

## **St George's, University of London**

### **Senate**

#### **Minutes (unreserved) of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2016**

Professor Jenny Higham (Chair)

Dr Anthony Albert	Dr Val Collington	Dr Nadia Mantovani
Dr Rachel Allen	Professor Mark Fisher	Dr Francesc Miralles
Dr Iain Beith	Steven Gilbert	Dr Axel Nohturfft
Professor Deborah Bowman	Dr John Hammond	Dr Barbara Phillips
Professor Nigel Brown	Dr Carwyn Hooper	Professor David Strachan
Professor Judith Cartwright	Professor Franklyn Howe	Dr Matt Szarko
Rob Churm	Dr Marcus Jackson	Kat Telford
	Nick Lock	Dr Chris Tye
	Dr Iain MacPhee	Peter Woodford

In attendance:

Derek Baldwinson (minutes)  
Nicola Arnold  
Andrew Dyer  
Susan Trubshaw

Dean Surtees  
John Taggart (for item 4)

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Dr Jo Brown, Dr Julia Gale, Dr Vanessa Ho, Professor Andy Kent, Dr David Lovell, Dr Jayne Marshall, Dr Linda Perkins-Porras, Dr Anne-Marie Reid, Dr Suman Rice, Karen Roberts and Professor Michael Ussher.

#### **2. Minutes of the previous Senate meeting**

Received and approved:

The unreserved minutes of the Senate meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

Paper Senate/15-16/2/A

#### **3. Matters arising from the joint SPARC-Senate meeting**

- 3.1. **Government HE Green Paper (arising from minute 6)** – it was noted that SGUL’s formal response to the Green Paper (fulfilling our potential teaching social mobility and student choice) had been published on the portal.
- 3.2. **Athena SWAN (arising from 10)** – it was reported that SGUL had submitted its Athena SWAN Silver Award application by 30<sup>th</sup> November 2015. The Equality Challenge Unit, the body that manages the Athena SWAN charter, had subsequently asked SGUL to provide additional data to supplement its application.

#### 4. Annual report from the Counselling Service

Received:

- 4.1. A report from the Head of the Counselling Service on the operation of the Service in 2014-15.

Paper Senate/15-16/2/B

Reported:

- 4.2. That 400 clients accessed the Service in 2015 in comparison with 357 in 2014, an increase of 8.3%. There had also been a slight increase from 1688 to 1701 in the number of sessions booked by clients in the same period.
- 4.3. That the Counselling Service had delivered a range of seminars to student groups in 2014-15. The purpose of these seminars was to make students aware of the support the Counselling Service was able to provide. With the support of course directors, considerable progress had been made in embedding these seminars within the core curriculum for SGUL courses.
- 4.4. That the Service was mindful of the need to engage with SGUL’s growing cohort of international students to better understand and address their specific needs. Senate had previously asked for data on the international MBBS programmes to be presented separately and planned revisions to the database used by the Service would facilitate this.
- 4.5. That a question on sexual orientation had been added to the enrolment form used by the Service and that clients had not objected to the addition of a question of this kind. Clients do not have to complete the question and 37 chose to leave it blank. On balance, it was felt that the additional question added to the message that sexual orientation was not a matter of shame or secrecy.
- 4.6. That levels of satisfaction with the Service remained high. 60% of respondents to the Service’s feedback survey were either satisfied or very satisfied with the Service. (2% of respondents were not satisfied; the remainder did not complete this question or answered “don’t know”.) 59% of respondents indicated that counselling sessions helped them to remain at SGUL.

