviewed; this also fed into the ongoing transformation work project strand looking at governance structures in general.

2. It was proposed that Academic Board should be replaced by a *Quality and Standards Committee*, with oversight of the academic quality assurance agenda and an Education and *Student Experience Committee*, which would have oversight of a broader enhancement and student experience agenda; both would sit as new subcommittees of Senate. *Welsh Medium Studies Committee* had been elevated to become a subcommittee of Senate. *Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions Board* and *Collaborative Provision Board* would continue to sit as currently established though their nomenclature could be reviewed.
3. The work previously undertaken by the subcommittees of Academic Board, namely FAACs, SEC, AEC, PPC and RDC would be redistributed. In the case of RDC some aspects of its work would be discussed through Research and Innovations Committee and other reporting would be through the Quality and Standards Committee.
4. The business case for new scheme proposals would come through the planning process, via the FPVCs and Faculty Executive Committees to ensure the portfolio was looked at holistically. The current standing Scheme Approval Panel would be retitled as the Academic Scrutiny Panel and would be responsible for the *academic* scrutiny of new schemes and changes to schemes, the latter previously having been undertaken at FAACs. It would be convened as a standing panel of the Quality and Standards Committee with panel members drawn from across the faculties from a pool nominated by departments. The Academic Scrutiny Panel would concentrate on the academic aspect of scheme approval, and, with meetings scheduled at regular intervals, it was hope that this would help to streamline and speed up the decision-making process.
5. Draft Terms of Reference would be presented to the first meetings of each committee and final proposals would be presented for Senate to review.
6. Senate members commented that committees were often used to disseminate information and for departmental voices to be heard. It was important that communication channels were not lost in the move to rationalise academic committees and that committee members understood their role and were proactive in cascading information where this was appropriate.

RESOLVED

To welcome the proposals in principle. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) and Deputy Registrar (as Secretary to Senate) would bring the draft Terms of Reference for the academic committees reporting to Senate for consideration after they had been discussed by their respective committees. [**Action:** Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) and Secretary to Senate]

8. **ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY BRANCH OF COLEG CYMRAEG CENEDLAETHOL**

RECEIVED

A report from Mr Jonathan Fry, Chair of the Branch (SEN2425-009)

9. **RESPONSE TO THE ABER SU ANNUAL SUBMISSION**

RECEIVED

Response to the Aber SU Annual Submission (SEN2425-010)

10. **ACADEMIC PRIZES**

RECEIVED

Academic prizes awarded during 2022-23 and 2023-24 (SEN2425-011)

11. **REPORTS FROM SUBCOMMITTEES**

RECEIVED: Minutes from the following committees (SEN2425-012):

1. Academic Board (5 June 2024)
2. Collaborative Provision Board (4 March 2024)

12. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS, MEETING REVIEW, AND FUTURE BUSINESS.**

NOTED

The next formal meeting would be on 13 November 2024.

krb 2024/10/09