



## SENATE

**Minutes of the meeting held at 14:15 on 13 November 2024, in the Main Hall, International Politics Building.**

Voting members: Professor Jon Timmis, Vice-Chancellor; Mr Tom Bates; Professor Hazel Davey; Professor Sarah Davies; Professor Iain Donnison; Dr Patrick Finney, Interim Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences); Professor Neil Glasser, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Earth and Life Sciences); Miss Elain Gwynedd, UMCA President; Professor Mererid Hopwood; Dr Aloysius Igboekwu; Professor Anwen Jones, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience); Dr Alex Mangold; Professor Louise Marshall; Dr Julie Mathias; Mr Will Parker, Undeb Aberystwyth Academic Affairs Officer; Ms Jen Phipps; Dr Alexander Pitchford; Dr Samuel Raybone; Professor Phillipp Schofield; Dr Alistair Shepherd; Mr Bayanda Vundamina, Undeb Aberystwyth President; Professor Reyer Zwiggelaar Head of Graduate School.

Non-voting members: Professor Iain Barber; Mr Prysor Davies; Dr Gwion Evans; Dr Hywel Griffiths AU Branch of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol; Dr Thomas Jansen; Dr Kim Knowles; Professor Huw Morgan; Professor Charles Musselwhite; Dr Olaoluwa Olusanya; Professor Helen Roberts, Director of Research Excellence and Impact; Dr Steve Thompson.

In attendance: Mrs Kim Bradick, Deputy Registrar (Secretary); Mrs Jean Jones, Head of the Vice-Chancellor's Office; Mr Ian Munton, Director of Student Services; Dr Gwawr Taylor, University Secretary and Director of Welsh Language.

Apologies for absence had been received from Dr Otar Akanyeti; Dr Hanna Binks; Professor Nigel Copner; Mr Tim Davies, Head of Information Services; Ms Michelle Dickson, Academic Registrar; *Prof Andy Evans*; Professor Angela Hatton, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation); Mr Jonathan Fry, Chair of AU Branch of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol; Dr Ffion Jones; Ms Jackie Sayce; Professor Qiang Shen, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Faculty of Business and Physical Sciences); Dr Anoush Simon, Dr Lucy Trotter. *Professor Catrin Webster*.

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### 13. WELCOME

Welcome was extended to Dr Hywel Griffiths representing the AU Branch of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol.

#### 14. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

#### 15. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RECEIVED

Minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2024 (SEN2425-015).

RESOLVED

That the minutes be confirmed as a correct record.

#### 16. 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 (SEN2425-016).

NOTED

1. An update was provided to Senate on the decision to formally accept the name of 'The Aberystwyth Chair in International Politics', approved by Senate in June 2023; this was subject to a meeting of the Woodrow Wilson Board. It was recommended that Dr Alistair Shepherd, Interim Head of International Politics, be elected to the Woodrow Wilson Board in place of Dr Parick Finney whose term on the Board had come to an end. The item would be moved to closed on the actions log for Senate.
2. The Academic Registrar would report back directly to the department on the timetabling issues which had been raised at the previous meeting.

RESOLVED

3. That Dr Alistair Shepherd, Interim Head of International Politics, be elected to the Woodrow Wilson Board. [**ACTION:** University Secretary and Director of Welsh Language]
4. To confirm approval of the minutes.

#### 17. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

RECEIVED

Vice-Chancellor's Report (SEN2425-017)

NOTED

1. The report consisted of two parts: a highlight report and an update on recruitment.

2. The previous week the University had welcomed Dame Nia Griffith, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Wales to Aberystwyth and the following day the University would be hosting a visit from the Welsh Government Minister for Higher and Further Education, Vikki Howell.
3. Discussions around the level of the tuition fee for foundation year provision were noted as well as the continuing financial challenges facing the University in the context of the external environment, both in Wales and in the UK more widely.

## 18. FACULTIES NAMES AND ORDINANCE CHANGES

RECEIVED

Report by Dr Gwawr Taylor, University Secretary and Director of Welsh Language (SEN2425-018).

NOTED

1. Council had approved the recommendation from Senate that the University work towards a two-Faculty structure in July 2024. Senate was now asked to consider the names of the faculties as stated in Ordinance 21: Academic Units.
2. Work had been undertaken by the project group, led by Dr Patrick Finney, to explore various suggestions and options. Information and opinions had been sought from key stakeholder including the University Executive; Senate members; Students' Union and staff within the faculties.
3. The feedback concluded that generally students did not feel an affiliation to a faculty and did not hold a strong view on how they were structured or their names. The names of the units should be concise and broad enough to encompass most of the disciplines in the respective faculty and including specific subject areas in a name could suggest the prioritisation of some areas over others. In creating two new faculties it was important to signal a change and to use names different from any of those currently held.
4. No changes were currently being proposed to the names or structures of the schools/departments and it was proposed that the two new faculties should be known as (in alphabetical order) as the Faculty of Humanities and the Faculty of Sciences and organised as follows:
  - Faculty of Humanities: Art; Business; Education; History and Welsh History; Information Studies; International Politics; Languages and Literature (English and Creative Writing - Modern Languages - Welsh and Celtic Studies); Law and Criminology; Theatre, Film and Television Studies.
  - Faculty of Sciences: Computer Science; Geography and Earth Sciences; Life Sciences; Mathematics; Physics; Psychology.