Discussed:

- 4.7. A number of external factors including the late introduction of the prescribing examination, the junior doctors' contract dispute and mounting student debt had had a negative impact on the health and wellbeing of students. Anxieties in these areas might have a negative impact in the 2016 NSS results for medicine.
- 4.8. Some students and staff had commented on the location of the Service and on the absence of an inconspicuous waiting area for clients. There was no easy solution to this problem although an alternative site might be considered if the location of the Service was identified as a barrier to access by large numbers of staff and students. A central location was advantageous in terms of raising the profile of the Service.
- 4.9. The Students' Union reported an enduring misperception amongst some students that seeing a counsellor may trigger a fitness to practise enquiry. Allaying student concerns about the confidential nature of the service remained a challenge.
- 4.10. The Students Union reported that, in terms of its case load, concerns raised by international MBBS students were disproportionately high.
- 4.11. The Students Union took the view that the support provided by the Counselling Service was greatly valued by students. The Counselling Service was one of a range of pastoral support services available to students and more could be done, from a Students' Union perspective, to knit these services together.

Agreed:

- 4.12. That the work of the Counselling Service in supporting students and staff was to be commended.

## **5. Report from the Dean for Students**

Received:

- 5.1. A report from the Dean for Students on student welfare and related policy and procedural matters.

Paper Senate/15-16/2/C

Reported:

- 5.2. That the report outlined developments in the three principal areas of activity in which the Dean for Students provides leadership. These are i) student welfare; ii) procedural and policy matters including complaints, discretionary applications, disciplinary and fitness to practise; and iii) the student experience beyond NSS-focused activity.
- 5.3. That Dr Leanda Kroll had overseen the personal tutorial arrangements for a number of years. Dr Kroll would retire shortly and replacing her in this role was a priority. The

provision of an equitable experience of personal tutoring for all students and staff remained a challenge. Particular issues were the recruitment and preparation of sufficient staff to take on the role, clarifying the limits of the role, and signposting students to other specialist services when needed.

- 5.4. That understanding and responding to the increasing numbers of students in distress was a challenge. Reports and data from the Counselling, Occupational Health and the sessional psychiatrist showed an increase in the numbers of students seeking help and that particular groups were overrepresented in welfare services. International students, especially those who are placed overseas, are more likely to access support.
- 5.5. That variable record keeping on programmes can have an impact on the quality and accuracy of materials available in procedural matters and inhibit fair decision making. Furthermore, systems (particularly SITS) does not reliably or consistently make it possible to identify suspended students and students on interruption and this also inhibits the application of processes.
- 5.6. That the team that works on policy and procedures was dedicated, but small in number. The numbers of students considered within procedures, principally discretionary panels, was significant and the burden of managing these procedures was growing. The work of the team was complicated by the need to recruit and train staff willing to participate in procedural matters for example as investigating officers in disciplinary issues or complaints. Staff take on these roles on a voluntary basis.
- 5.7. That in addition to Dr Jo Brown's work in relation to improving SGUL's performance in the National Student Survey, a number of additional activities are ongoing including the launch of the *SGULChange* programme, the creation of an all-student newsletter; supporting and training students in a wide number of extracurricular roles and working closely with the Students Union to enhance the student experience.

Discussed:

- 5.8. The intention to focus on personal tutoring was endorsed by Senate because effective personal tutoring improved the student experience and maximised the likelihood that students will be academically successful.
- 5.9. At present, there was no requirement for staff in IMBE and the research institutes to act as personal tutors. As a consequence tutees have been allocated to clinical colleagues in the NHS to ensure that all students have a tutor.
- 5.10. A model based on the recruitment and preparation of a core of personal tutors might enhance the overall effectiveness of personal tutoring across SGUL. However, if this approach was to be successful, staff would need to be incentivised to take on the role and their contributions would need to be recognised.

5.11. Personal tutors were sometimes asked by tutors to provide advice on course-specific matters. Problems had arisen when personal tutors had mistakenly given inaccurate advice on procedural matters.

5.12. The Faculty of Health, Social Care and Education's approach to personal tutoring was based on the Kingston University model. As a consequence, many of the challenges of providing effective personal tutor support had been avoided by the Faculty.

## **6. Student Experience and Engagement Annual Report (2014-15)**

Received:

The Annual Report from the Academic Director of the Student Experience.

