

St George's, University of London

Senate

Minutes (unreserved) of the meeting held on 15th November 2016

Professor Jenny Higham (Chair)

Dr Rachel Allen

Tanisha Amin

Professor Dot Bennett

Professor Deborah Bowman

Corey Briffa

Professor Mark Fisher

Dr Julia Gale

Dr John Hammond

Dr Taigang He

Dr Vanessa Ho

Dr Carwyn Hooper

Professor Andy Kent

Professor Jane Lindsay

Nick Lock

Dr David Lovell

Dr Iain MacPhee

Dr Nadia Mantovani

Gill Mein

Dr Francesc Miralles

Dr Wilson Muleya

Dr Janette Myers

Dr Barbara Phillips

Dr Aileen O'Brien

Dr Anne-Marie Reid

Dr Suman Rice

Karen Roberts

Nigel Rogers

Professor Jane Saffell

Professor Mary Sheppard

Professor Guy Whitley

In attendance:

Derek Baldwinson (minutes)

Caroline Davis

Don Kennedy

Paul Ratcliffe

Dean Surtees

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Dr Anthony Albert, Dr Iain Beith, Professor Judith Cartwright, Rob Churm, Dr Val Collington, Professor Franklyn Howe, Dr Marcus Jackson, Dr Jayne Marshall, Professor Julian Ma, Dr Axel Nohturfft, Dr Elena Sviderskaya, Professor Michael Ussher and Professor Peter Whincup.

2. Powers and responsibilities of Senate and its membership

Received and noted:

The Powers and responsibilities of Senate and its membership for 2016-17.

Paper Senate/2016-17/1/A

3. Principal's Report

Received:

An oral report from the Principal.

Reported:

3.1. Since Senate last met in June 2016, there had been a number of important changes to the leadership structure at SGUL. Professor Saffell had been appointed as Director of IMBE and Deputy Principal (Education) and Professor Deborah Bowman had returned to SGUL to take up the new post of Academic Lead for Quality and Partnerships. Lastly, Paul Ratcliffe was the newly appointed COO. With these appointments, SGUL was now carrying out a wide-ranging review of its strategy, structures and processes.

3.2. One area that was being reviewed as a priority was international education including the delivery of the international MBBS programmes. Senate had previously been made aware of the continuing shortfall in US clinical placements; high levels of student dissatisfaction and the adverse GMC perspective in relation to the international MBBS programmes. These issues were being tackled and Senate would receive a detailed report on international education when it meets in February 2017.

4. Minutes of the previous Senate meeting

Received and approved:

The unreserved minutes of the Senate meeting held on 14th June 2016.

Paper Senate/2016-17/1/B

5. Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting of the 14th June 2016

5.1. **Space Strategy (arising from 8)** - the remaining elements of the space utilisation programme were complete. Staff from the Faculty of Health, Social Care and Education had relocated to a reduced footprint on HW6 and initial feedback from the relocated faculty staff indicated that the move had gone well and staff were satisfied with the new environment. The Dean of Faculty thanked staff who had worked hard to facilitate the move.

The new teaching rooms in Jenner Wing had been delivered on time. Students were pleased with the quality of rooms and welcomed the fact that they were available for student use on a 24 hour basis.

- 5.2. **Value-added scores by Ethnic group (BME vs. White) (arising from 14)** - the work of Attainment Group in developing a strategic response to the issues raised by the analysis of value-added scores by ethnic group was continuing. The Group would report to QAEC and EDC and, through these committees, to Senate in due course.

6. Minutes of the previous SPARC-Senate meeting

Received and noted:

The unreserved minutes of the SPARC-Senate meeting held on 12th July 2016.

Paper Senate/2016-17/1/C

7. Strategic Plan

Received:

An oral report from Paul Ratcliffe, Chief Operating Officer, on the development of the Strategic Plan.