RECOMMENDED

5. To Council to approve the proposed changes to Ordinance 21. [**ACTION:** University Secretary and Director of Welsh Language]

## 19. EDUCATION AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE PLAN

RECEIVED

Draft Education and Student Experience Plan, prepared by Prof Anwen Jones, PVC ESE (SEN2425-019).

NOTED

1. Following on from the workshop approach taken in the previous meeting to look at the Learning and Teaching Strategy, Senate members were invited to feedback on a draft Education and Student Experience Plan, considering three questions: 1) had the mapping across to key priorities, using feedback from the previous meeting, identified what was needed; 2) did each priority have a corresponding action and were they the right ones and 3) were the KPIs right? For example, should NSS be cited as a KPI and could an appropriate measurement be identified to measure progress against the research led teaching action.
2. Colleagues were given the opportunity to discuss 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 to refine the plan. In summary the following points were made:
3. Key priorities: It was important to be clear who the document was written for, i.e. whether it was for students, staff, or a public audience and reflect the partnership approach that was already in place with students. The language/ writing style/ tone used in the narrative needed to be tightened and greater emphasis put on the distinctiveness of Aberystwyth and capturing a sense of place. Reference could be made to the wider community in which the university operated, not only at a local level but also at an international level. Comments were made around developing students into more independent learner and broadening the plan so that it was wider than just the student journey. There was repetition in some of the priorities and key activities and parts of the draft would sit more logically in the action plan which would be drafted in the next phase of developing the ESE plan.
4. Actions: More work was needed to be clear about what should be listed as a priority and what was an action; some key actions were not mapped onto anything specific; an example was given relating to the committee structure. Actions around encouraging students to work together, enabling peer collaboration, building and maintaining a safe environment, including that beyond the immediate boundaries of the university itself, were all welcomed.
5. KPIs: Senate queried if the KPIs were devised for an internal audience or external audience. The Vice-Chancellor confirmed certain KPIs would be kept internal, as some would be commercially sensitive. The focus on degree scheme outcomes should be widened to include KPIs measuring the student experience and value-added metrics, although there were reservations around the use of data and using the NSS. The challenges around grouping staff and student in the same KPI were noted, e.g. in relation completing tensions around wellbeing, as were the difficulties around capturing research led teaching in a KPI and it was suggested that one option might be to identify research outputs aligned to teaching areas.

6. Senate members were thanked for their continued positive engagement in the discussions and invited to contact the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) with any other comments.

RESOLVED

That the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) would take on board the feedback from the discussions and submit the plan to University Executive. [**Action:** Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience)]

## **20. RESEARCH AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE**

RECEIVED

Report from Research and Innovation Committee (SEN2425-020)

NOTED

The discussion on proposed changes to Grant Application Processes and the notification of the Advanced Research and Innovation Agency (ARIA) as a new Funder.

### **20.1 Annual Report on Research Ethics**

RECEIVED

Report by Lisa Fisher, Research Ethics and Integrity Officer (SEN2324-021)

NOTED

This was an internal report which provided an update on the work undertaken by the University Research Ethics Committee and the Research Ethics Panel. It also outlined a summary of all research ethics activities within the academic year 2023/24.

### **20.2 Annual Integrity Statement**

Report by Lisa Fisher, Research Ethics and Integrity Officer (SEN2425-022)

NOTED

1. The Statement had been prepared for annual publication in compliance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity. It covered the period from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024 and summarised the University's status relative to the expectations of the Concordat. It outlined the actions and activities undertaken, and the framework in place in support of fostering a culture of research integrity. It also provided a summary of investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken by the University.

RESOLVED

2. To approve the Annual Integrity Statement to go forward to Council and thereafter for publication on the University's website. [**ACTION:** Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation)]

## 21. ACADEMIC SUB COMMITTEES OF SENATE

RECEIVED

Terms of reference (SEN2425-023)

