University of Suffolk

SENATE

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 12 October 2022 at 14:00 hours in room A204, Atrium Building

Chair:	Professor Helen Langton (Vice-Chancellor)
Present:	Professor Emma Bond (Pro Vice-Chancellor Research), Jo Campbell (Head of People, People and Organisational Development, Vice-Chancellor's nominee), Dr Sam Chenery-Morris (University wide representative, School of Health and Sports Sciences), Sam Clarke (Students' Union Officer, School of Social Sciences and Humanities), Dr Adam Clayden (School of Engineering, Arts, Science and Technology representative), Professor Mohammad Dastbaz (Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Dr Paul Driscoll-Evans (Pro Vice-Chancellor, Health and Wellbeing), Fiona Fisk (Academic Registrar and Director of Student Life and Registry Services), Alex Gooch (Students' Union President of Education), Deana Hazeldene (School of Health and Sports Sciences representative), Professor Gurpreet Jagpal (Pro-Vice-Chancellor Business and Entrepreneurship), Dr Ross Kemble (Suffolk Business School representative), Professor Alistair Mathie (Dean, School of Engineering, Arts and Science and Technology), Professor Brian McCook (Dean, School of Social Sciences and Humanities), Dean McGeachie (Students' Union Officer, Suffolk Business School), Felix Ngobigha (Lecturer, School of Engineering, Arts, Science and Technology, Vice-Chancellor's nominee), Sean Preston (University wide representative, School of Engineering, Arts, Science and Technology), Dr Pallawi Sinha (School of Social Sciences and Humanities representative), Jamie Steele (Students' Union Officer, School of Health and Sports Sciences), Reilly Willis (University wide representative, School of Social Sciences and Humanities)
Apologies:	Dr Ellen Buck (Director of Learning and Teaching), Dr Rachael Martin (University wide representative, School of Social Sciences and Humanities), Abigail Morgan (OSACC Manager) (Professional Services representative)
Secretary:	Alison McQuin (Head of Quality)
In attendance:	Associate Professor Stuart Agnew (Director, Centre for Academic and International Partnerships), Amy Carpenter (Head of Careers, Employability and Enterprise) for item Graduate Outcomes, John Cavani (Interim Director of External Relations), Tim Greenacre (Chief Operating Officer), Stuart Lipscombe (Representative, University and College Union), James Nial (Head of Planning and Management Information), Laura Pennie (Deputy Academic Registrar)

Minutes shown in bold italics should be treated as confidential and will be removed from the published set on the University website.

Minutes of previous meetings held on 15 June 2022

22/001 The minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2022 were approved as an accurate record to be published on the website.

Matters arising

22/002 It was confirmed that all matters arising items had been completed or were included on the agenda.

Students' Union report

22/003 The Students' Union (SU) reported that the recent Fresher's Fair had been successful, with a good student turnout, and a survey had been issued to explore what improvements could be made for the future.

22/004 Course representative elections would be taking place shortly, with course teams encouraged to invite the SU into teaching sessions to discuss the role and process.

22/005 The main area of focus was the current cost of living crisis, with the SU working with the University to explore how students could be supported over the winter. Members welcomed this initiative and also suggested providing cooking advice. It was confirmed that financial advice was available from the University.

Agreed action: The Academic Registrar to circulate the link to the MySuffolk financial advice page.

22/006 Members discussed the Uni X Student Collaboration project, it was explained that all types of collaboration opportunities would be explored, such as utilising photography students' skills at University events. It was also suggested that the new Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Manager may be able to provide further support.

22/007 It was reported that the increase in Advice Centre enquiries also reflected the experience of the Office for Student Appeals Complaints and Conduct (OSACC).

Chair's report

22/008 It was reported that the development of dentistry provision was progressing, with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Health and Wellbeing) leading on the project. The NHS Dental Social Enterprise aims to be opened on 1 April 2023, with foundation dentists allocated to the provision, who will benefit from CPD and would provide newly qualified dentists with a range of early experiences. There was support from local dentists and there was confidence that up to 50 dentistry practices would be involved in the project. The General Dental Council (GDC) was also encouraging international recruitment to the project.

22/009 The Chief Operating Officer was leading a group exploring support for staff and students during the cost of living crisis, noting that the Students' Union was also part of this.

22/010 All those who had been involved in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) submission and outcome were congratulated, noting that it was important to highlight the University's successes, such as the REF and Ofsted, more widely.