Reported:

- 7.1. A large number of responses had been received to the on-line Strategy Survey. The themed-focus-group meetings aimed at developing areas of the strategy had also been well-attended and productive. It was gratifying that so many staff wished to contribute in a material way to strategy development at SGUL
- 7.2. There had requests for greater clarity about SGUL's mission and values and requests for more time for institutes and departments to develop their responses. Since the Strategy Survey and the focus-group meetings, work on further refining SGUL's values and aspirations for the future had been carried out and institute and department heads had been asked to discuss these with their teams in the coming weeks. Institute and departments had been asked to feedback comments prior to the Christmas break.
- 7.3. The overall timescale for the Strategy Review had been extended and it was now expected that the review process would be complete no later than May 2017.

8. Athena SWAN

Received:

An oral report from Professor Deborah Bowman, Academic Lead for Quality and Partnerships, on SGUL's Silver Award application.

Reported:

- 8.1. SGUL's Silver Award application had been unsuccessful and SGUL's Bronze Award was at risk. SGUL had originally been invited by the Equality Challenge Unit to resubmit its application no later than April 2017. Sarita Godber, Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development, had however been successful in agreeing a six month extension to the April deadline with the Equality Challenge Unit.
- 8.2. Dr Vanessa Ho, the newly appointed Associate Dean (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion), would with the support of Professor Bowman, would have the lead role in developing the resubmission.
- 8.3. The rejection of the Silver Award application was a reflection of the circumstances in which the application had been produced. Steps were being taken to ensure that the reapplication process was owned by the executive team and authoritatively led. The application process needed to be resourced properly with buy-in at all levels of the institution.

Discussed:

- 8.4. The NIHR had previously made it clear that it would only expect to shortlist medical schools for biomedical research centre and unit funding if the school held a Silver Athena SWAN Award. This remained the position of the NIHR although at this stage a formal policy had not been implemented.
- 8.5. In May 2015 the scope of the Athena SWAN charter had been expanded to recognise work undertaken in professional and support roles and to address gender equality more broadly instead of focussing solely on barriers to progression that affect women in science. Staff in professional and support roles had been referred to in SGUL's Silver Award application but not fully included. Any decision on whether to include professional and support staff in the reapplication would depend on how SGUL articulated its culture of inclusivity.
- 8.6. It was possible to apply for a Silver Institution Award or a Silver Department Award. SGUL had previously applied for a Silver Institution Award – SGUL had asked for special permission from the Equality Challenge Unit to submit a Silver Institution Award – and it may now be difficult for SGUL to reverse its previous position and apply for a Silver Department Award.
- 8.7. In considering its options, the Faculty would need to be mindful of the intentions of Kingston University.

8.8. Anecdotally, two thirds of recent applications had been rejected. This suggested that the approval criteria were being applied more rigorously than they had been in the past.

9. Teaching Excellence Framework

Received:

A discussion paper from Dr Anne-Marie Reid on the Teaching Excellence Framework.

Paper Senate/2016-17/1/D

Reported:

- 9.1. The discussion paper set out the benefits and risks of entering TEF in year 2. The paper had been considered by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee on 10th November 2016 and, on balance, QAEC had concluded that the benefits of entering TEF2 outweighed the risks. On that basis, QAEC had recommended entry into TEF2.
- 9.2. Three aspects of quality are assessed under the TEF. These are teaching quality; the learning environment; and student outcomes and learning gain. Six metrics are used to assess quality in the three aspects. On the basis of the benchmarked metrics provided by HEFCE, SGUL can expect a bronze award because it has negative flags in three of the metrics. Universities can provide additional evidence, referred to as the provider submission, to support their TEF application. It is unlikely that SGUL's provider submission would alter the bronze award because of the prevalence of negative flags.
- 9.3. At this stage it is difficult to assess the reputational impact of a bronze award. This will depend in part on whether institutions whose metrics suggest that they can expect a bronze award in TEF2 choose to enter. It will also depend on the characteristics and profile of those institutions who achieve a bronze award. SGUL will need to consider its PR response when TEF2 awards are published.