NOTED

1. The Welsh Medium Studies Committee and new Quality and Standards Committee and Education and Student Experience Committee had met and discussed their respective draft terms of reference; these were being presented to Senate for consideration.
2. Senate's attention was drawn to the responsibilities devolved to the academic committees, in particular the Quality and Standards Committee would take over some of the responsibilities previously carried out by Academic Board namely:
  - a. To consider and recommend for approval by Senate Rules and Regulations for Students (General and Academic Regulations including Unacceptable Academic Practice regulations and procedures) new and significant amendments to existing rules and regulations.
  - b. To consider and have authority to approve on behalf of Senate Academic Quality Handbook including new and substantially revised sections of the AQH and minor amendments to rules and regulations.
3. And the Education and Student Experience Committee would consider and have authority to approve on behalf of Senate New and significantly revised policies relating to learning and teaching, enhancement, supporting students, retention and employability.
4. It was proposed that a second student representative be added to the Education and Student Experience Committee (Undeb Aberystwyth Academic Affairs Officer) and to the Quality and Standards Committee (UMCA President); the Associate Deans listed as one per faculty, which would accommodate move to two faculties, and the numbers and quoracy amended accordingly. Any references to Learning and Teaching Strategy would in due course need to be updated to reflect the change to an Education and Student Experience Plan.
5. The Collaborative Provision Board had also met and reviewed its membership and Terms of Reference and would become the Collaborative Provision Committee, in line with the other academic committees of Senate (rather than Board). Some aspects of business currently reported through CPC might move to the Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions Board/Committee however MRAB was not scheduled to meet until later in the month and the final drafts of the Terms of Reference of both these committees would be presented to Senate at its next meeting.
6. Work was also ongoing to ensure that the responsibilities of the Research Degrees Committee were distributed between Quality and Standards Committee and Research and Innovation Committee.

RESOLVED

6. To approve the terms of reference for Quality and Standards Committee, Education and Student Experience Committee and Welsh Medium Studies Committee, with the amendments as discussed at Senate, and the name change to Collaborative Provision Committee. [**ACTION:** Deputy Registrar (Secretary to Senate)]

## 22. QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

RECEIVED

Report by Kim Bradick, Deputy Registrar (SEN2425-024)

NOTED

1. External Examiner reports 2024: QSC had reviewed the Associate Dean summary reports, drawing together the themes identified in external examiners reports ensuring that issues raised were addressed and followed up on at the most appropriate level. The Senate External Reviewer's report was very positive and complimentary of the process. QSC had also received a report on PGR examinations, this would previously have been taken through Research Degrees Committee; the Graduate School would consider several matters that had been raised.
2. Annual Monitoring of Taught Schemes and NSS Action Plans: outstanding actions would be followed up in by the Faculty Executive Committees. QSC concluded that there was clear evidence and assurance provided through the ADLT reports that academic staff had again engaged with the annual monitoring of taught provision in a positive and constructive manner. A number of IS and technical issues would be taken forward in discussions with the Director of Information Services.
3. Internal Audit reports: Two Internal audits had been conducted by Tiaa (the University's internal auditors) over the summer; both reported positive outcomes.

## 23. QUALITY ASSURANCE STATEMENT

RECEIVED

QAS2024 prepared by Kim Bradick, Deputy Registrar (SEN2425-025)

NOTED

1. The purpose of the annual Quality Assurance Statement was to provide the University Council, with the appropriate evidence to be able to assure itself that it was satisfied that the University had met, and continued to meet, its obligations in respect of a series of statements in relation to quality assurance. The report would be presented to the November meeting of Council, to enable it to fulfil its annual reporting obligations to Medr.

RESOLVED

2. To commend the Quality Assurance Statement and refer this to Council. [**ACTION:** University Secretary and Director of Welsh Language]

## **24. HONORARY AWARDS**

RECEIVED

Report by Gwawr Taylor, University Secretary and Director of Welsh Language (SEN2425-026)

NOTED

1. The Honorary Awards Group had met to consider nominations for Honorary Awards. The report set out the proposed shortlist, and Senate members were asked to respect the confidential nature of this paper. The University would not correspond with those being recommended for an Honorary Award until their names had been approved by Council. Furthermore, the names of those to be conferred with an Honorary Award would not be publicised until the summer of 2025.

RESOLVED

2. To refer the nominations for Honorary Awards to Council for approval. [**ACTION:** University Secretary and Director of Welsh Language]

## **25. ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY BRANCH OF COLEG CYMRAEG CENEDLAETHOL**

RECEIVED

A report from Mr Jonathan Fry, Chair of the Branch (SEN2425-027)

NOTED

The contents of the report.

## **26. ANNUAL REPORT FROM COLLABORATIVE PROVISION BOARD**

RECEIVED

A report from the Academic Partnerships Office (SEN2425-028)

NOTED

The contents of the annual report.

## **27. REPORTS FROM SUB-COMMITTEES.**

RECEIVED: Minutes from the following committees (SEN2425-029):

1. Research and Innovation Committee (27 September 2024)
2. Quality and Standards Committee (09 October 2024)
3. Welsh Medium Studies Committee (17 October 2024)
4. Collaborative Provision Board (17 October 2024)



5. Education and Student Experience Committee (30 October 2024)

NOTED

7. The reports received from the committees

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

NOTED

1. The next formal meeting would be on 12 March 2025 but it was likely that an additional meeting would be convened for early January in a workshop format for Senate members to provide feedback to the university's research plans.
2. A Governance review had been undertaken during the summer and a report had been submitted to the Vice Chancellor and Chair of Council. The relationship between Senate and other governance committees would now be considered in the coming months.