



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

University
Secretary's
Office.

The Council, 25 April 2016

Report of the Senate

Date: 16 March 2016
Chair: The Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Secretary: Dr West

1. Languages review: recommendations to Council

1.1 Modern Languages Teaching Centre

Senate considered a proposal for a different future operating model for the Modern Languages Teaching Centre (MLTC), based on the findings of a review group established as part of the broader Languages Review and reached following wide consultation. Senate **agreed to recommend** to Council that the MLTC should move from the School of Languages & Cultures in the Faculty of Arts & Humanities to Student Services, noting that this would better reflect the Centre's role as an institution-wide internal service provider, would provide it with new possibilities for growth and development and support the delivery of the University's Languages for All programme as a shared service.

1.2 School of Languages & Cultures

Senate received a report on a review of the internal structure of the School of Languages & Cultures in the Faculty of Arts & Humanities, a principal objective of which had been to move towards full integration of the individual language areas into a single School structure, with language group heads replaced by non line-managing directors and line management responsibilities resting with the Head of School. A new governance structure and constitution for the School, together with a new support staff structure, had been agreed following consultation with staff and students and was now in the process of being implemented.

These arrangements required changes to Senate membership, and Senate **agreed to recommend** to Council that the Regulations of Council relating to the composition of the Senate be amended to such that the School's ex-officio representation on Senate would in future be the Head of School (rather than the Head of School and the language group heads), consistent with the position of other academic departments.

2. Vice-Chancellor's report

The Vice-Chancellor presented a report covering the following main areas:

- (a) EU referendum: The University's status as a charity constrained campaigning and in accordance with guidance from the Charity Commission, the focus would be on activities aimed at promoting debate and raising awareness, including events with Sheffield Hallam University and local MPs. Meanwhile, UUK was running a campaign to remain in the EU. The importance of facilitating students' ability to

participate in the debate and subsequent vote was noted, and the latest Charity Commission guidance would be made available to departments.

- (b) BIS grant letter to HEFCE: The annual grant letter from BIS to HEFCE announced cuts to teaching grants and capital funding for teaching, with protection for high-cost subject funding. The Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) would be maintained at its current level, while cuts would be made to the Student Opportunity Fund, which would be retargeted, and there would be a slight increase in the QR element of research funding. HEFCE would be responsible for delivering the second year of the Teaching Excellence Framework. The University expected to receive its grant letter from HEFCE on 19 April.
- (c) Green Paper: Feedback gathered from across the University had informed the University's response to the Government's consultation on the Green Paper. The Queen's Speech in May was expected to announce a Higher Education White Paper and the implementation of some of the recommendations from the Green Paper and Professor Sir Paul Nurse's recent review of the Research Councils.
- (d) Teaching Excellence Framework: Level 1 status would be available from 2016-17 to any institution with a successful Quality Assurance Review. The details of Level 2 status would not take effect until 2017-18 following a further technical consultation. In the meantime, discussion within the University would seek to define teaching excellence in a manner consistent with the institution's character and strategic vision.
- (e) Immigration regulations: Negative or marginal growth in non-EU international student enrolment over the last three years contrasted with the position in countries such as Australia and Canada, which had achieved considerable growth in the same period. Intensive lobbying by the Higher Education sector continued.
- (f) Widening participation: While the University performed well in its peer group in terms of widening participation, more could be done. The Prime Minister had recently highlighted a lack of BME students at the most selective universities and had also requested OFFA to increase participation from white men from disadvantaged backgrounds. Providing real opportunity required access to skilled employment as well as Higher Education, and the work of the AMRC Training Centre had been highlighted as an exemplar in closing the attainment gap.
- (g) The place agenda: With 46% of public investment in research going to institutions in the 'golden triangle' of London, Oxford and Cambridge, attention was beginning to focus on the benefits of clustering resources and industries in specific locations. The Nurse Review (see (c) above) had proposed a map of UK research strength to help decide 'which disciplines or technologies should be invested in an area'.
- (h) The Budget 2016: Early announcements included a number of developments relevant to the University, including the proposed extension of the Sheffield City Region Enterprise Zone; investment in the Northern Powerhouse; the allocation of funding for R&D in advanced nuclear manufacturing and a competition to identify a small modular nuclear reactor to be built in the UK. In addition, a number of areas, including the Sheffield City Region and Lancashire LEP, would be involved in the first Science and Innovation Audits, which would map the region's research and innovation strengths, identify areas of potential global competitive advantage and provide the evidence base for future investment.
- (i) Other issues: Other issues in the Higher Education landscape included the recent Counter Terrorism and Security Act, which placed a new statutory duty on universities and other bodies in relation to the prevention of extremist radicalisation; and Lord Stern's review of the REF, which had recently issued a call for evidence and was expected to report by the summer. The closure of the

Sheffield BIS office as part of a wider process of streamlining and cost reduction was an unwelcome development principally affecting BIS staff specialising in Higher Education policy.