Discussed:

- 9.4. Institutions who achieve a TEF2 award are permitted to raise fees to £9250 in 2017-2018. This fee rise applied in theory to both new and continuing students. At this stage it was unclear whether institutions would choose to raise fees and SGUL had yet to reach a final decision on raising fees in 2017 or 2018. Nationally, the link between TEF and fee increases had generated opposition amongst students unions to the TEF and the NUS had sought to organise a boycott of the NSS to undermine the TEF.
- 9.5. SGUL was engaging with the Students Union with regard to the TEF2 and its implications for students. A development group was working on the preparation of the provider submission and the group would consult with students on the contents of the submission.

9.6. Even if SGUL decided not to enter TEF2, the development of robust improvement plans to raise teaching quality and enhance the student experience was an imperative for SGUL. In terms of TEF, improvement plans should be mindful of the need to tackle the metrics that currently have negative flags as a precondition for achieving a Silver award in future years of the TEF.

9.7. The Stern review into the Research Excellence Framework had referred briefly to TEF. The need to ensure that there was no increased administrative burden to HEIs from interactions between the TEF and REF and that the two frameworks strengthen the relationship between teaching and research in HEIs had been flagged by Stern but there no specific proposals on how this might be achieved.

Agreed:

9.8. To endorse the recommendation from QAEC to submit a TEF2 application.

10. Report to Council on the Student Academic Experience and Academic Standards (15/16)

Received:

The draft report to Council on steps being taken to improve the student academic experience and to secure academic standards.

Paper Senate/2016-17/1/E

Reported:

10.1. HEFCE published its Revised Operating Model for Quality Assessment in March 2016. For established providers a principle element of the model was the Annual Provider Review (APR). As part of the APR, HEFCE expected governing bodies to provide a number of assurances. Prior to the publication of the Revised Operating Model and the introduction of the APR, these assurances related to financial sustainability, good management and governance, data quality and value for money. From 1st December 2016 the Board of Governors will be asked to provide additional quality related assurances on:

- the quality of the student academic experience and student outcomes; and
- the standard of awards.

10.2. To provide these assurances, HEFCE expected Council to receive and challenge a Report on the Continuous improvement of the Student Academic Experience and Student Outcomes. Paper E had been prepared to enable Council to provide the assurance expected by HEFCE.

10.3. The draft report was underpinned by a paper and annexes that provided details of progression rates and degrees awarded for undergraduate degree programmes for the last three years. The paper also compared the degree classifications conferred by SGUL to those awarded by other benchmarked HEIs.

Discussed:

- 10.4. The Student Experience Committee was developing an action plan to improve the student experience. The overarching action plan and detailed operational plans are yet to be finalised. When these plans are in place, they will be central to SGUL's strategy for improving the quality of the student experience.
- 10.5. The sections of the report that related to faculty development were overly focused on SGUL-employed staff and could be broadened to reference staff from the Faculty of Health, Social Care and Education.
- 10.6. The report identified the actual numbers of staff who were recognised as fellows of the HEA but did not provide an indication of the proportions who were recognised in this way. The report did not include more general information about the academic and professional qualifications of academic staff because this information was not readily available from the Human Resources Department. This situation was being reviewed within HR.
- 10.7. The report could make more of the important role played by PSRBs in assuring the quality and standards of SGUL's pre-registration programmes.
- 10.8. The annex providing data on the percentage of degrees awarded by SGUL compared to competitor institutions. In 2014-2015 was ranked SGUL fifth in a benchmark group of seven. The report could provide a commentary on the reasons for SGUL's ranking in the competitor group. The report could also include progression rates and completion data for postgraduate programmes.

Agreed:

- 10.9. That in view of the delayed circulation of the draft report and accompanying data tables, Senate members would be given an additional 24 hours to comment on the paper if they wished.

