MINUTES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL SENATE
WEDNESDAY 20 MARCH 2024 / 2PM / BRETT BUILDING

Present: Professor T Jones (Vice-Chancellor, Chair), Professor T Ali, Dr A Alsalloum, Dr H Arnolds, Professor K Atkinson, Professor M Baylis, Dr C Belfrage, Professor K Bennett, Dr M Berenbrink, Professor N Berry, Professor F Beveridge, Professor R Black, Dr V Chauvet, Professor R Chiverrell, Professor K Coleman, Professor D Colquitt, Professor L Crolley, Professor M D’Onofrio, Professor P Drake, Professor G Endfield, Professor C Eyers, Dr K Furman, Professor M Garcia Finana, Professor B Gibson, Professor L Harkness-Brennan, Dr N Helassa, Professor A Hollander, Professor D Jeater, Professor B Konev, Dr H Little, Professor W Liu, Professor D Mair, Professor V Mitsilegas, Professor M O’Flaherty, Dr S Parameswaran, Professor S Pickard, Professor S Rocha, Dr M Rose, Professor H Scott, Professor S Sheard, Professor R Smith, Professor J Surroca, Professor J Sweeney, Professor T Teubner, Professor M Towsey, Professor S Voelkel, Professor F Watkins, Dr B Wilm, and Dr J Woolf.

Student Representatives: J Barber, R Bradbury, E Campbell, L Dubbins, K Manley and S Mitra.

Apologies: Professor L Anderson, Professor J Balogun, Professor J Bridgeman, Professor G Brown, Professor I Buchan, Professor P Clegg, Dr S Cornell, Dr L Corner, Dr C Costello, Professor A Fell, Dr L Gahman, Professor L Kenny, Professor P Lunn, Professor G Lynall, Professor A Lyons, Professor P McCormick, Professor P Murray, Professor K O’Halloran, Professor E Patterson, V Samuels, Professor W van der Hoek, Professor F Vis and Professor T Walley.

In Attendance: M Edge (Secretary, Governance, Compliance and Regulatory Manager), E Leonard (Head of Governance and Deputy Secretary), and K Ryan (University Secretary and General Counsel). Sharon Tuersley from Advance HE observed the meeting as part of the Senate Effectiveness Review.

COMMITTEE AND MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

1. Welcome

   NOTED:

   i. New Senate members, Professor Daniel Colquitt, Professor Philip Drake and Professor Wenqing Liu were welcomed to their first meeting.

2. Disclosures of Interest

   Members were asked to disclose any interest that could give rise to conflict in relation to any item on the agenda. No such interests were disclosed.
3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

3.1 **Minutes of the Meeting Held on 24 January 2024**

**NOTED:**

i. The following addition to the minutes was suggested:

- Minute 8.ii (Research and Impact Committee): *A request was made to consider whether the Research and Impact Strategic Committee (RISC), as the Committee which currently reports on REF preparations on a regular basis to Senior Leadership Team and seeks endorsement on key issues from RIC, might also report to Senate. This request was made in light of there being no mention of recent developments for the next REF in the January Research and Impact Committee report to Senate. It was explained that there had been no substantive University updates on REF to report at the January meeting of RIC, but Senate would be kept informed of all key developments through RIC, in line with agreed reporting structures, as and when there were matters to report.*

**AGREED:**

ii. The minutes should be approved as an accurate record subject to the above change.

3.2 **Matters Arising**

3.2.1 *Curriculum Project – Additional Senate Meeting*

**REPORTED:**

i. Whilst not specifically referred to in the minutes, the Vice-Chancellor confirmed that a special meeting of Senate would be convened for 22 May 2024, at 2.30pm, to enable Senate members to discuss the proposals around the Curriculum Project, including potential changes to the existing credit structure.

ii. To assist discussion, a positioning paper would be circulated in advance of the meeting that would consider the potential pros and cons of the Project. This special meeting would not be a decision-making meeting, but rather an opportunity to have a discussion on the matter. If the University proceeded with this Project, it needed to be clear on how it genuinely benefited both staff and students.

iii. Depending on the outcome of this discussion in May, the plan would be to then present a final recommendation to the June meeting of Senate.

4. **Report on Action Taken by the Chair on Behalf of Senate**

**RECEIVED and NOTED:**

i. A paper summarising the activity taken by the Chair on behalf of Senate. Since the last meeting of Senate, Chair’s action had been taken on the following matters:
a. To approve the appointment of Dr Rebecca Rylance Graham to the Fitness to Practise Panel Chairs.

b. To approve the renewal of the partnership between the University and the International Medical University (IMU) for a further five years. Under the articulation arrangement, students from IMU could transfer into year three of the University’s MBChB (Medicine and Survey), providing they met specific entry requirements.

c. Following endorsement by the University’s Senior Leadership Team, to approve the following School name changes in the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences:
   • To change the name of the ‘School of Life Sciences' to ‘School of Biosciences’.
   • To change the name of the ‘School of Health Sciences' to ‘School of Allied Health Professions and Nursing'.