- (j) University governance: The University Secretary drew attention to a forthcoming call for expressions of interest in serving on committees of Senate and Council and new web-based resources for colleagues interested in becoming involved in University governance, which members were invited to draw to others' attention.

3. Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)

In the context of current external developments in the area of teaching excellence and quality assurance and preparations for the University's new Learning & Teaching Strategy, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Learning & Teaching presented a series of thought pieces focusing on specific aspects of activity and seeking to highlight the key characteristics of excellence in these areas. Two additional papers were also noted, one on the Teaching Excellence Framework, and the other on potential metrics for the TEF. Together, these documents had been provided as the basis for a Senate discussion which it was hoped would help to create a shared understanding of what was meant by teaching excellence and set the foundation for a the new Strategy, which Senate would have an opportunity to discuss in draft at its meeting on 22 June.

Points noted in discussion included the following:

- recognition that excellence may exist in differing levels across the University, and that consideration of how best to identify, attain and share it would be important;
- the need for curriculum design and delivery to be a reflective, iterative process, taking into account the requirements and expectations of a diverse student body as a standard, embedded component of our support for student learning more broadly;
- the fact that approximately half of the University's international students enter through USIC and/or the English Language Teaching Centre, highlighting the importance of engagement by academic departments with USIC and the ELTC to ensure the best possible preparation of students for entry to University programmes;
- recognition that while it was wholly appropriate that the University's Learning & Teaching Strategy should not be driven by metrics, they could not be overlooked, and that some – graduate starting salaries, for example – presented a comparatively greater challenge for northern universities;
- the need for the new Strategy to be informed by a holistic, lifecycle approach to the student journey, in which the views of employers on what constituted excellence would be one component;
- the need for what might otherwise become an overly anthropocentric discourse to be balanced by recognition of broader issues, including sustainability.

4. Report of the Council

Senate received a report on the meeting of Council held on 22 February 2016.

5. Reports of committees

5.1 Committees of Senate

Senate approved the reports of the following committees:

- (a) Learning and Teaching Committee
(Meeting held on 17 February 2016)
- (i) Wednesday afternoon timetabling policy: Senate endorsed the continuation of the University's current policy for undergraduate students, supported by strengthened communications to both departments and students. It was noted in discussion that the Students' Union remained committed to a stronger policy on Wednesday afternoon timetabling and welcomed the current proposal as a positive development.
- (ii) Joint Institute with Nanjing Tech University: Senate approved the following recommendations:
- that programmes delivered by the Joint Institute should include 40 credits of English language provision and a progression hurdle at the end of each of the two years at Level 1;
 - that new 4+0, 3+1 and 2+2 delivery models should be available to the Joint Institute;
 - that, for the first two years of the Joint Institute's operation, up to 30 credits may be delivered in Mandarin;
 - that, following detailed review by the Committee for Collaborative Provision, the partnership arrangement setting out the model of collaboration for the Joint Institute, as described to Senate in June 2015, be approved.
- (iii) General Regulations: Senate approved amendments to the General Regulations as detailed in the Report.
- (iv) Widening Participation: Senate approved proposals for adjusted offers for Home undergraduate applicants enrolled on post-16 Widening Participation sustained engagement programmes.
- (v) Joint Award Agreement: Senate approved the renewal of the Joint Award Agreement between the Management School and the Department of Marketing, Hong Kong Baptist University for five years, with an increase in student numbers to 50.
- (vi) Programmes of study: Senate approved the new, significantly amended, suspended and discontinued programmes approved by Faculties since 10 November 2015.
- (b) Research Ethics Committee
(Meeting held on 11 February 2016)
- (c) Research and Innovation Committee
(Meeting held on 10 February 2016)

Sub-committee structure: Senate approved recommended changes to sub-committees whereby the existing Doctoral Researcher Development Sub-Committee and Doctoral Researcher Strategy Group would be replaced by a single Doctoral Academy Committee.

- (d) Senate Budget Committee
(Meetings held on 25 February 2016)

5.2 Other committees

Senate received for information the reports of the Finance Committee (meeting held on 26 November 2015), Estates Committee (meeting held on 20 January 2016) and Human Resources Committee (meeting held on 12 November 2015), which were approved by Council at its meeting on 22 February 2016.

6. Semester dates

Senate approved the dates of Semesters for the period 2020-21 to 2023-24, which would follow similar patterns as in previous years.