11. Prevent Duty

Received:

The Annual Report on compliance with the Prevent Duty.

Paper Senate/2016-17/1/F

Reported:

- 11.1. Under HEFCE's current framework for the monitoring of the Prevent Duty, HEIs are required to submit a short annual report and an accompanying risk assessment and action plan to HEFCE. The report must be signed off by Council prior to its submission

to HEFCE. In signing off the report, Council was providing an assurance to HEFCE that SGUL had 'due regard' to the Prevent duty responsibilities.

11.2. The Chief Operating Officer was SGUL's Prevent Lead and in this role the COO chairs the Good Campus Relations Group. This Group ensured that SGUL's policies and processes were robust and correspond to the Prevent guidance. The Group also ensured that procedures were actively implemented and that their impact was evaluated.

11.3. No cases had referred for investigation in the period covered by the report.

Discussed:

11.4. The Prevent Duty remained an area of concern amongst students because they were uncertain about the types of behaviour that might trigger an intervention from SGUL, the nature of any intervention and the possible implications for their future careers. In this context, SGUL would continue to communicate with students, especially the student groups that considered themselves to be most affected by the Prevent agenda, to provide reassurance.

Agreed:

11.5. To recommend to Council approval of the Annual Report on compliance with the Prevent Duty

12. National Student Survey 2016

Received:

An oral report from Professor Deborah Bowman, Academic Lead for Quality and Partnerships, on the 2016 NSS results and the actions to be taken in response to the NSS and Student Experience Survey.

Reported:

12.1. Professor Deborah Bowman had been appointed as Academic Lead for Quality and Partnerships to refocus and vivify work to enhance the experience of all students.

12.2. The NSS results had been widely circulated within SGUL, considered at the programme level and discussed at an Open Forum meeting. The 2016 results represented a downturn from previous years and this suggested that activities initiated in 2015 and in previous years to improve the student experience had not gained full traction.

- 12.3. The governance arrangements for the student experience had been reviewed and simplified by Professor Bowman. A number of pre-existing groups that had previously had a role in relation to the student experience had been discontinued and replaced by the Student Experience Committee (SEC). SEC would provide strategic leadership for, and oversight of, the student experience at St George's. SEC will report to QAEC and, through QAEC, to Senate.
- 12.4. The SEC would formulate a student experience action plan and agree plans for implementing the intentions of the action plan. SEC would also monitor the implementation of plans and evaluate their impact. The student experience action plan would place clear obligations on the executive team.
- 12.5. SGUL would need to be selective when identifying and setting student experience priorities because it was not possible to tackle every issue immediately. It was also important to recognise that there is a link between the student experience and decisions about resources and investment and disinvestment decisions both have an impact on students.
- 12.6. Many staff were hardworking, professional and contributing to the academic mission of the SGUL. The NSS and SES results, which revealed levels of student dissatisfaction, therefore present a challenge to many staff. Messaging in relation to the student experience needs to be managed carefully.
- 12.7. The Student Experience Network had been established as a forum to bring together staff and students for discussions, workshops and talks focused on key topics raised in NSS and SES. The Student Experience Network launch event was taking place on 23rd November 2016.

Discussed:

- 12.8. There may be pockets of unsatisfactory teaching and inadequate assessment practices across the provision. It is primarily the responsibility of the senior team to identify and tackle unsatisfactory practice outside of the student experience action plan.
- 12.9. SGUL relied on staff employed by the NHS to provide teaching on professional programmes. SGUL would need to engage with NHS staff when setting its priorities for the improving the student experience. Dealing with unsatisfactory teaching provided by NHS colleagues also presented a particular challenge.
- 12.10. Pressures on staff can have an impact on the student experience. It is important to ensure that SGUL's expectations of its staff are clearly expressed, realistic and achievable and that staff are properly supported in their various roles.