Growth strategy

22/011 An overview of the University's growth strategy was provided to members, noting that 'all staff' presentations were also provided across the institution.

22/012 The strategy focused on increasing the number of 18 year-olds to the institution through providing quality academic provision; continuing to enhance course resources; and providing a better wider student experience through sports facilities, a cafeteria and further SU clubs and societies.

22/013 By 2030, the University also aimed to be top-50 within the Guardian league table, to have a silver Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award, be above average within the National Student Survey (NSS), have continued excellence within the REF, have Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAP) and be in receipt of Higher Education Innovation Funding (HEIF).

22/014 Members discussed support for international applicants and it was confirmed that a contract was being explored with Adventus who could complete necessary applicant checks.

Terms of reference

Senate

22/015 The Senate terms of reference were reviewed annually, with minor changes to membership proposed, along with providing clarity on how the Senate member to Board was elected.

Outcome: Approved.

22/016 It was noted that a further election was needed for a University wide academic representative, due to the appointment of the new Interim Dean, School of Health and Sports Sciences.

Agreed action: The Academic Registrar to arrange a University wide academic representative election prior to the spring Senate meeting.

Quality Committee

22/017 The Quality Committee terms of reference were reviewed annually. The work of the disbanded Policies and Procedures Working Group, previously a sub-group of Quality Committee, would be undertaken by Quality Committee members.

Outcome: Approved.

22/018 Members were reminded of their responsibility to ensure that outcomes from committees were disseminated to their School or professional service area.

Policies and procedures

Higher and Degree Apprenticeship Framework

22/019 The Higher and Degree Apprenticeship Framework was updated to ensure it continued to align with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) requirements following ESFA funding changes.

Outcome: Approved.

22/020 The University had significantly enhanced its relationship with apprenticeship employers through employer voice forums, with employers also more involved in the onboarding process. As a result, employers were more aware of the value of the processes in place to ensure continued compliance.

Partnerships Handbook

22/021 Minor amendments were proposed to the Partnership Handbook.

Outcome: Approved.

22/022 Members queried how the flying faculty model worked with complex tax arrangements for staff members who worked abroad. It was explained that this model was not currently used by the University but was a common model across the sector so the experience of others could be drawn on. It was confirmed that all partners taught in English.

22/023 It was confirmed that as part of the due diligence, completed through the course approval process, that the policies and political landscape of the country, where the proposed partner institution was based, were explored. Student support provided by partner institutions was also explored as part of the validation process.

TEF

22/024 A TEF update was provided, highlighting that the submission deadline had been set for 24 January 2023 and the data dashboards had now been published on the OfS website.

22/025 There were lots of initiatives and examples of good practice that could be highlighted within the narrative submission, with Associate Deans having already provided examples from each of the Schools. A draft narrative submission would form part of the Senate and Board workshop.

22/026 The Students' Union had confirmed that they would be providing a student submission and had joined the University's TEF Working Group.

22/027 Where data did not meet benchmark thresholds, this would need to be explored within the narrative submission. It was noted that further guidance from the OfS was required regarding how students with exit awards were counted within completion data.

Block Learning

22/028 The evaluation of block and blend module performance compared to traditional delivery in 2021/22 was provided to members. While block delivery appeared to have a positive impact on retention compared to traditional delivery, there was no indication, at this stage, of significant ongoing positive impact on assessment/attainment. It was noted that the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) would be exploring next steps, along with addressing how block delivery can better support part-time students and those with a disability.

22/029 Not all courses had moved over to block delivery, noting there was further work needed to ensure that all courses were fully designed for, and embraced the block delivery pedagogy, with course teams encouraged to be more creative with assessment.

22/030 There had been interest from other institutions about how block delivery was implemented, noting that block delivery should be a key selling point of the University to applicants.

22/031 Members discussed the impact block delivery had on Academic Administrators, noting that the Assessment Board Policy had been reviewed so that it aligned with block delivery, but further work was needed to ensure this was followed by all courses.

22/032 The academic calendar was discussed, including whether the academic year should start later to better accommodate international students and clearing.

22/033 With the move away from live streaming, a concern was raised around students who may miss sessions due to Covid or disability. It was confirmed that live streaming was still available for students with reasonable adjustments. Recorded sessions were also available for students to watch so they should not be disadvantaged.

Student recruitment

22/034 An update on student recruitment for the 2022 intake was provided, noting this had been a challenging cycle, especially with conversion.