Paper Senate/15-16/2/D

Reported:

6.1. That the report drew together Student Experience and Engagement (SEE) activities in a single report to provide an overview of SEE across SGUL, to raise awareness of SEE issues, to provide a baseline for measuring progress and to provide a professional reporting structure.

6.2. That the report is the first of its kind. Its novelty reflected the greater emphasis placed on the Student Experience with the appointment of Dr Jo Brown as Academic Director of the Student Experience, the creation of the Student Experience Officer post and the establishment of the Student Experience and Engagement Group.

6.3. 12 performance areas for measurement have been identified. These were:

- a) Engagement with the National Student Survey
- b) Engagement with the Student Experience Survey
- c) Overall student satisfaction – final year
- d) Overall student satisfaction – non-final year
- e) Attrition rates
- f) Employment rates
- g) Engagement with SGUL Change projects
- h) Student representation on committees
- i) Student engagement with Student Union societies
- j) Student engagement with the St George's Student Award
- k) Student engagement with volunteering work
- l) University engagement with the Student Experience through committees.

6.4. Each data set had been analysed and the analysis had been used to generate the SEE programme of work and plans for 2015-16. These plans included the creation of three task and finish groups to work on issues identified in the NSS and SES. Groups were exploring Organisation and Management; Learning Resources and Feedback and Assessment. These groups included wide representation from students.

Agreed:

6.5. To approve the format of the report and endorse the SEE plans for the year ahead.

## **7. International Education**

Received:

An update on International Education from the Dean for International Education.

Paper Senate/15-16/2/E

Reported:

- 7.1. That the GMC had carried its most recent Quality Assurance visit in relation to the International Medicine programmes on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2016. In its oral feedback, the GMC panel had commended the pastoral support for students on the programmes; plans for the quality assurance of clinical placement sites; and the highly focussed and articulate student groups met during the visit.
- 7.2. That the panel reported a number of concerns. These were the continued, unresolved, high level of student anxiety, in particular around the USMLE Step 1 examination; the apparent lack of resolution of student issues; the need for further improvement in USMLE Step 1 preparation; the allocation process to US clinical sites; the lack of a strategic approach to procuring further clinical placement sites.
- 7.3. That with the agreement of INTO University Partnerships, a decision had been taken prior to the GMC panel's visit to reduce recruitment targets for September 2016 to 60 students (30 MBBS6, 30 MBBS4) to align places offered with currently available clinical placements. Recruitment was buoyant and the reduction in intake targets would enable SGUL to be more selective in selecting applicants.

Discussed:

- 7.4. The GMC panel had discussed the support available to students who failed USMLE step 1 and were required to take an Interruption of Studies. The panel had encouraged SGUL to consider ways of giving these students opportunities to remain in the UK during the IOS year to benefit from USMLE teaching and to carry out additional study to offset the impact on the career prospects of Step 1 failure. Registry was exploring what might be allowable within current UK Visas and Immigration regulations.
- 7.5. The student members of Senate reported the view commonly held by international MBBS students that the programme did not fully meet their expectations. The mismatch between student expectations and the actual programme was a source of anxiety for some students.

7.6. In response, it was reported that specific student complaints had been investigated and marketing materials were found to be comprehensive and accurate. It was also reported that applicants to the international MBBS programme apply directly to SGUL without the involvement of agents and so the programmes were not being misrepresented by third parties. However it was noted the international MBBS programme was a complicated proposition and some applicants may not have fully grasped the international nature of the programme.

## **8. Portfolio planning**

Received:

A presentation from the Director of Planning and Performance on portfolio planning.