- 12.11. Teaching and learning strategies that provide opportunities and learning experiences that genuinely challenge and stretch students may result in lower levels of student satisfaction in the NSS.

13. Report on Student Recruitment for 2016/17

Received:

A report on Student Recruitment (2016-17) from the Academic Registrar.

Paper Senate/2016-17/1/G

Reported:

- 13.1. Following confirmation, a number of places on the MBBS5 programme needed to be filled. The decision to enter clearing was fully justified because it had been possible to fill all places with applicants who met the entry requirements and scored above the minimum pass score at interview.
- 13.2. Recruitment to the MRes Biomedical Science had been significantly below target although BSc Biomedical Science graduates who might previously have applied for the MRes were able to continue to the MSci. Strategies for maximising the recruitment potential of the MRes are being considered within IMBE.
- 13.3. Recruitment to the MSc Applied Exercise for Health/MSc Rehabilitation remained low. The future of these MSc programmes was being reviewed by the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences and would be discussed with the Head of the Graduate School.

14. Strategy Planning and Resource Committee

Received:

A report on educational and research matters considered at SPARC.

Paper Senate/2016-17/1/H

Reported:

A League Table Focus Group had been established to better understand the factors that influenced SGUL's standing in league tables and to improve the institution's position. In most cases, compilers made use data provided in by SGUL in its statutory returns. Ensuring the integrity of data returns had been a priority for the Group.

15. Report from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee

Received and noted:

A report from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee.

Paper Senate/2016-17/1/I

16. Academic Forum

Received:

A report from the meeting of the Academic Forum that had taken place on 11th October 2016.

Paper Senate/2016-17/1/J

Noted:

This was the first meeting held under the new arrangements allowing students and professional support staff to attend. In total, 32 staff and students had attended; the discussion topics had been the Panopto lecture capture system and Canvas.

17. International MBBS

Received and noted:

The report of the clinical site visit to the Sidney Kimmel Medical College, Thomas Jefferson University, Philadelphia.

Paper Senate/2016-17/1/K

18. MSc Clinical Genomics

Agreed:

To receive the report of the validation of the MSc Clinical Genomics and to approve the recommendations of the validation panel.

Paper Senate/2016-17/1/L

19. BSc/MSci Biomedical Science

Agreed:

To receive the report of the validation of the BSc/MSci Biomedical Science and to approve the recommendations of the validation panel.

Paper Senate/2016-17/1/M

20. PgDip Diabetes

Agreed:

To receive the report of the validation of the PgDip Diabetes and to approve the recommendations of the validation panel.

Paper Senate/2016-17/1/N

21. Actions taken by the Chair

Received and noted:

A report on decisions taken on behalf of Senate by the chair since last meeting of Senate.

Paper Senate/2016-17/1/O

22. Student Cases

Received and noted:

A report on student cases considered by hearing committees.

Paper Senate/2016-17/1/P

23. Honorary appointments

Agreed:

To recommend to Council that Dr Jan Poloniecki is awarded the title of emeritus reader in the Population Health Research Institute.

24. Programme Regulations

Approved:

Amendments to the Programme Regulations for the MSci Biomedical Science; the BSc Healthcare Science; the Intercalated BSc; and the BSc Biomedical Science.

Paper Senate/2016-17/1/Q

25. Boards of Examiners

Approved:

The membership of the following Boards of Examiners:

FdSc Breast Imaging

FdSc/BSc Paramedic Science

MBBS

BSc Biomedical Science (years 1 and 2)

BSc Therapeutic Radiography

BSc Diagnostic Radiography

BSc Healthcare Science

FdSc Healthcare Practice

Paper Senate/2016-17/1/R

26. Dates of meetings in 2016-2017

All meetings are from 2.00 – 4.00 pm in H2.5

Tuesday 28 February 2017

Tuesday 6 June 2017

Tuesday 11 July 2017 (Joint meeting with SPARC H2.5 and H2.6)

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