22/035 It was recognised that the University was entering the 2023 cycle with a similar course portfolio and that work was required to both increase the number of applications received and improving the conversion rate.

22/036 Catering facilities for evening and weekend courses were discussed, noting that it was more likely that these could be made available if timetables for these courses were co-ordinated to ensure a critical mass of students.

Agreed action: The Pro Vice-Chancellor, Health and Wellbeing, to add evening and weekend timetables to the Enrolment and Timetabling Group agenda.

Withdrawal data

22/037 The latest withdrawal data was provided to members, noting this was point-in-time data as end-of-year data was not yet available.

22/038 Members were reminded that this data would be used within the TEF, B3 student outcomes and Access to Participation Plan (APP).

22/039 Members discussed withdrawal data at level 4, noting that withdrawal for academic failure had reduced from the previous year. Members discussed the assessment strategy at level 4, with students finding the current system of receiving a numerical mark for their assessed work at level 4 beneficial in preparing them for future levels and the current strategy providing reassurance about academic integrity.

22/040 It was noted that some partners had a high proportion of students who were withdrawn ‘after a lapse of time’. The Partnership Management Groups reviewed the data in detail and had noted the robust attendance checking processes in place.

Access and Participation Plan research report

22/041 The APP research report was received, with members noting the initial positive results.

Graduate outcomes

22/042 The positive results, particularly around highly-skilled employment, were highlighted within the Graduate Outcomes report, noting that these would also feed into the TEF and B3 student outcomes. Members congratulated the Head of Careers, Employability and Enterprise on the results.

22/043 It was reported that a Careers and Employability Consultant would be allocated to each School, with a further consultant aligned to the APP, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research provision. In addition, there would also be a member of staff focused on data and providing monthly reports to staff.

22/044 Work was continuing to further embed employability within courses, along with increasing visibility for start-ups and entrepreneurship. It was confirmed that the FutureMe platform was still available offering a range of support including CV writing.

RDAP

22/045 While gaining RDAP was a few years away, this was a key part of the University's journey. As the QAA will have demitted their DQB responsibilities from March 2023, it was unsure what the future RDAP application process would be.

DQB External Quality Assurance (EQA) Process

22/046 The new DQB External Quality Assurance (EQA) process was shared with members, noting this had also been circulated to the Apprenticeship Management Group and Quality Committee.

22/047 It was highlighted that the outcome of the DQB EQA process would be used by the OfS to confirm compliance with the B4 conditions of registration.

Partnership update

22/048 A partnerships update was shared with members alongside the new Centre for Academic and International Partnerships team structure.

22/049 While a structure chart was not available for each of the partners, it was confirmed that all students had a key point of contact.

Apprenticeships

Ofsted report

22/050 The Ofsted report from the full inspection, which had taken place in May 2022, was received for information.

Quality Improvement Plan

22/051 The latest QIP was received for information.

QAA and UUK external examiner principles

22/052 The new external examiner principles developed by the QAA and UUK were provided to members.

Partnerships

Partnerships register
22/053 The University's register of partnership arrangements was received.

Course proposal forms

22/054 The list of course proposal forms approved since the last meeting was received.

Course suspension and discontinuation forms

22/055 The list of approved course suspension and discontinuation forms was provided to members.

Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB)

PSRB reports
22/056 The recent reports received from PSRBs were shared with members.

PSRB register
22/057 To receive the PSRB register.

National Student Survey (NSS)

22/058 The initial analysis of the NSS results were provided for information.

Senate member attendance 2021/22

22/059 The attendance register for 2021/22 was received for information.

Senate activity

22/060 Items approved by Senate Chair's action or electronically by members since the last meeting was provided for information.

Course (re)approvals 2021/22

22/061 The evaluation of the course (re)approvals that had taken place in 2021/22 was received for information.

Reports from sub-committees

Academic Appointments and Promotions Committee
22/062 The minutes from the Academic Appointments and Promotions Committee held on 13 January and 5 May 2022 were received for information.

Quality Committee
22/063 The minutes from the Quality Committee meeting held on 18 May and 14 September 2022 were provided for information.

Research and Enterprise Committee
22/064 The minutes from the Research and Enterprise Committee held on 7 June 2022 were provided for information.

Any other business

22/065 Members wished to recognise staff members working on graduation at the moment.

Date of next meeting

22/066 The Senate and Board workshop is to be held at 09:00 on Wednesday 23 November 2022 in the Seminar Room, Atrium Building.

Alison McQuin
Head of Quality