Reported:

- 8.1. That growth in educational activity was a key strategic ambition. SGUL aimed to achieve a growth in income from educational activity of 25% in the five year period to 2020.
- 8.2. That a number of educational activities were underway in the current year. These included the curriculum review focusing initially on the MBBS, the uncoupling of Biomedical Science and MBBS teaching; and the development of new MSc programmes in Physician Associate Studies and Sports Cardiology for 2016 entry.
- 8.3. That future developments included several new programmes - FdSc Offender Care, MSc Human Anatomy;, MEd Medical Education, MSc Global Health, a Grad Dip in Science to be offered in partnership with INTO and a pre-registration Occupational Therapy programme.
- 8.4. That in deciding which initiatives to take forward, SGUL will review market demand (including NHS need), employment prospects for graduates, the quality of student experience that SGUL was able to offer and the financial case.
- 8.5. That at present, there was no single group with responsibility for portfolio planning including resourcing new developments and market research. In the future, the IMBE Centre for Innovation & Development might have a co-ordination and project management role. Existing groups that might also have a role included QAEC, International Committee, SPARC and, for FHSCE programmes, JSEC.
- 8.6. That in terms of the next steps, a portfolio planning away day will be held in April 2016. The aim of the away day was to review possible developments and to explore alternative delivery options and income streams.

Discussed:

8.7. Clinical staff in the Trust interested in developing new postgraduate programmes do not always know who at SGUL to approach to initiate discussions. Joint working in education and training with the Trust was a strategic priority for SGUL and a collaborative approach to the development of new courses was therefore welcomed. Dr Rachel Allen, as Head of the Graduate, is the appropriate contact point.

8.8. SGUL was well-placed to offer valuable interprofessional learning opportunities to students. As SGUL reviewed its existing curricula and developed new professional programmes, the exploration of ways to embed IPL in the curricula could be a priority.

## 9. Space Strategy

Received:

An oral report from the Chair of the Space Strategy Committee (SSC) on the Space Utilisation Programme.

Reported:

9.1. That the key elements of the Space Utilisation Programme were:

- The co-location of the Research Institutes in levels 1 and 2 of Jenner Wing.
- The co-location of IMBE and the Faculty of Health, Social Care and Education on level 6 of Hunter Wing to create an “education hub”.
- Vacating Grosvenor Wing. The corporate teaching space currently available in Grosvenor Wing would be re-provided in Jenner Wing.

9.2. That the programme was on time and on budget. An agreement with SGHT had been reached to allow for continued use of the Grosvenor Level 2 teaching rooms for up to three months in the event of a project overrun. SGUL would need to give SGHT two months’ notice before issuing the deed of surrender.

9.3. That a microsite had been set up to provide more information about the programme: <http://www.sup.sgul.ac.uk/>

9.4. An email account had been set up for staff to report issues or raise concerns ([sup@sgul.ac.uk](mailto:sup@sgul.ac.uk)).

9.5. As part of the Communications Strategy, an update would be included in St George’s Weekly. The update would refer to the microsite and the email address.

9.6. A VoIP telecommunications service would be provided for the Faculty. The service was likely to be provided in GW2 in May 2016.

Agreed:

9.7. That the update in St George’s Weekly should include a schedule of key dates and milestones so that staff were able to adapt their work plans to minimise any disruption.

## 10. Recruitment targets for 2016 entry

Received:

A paper reporting undergraduate and postgraduate recruitment targets for 2016 entry approved by SPARC in January 2016.

Paper Senate /2015-16/2/F

Reported:

That since the report had been prepared:

- a) The decision to discontinue the FdSc Breast Imaging had been taken.
- b) Recruitment targets for the international MBBS had been lowered to 60 students (30 MBBS6, 30 MBBS4).
- c) Commissions for the MSc Physician Associate Studies programme had been confirmed as 55.
- d) Commissions for the BSc Paramedic Science programme had been confirmed as 100.
- e) The arrangement whereby students from International Medical University in Malaysia are admitted to MBBS T year has been discontinued.

## 11. Recruitment and Admissions Strategic Change programme

Received:

A report on the Recruitment and Admissions Strategic Change programme.

Paper Senate/2015-16/2/G

Reported:

- 11.1. That the Strategic Change programme was reviewing all aspects of SGUL's approach to recruitment and admissions including SGUL's overarching strategies and detailed operational procedures.
- 11.2. That the programme had been launched in response to a number of changes in the external environment including fee increases, the removal of student number controls and increased competition from established and alternative providers. Evidence from the 2015 recruitment cycle indicated that SGUL's policies and processes had not kept pace with these changes and the Strategic Change programme was intended to enhance the reputation of SGUL and to improve the experience of applicants.
- 11.3. That Key initiatives in place for the 2016 recruitment admission cycle and beyond included:
  - a) A 'selection day' approach to running MMIs which placed a greater emphasis on sharing information with applicants about St George's,
  - b) The development of additional resources for use during the selection days.

- c) Incentives in support of conversion, including gifts and more regular communications with applicants.
- d) Consideration of establishment of a new Dean of Admissions post to take a strategic oversight of all admissions activity.
- e) Undertaking a gap analysis to provide a reliable evidence base to inform future planning.

## **12. Postgraduate studentships**

Received:

The business case in support of a proposal to adopt a scholarship scheme to bolster recruitment to postgraduate programmes.

Paper Senate/2015-16/2/H

Reported:

That SGUL has not previously offered postgraduate scholarships as a strategy to attract high quality applicants. The scholarship scheme, which was based on fee reductions, was being introduced to incentivise applicants and to ensure that SGUL was able to compete with other institutions who offered comparable support packages.

## **13. Report from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee**

Received:

A report from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee.

Paper Senate/2015-16/2/I

- 13.1. That QAEC has not previously reported to Senate. The report, which drew on deliberations at QAEC meetings in October 2015, November 2015 and January 2016, had been prepared to strengthen the reporting lines from QAEC into Senate.
- 13.2. That the report covered two areas: QAEC's role in supporting the development of educational policy and practice; and its separate role in developing, implementing and evaluating SGUL's quality assurance framework.
- 13.3. That the activity report included an update on the status of Education Strategy, an overview of the Curriculum review process initiated by Dr Reid, a commentary on portfolio growth and summaries of validation and review activity in 2014-15. The report also included an analysis of the External Examining system and issues raised in External Examiner reports.
- 13.4. That SGUL's Education Strategy covered the period to 2015. QAEC was reviewing the status of the Strategy to determine whether to extend the period of the current Education Strategy; to develop a new Education Strategy or to recommend that the aims of SGUL's Strategic Plan can be achieved without an Education Strategy.

13.5. That QAEC had reviewed its terms of reference to ensure that they were compatible with those of the International Committee. Revisions were proposed to make it clear that the International Committee was responsible for overseeing the implementation of SGUL's international strategic objectives and that QAEC was responsible for the quality assurance of all programmes (including programmes delivered in partnership with UK and international providers). This revision required Senate approval.

Agreed:

13.6. In line with the recommendation contained within the report, to terminate the external examiner appointment of an MBBS external examiner because the external examiner had not submitted a report.

13.7. To approve changes to QAEC's terms of reference (minute 13.5 refers).

#### **14. Information Governance Toolkit**

Received:

An oral report from Rob Churm, Director of Information Services, on the Health and Social Care Information Centre's Information Governance Toolkit requirements, the deadline for compliance and the implications for research activity.

Reported:

14.1. That all organisations that require access to NHS patient data must provide assurances that they are practising good information governance and that are using the Information Governance Toolkit to provide evidence of good information governance.

14.2. That the deadline for providing evidence was 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016. If SGUL does not meet the deadline, the Institution will no longer have access to patient data and its research income will be at risk.

14.3. That a Steering Group had been convened to coordinate SGUL's application to HSCIC and to develop an Information Governance Policy. The research institutes had appointed IG leads who were responsible for carrying out data audits at the institute level. Training for the IG leads had been scheduled for 21<sup>st</sup> March 2016 and an-all staff training programme would also be offered.

14.4. A Communications Strategy, which included the development of an IG microsite, was being developed.

#### **15. Academic Forum**

Received

A proposal from its chair and Secretary to change arrangements for scheduling meetings of Academic Forum.

Paper Senate/2015-16/2/K

Reported:

- 15.1. That Academic Forum had been set up in 2005 with two main purposes – to provide an inclusive forum for the discussion of the academic policy and to allow for the effective dissemination of information.
- 15.2. That since its inception, attendance at meetings had been a small proportion of those eligible to attend. In the period since October 2014, attendance had not exceeded 5% of those eligible to attend and was typically much lower. This called into question its effectiveness as a vehicle for sharing information and consulting on matters of academic policy.
- 15.3. That it was proposed that the Academic Forum would be retained with its existing Powers and Responsibilities although the Forum would be used primarily as a vehicle for consultation on matters of academic policy. The requirement for Academic Forum to meet three times a year would be discontinued. Instead, a mechanism that allowed meetings to be convened when required and not to a fixed timetable would be put in place.

Discussed:

- 15.4. That poor attendance was thought to be a reflection of the perception that the Academic Forum was not influential and that the views of staff members were largely ignored. Although there was broad support for the proposal, especially the proposal to include students in the membership of the Academic Forum, altering the negative perception amongst staff would present a challenge.
- 15.5. That the membership, terms of reference and the frequency of meetings are written into the Scheme and Statutes. Any changes will require a rewrite of the Scheme and Statutes and the updated version will need to be lodged with the University of London.

Agreed:

- 15.6. That the proposals would be discussed at the next scheduled meeting of the Academic Forum. Senate would reconsider the proposal in the light of feedback from the Forum.

## **16. Equality and Diversity Committee**

Received

A report on the work of the Equality and Diversity Committee.

Paper Senate/2015-16/2/L

Reported:

- 16.1. That the Single Equality Scheme set out institutional priorities for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. The Scheme and Action Plan had been agreed at the Equality and Diversity Committee and is available on the institutional website.
- 16.2. That the Prevent duty placed a duty on Higher Education Institutions to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. HEFCE monitors institutional compliance with the Prevent Duty. SGUL submitted an initial assessment of compliance with the Prevent Duty to HEFCE in January and further in-depth reporting will follow in April and December 2016.
- 16.3. That the possibility of joining the Race Equality Charter Mark was being explored. As with Athena SWAN, institutions are expected to start at Bronze level and progress to Silver in the longer-term. Supporting an application was time-consuming and resource intensive.
- 16.4. That SGUL had fallen in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index from 47<sup>th</sup> to 143<sup>rd</sup>. In part this was because the E&D Adviser post was vacant for some months and because of a general tailing off of activity within the LGBT Staff Network during that time.
- 16.5. That Committee was launching a review of the data on the gap in attainment between BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) and other students. The exploration of the factors that might cause an attainment gap was likely to be a substantial programme of work.
- 16.6. That it was timely to review the Athena SWAN structures to integrate those structures with the Equality and Diversity leadership. A discussion paper setting out options was being prepared.

## **17. Actions taken by the Chair**

Received and noted:

A report on actions taken by the Chair since the November 2015 meeting of Senate.

PAPER SENATE/2015-16/2/M

## **18. Honorary appointments**

Agreed:

To recommend to Council that Gillian Cockerill is awarded the title of emeritus Professor of Vascular Biology in the Cardiovascular and Cell Sciences Research Institute.

## **19. Retirement from Senate**

Agreed:

Dr Chris Tye would be retiring from the Joint Faculty and was attending his final meeting of Senate. Dr Tye was thanked for his many outstanding contributions to the Joint faculty and his commitment to partnership working.

**20. Dates of meetings in 2015-2016**

Senate dates are as follows (2.00 – 4.00 pm):

Tuesday 14 June 2016

Tuesday 12 July 2016 (joint meeting with SPARC)

All meetings will take place at 2pm in H2.5 and H2.6

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CONFIRMED