There would also now be a requirement to reflect the School name changes referred to above in relevant University Ordinances.

AGREED:

ii. The action taken by the Chair on behalf of Senate should be endorsed.

5. Vice-Chancellor’s Report

RECEIVED:

i. A report from the Vice-Chancellor on University, sector wide and political news, covering:

   University Updates
   • Condolences for the passing of former University of Liverpool Vice-Chancellor, Professor Philip Love
   • Queen’s Anniversary Prize
   • University Race Equality Charter Bronze Award
   • Faculty of Health and Life Sciences Athena Swan Award (Bronze), for Professional, Technical and Operations Staff
   • AI Research Chemistry Hub
   • Move to Master’s (Postgraduate Study Support for the XJTLU student cohort)
   • National Student Survey
   • University Staff Awards

   Higher Education Sector and Political Updates
   • Local political and stakeholder engagement
   • Visit from Liverpool City Region Mayor
   • Visit from the Ministry of Defence’s Chief Scientific Adviser
   • Knowledge Quarter Liverpool Board Strategy Workshop
   • Roundtable event with the new Wellcome Trust Chief Executive
   • Negative media coverage of international student access
   • London Economics Report, assessing impact of Russell Group universities
   • UUK manifesto requests of an incoming government.
REPORTED:

ii. The sector had been responding to a media focus on recruitment practices relating to international students in recent weeks, with lots of examples of articles containing inaccuracies. The Home Office had also recently commissioned the Migration Advisory Committee to review the Graduate route visa, with the outcome of this review anticipated in May 2024.

NOTED:

iii. Whilst there was broad support for the ‘Move to Master’s’ support package for XJTLU students, which was aimed at supporting this particular cohort of students to progress to postgraduate study, a number of queries were raised on whether such support could also be offered out more widely amongst the University’s international students. It was explained that the University already offered a wide range of support for its international students, particularly around English-language support, but the University would consider what other potential support could be provided more widely.

STRATEGIC MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

6. Draft University Access and Participation Plan (APP) 2025 – 2029

[Ian Roberts, Director of Global Student Recruitment, Admissions and Widening Participation, Jon Corish, Associate Director, UK Student Recruitment and Widening Participation, and Russell Cahill, the Head of Strategic Insights, attended for this item.]

RECEIVED:

i. A copy of the University’s draft APP (accessible via SharePoint), plus a presentation summarising the key headlines.

REPORTED:

ii. This APP would cover the reporting period 2025 - 2029 and retained an emphasis on ensuring under-represented students both entered the University, and also succeeded on their course and post-completion.

iii. Around 30 HEIs had already had their APPs approved by the OfS in Wave 1. Insights from these plans had been used to help frame the draft APP.

iv. As in the current APP (2020-25), targets needed to cover key stages of the lifecycle and the University had developed six targets for the new APP 2025-2029, as follows:

- Paragraph redacted due to commercial sensitivity.

v. Historically, the University had struggled to present its success work coherently to students and to the OfS. ‘Liverpool Plus’ was a clearer umbrella term being introduced as a way to explain activity across departmental/Faculty boundaries and engage staff in WP student success.
NOTED:

vi. Whilst the APP was a regulatory requirement, the University’s submission had retained a focus on delivering in the best interests of its students.

vii. To support the admission and success of applicants who experienced barriers to their education, the University had embedded a contextual admissions strategy for eligible UK students, adopting the use of alternative offers in the UCAS cycle and through clearing. IMD would be incorporated as a consideration in the contextual admissions policy.

viii. A query was raised on how additional focus could be given to supporting accessibility on campus for students that declared a disability. As part of the implementation of the APP the University intended to link into the implementation of the Equality Objectives Action Plan. There was also a piece of work required to continue to raise staff awareness around supporting students with a disability, noting that not all students always declared a disability.

ix. As noted above, the development and implementation of an APP was a regulatory requirement for the University and just focussed on UK undergraduate students. Therefore, this piece of work was not reflective of the University’s wider work and support around access, participation and progression, which encompassed different cohorts across the University, and also included outreach with local schools.

x. Outside of the APP, there was an ongoing piece of work for the University to amplify the student voice, and in turn respond to any insight through effective interventions. The University’s Race Equality Charter Action plan was highlighted as one example of this.

xi. A query was raised from a student representative on whether University bursaries could be increased to reflect recent challenges caused by the cost of living crisis. As part of Liverpool 2031, the University hoped to be able to raise additional income through fundraising activity, which could in turn further support its bursary work.

xii. The APP would include a clear focus on monitoring and evaluation moving forward.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND:

xiii. The draft APP should be submitted to Council for approval.

7. Briefing on Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023
[The Director of Student Life, Dr Paula Harrison, attended for this item.]

RECEIVED:

i. A briefing paper, which set out a summary of incoming changes, the background to the Act, plus an initial assessment of what action the University may be required to take. The paper was supported by a presentation
summarising the key legislative changes, plus a brief overview of recent examples of sector tribunals involving freedom of speech.

REPORTED:

ii. The Act placed new legal requirements on universities in relation to Freedom of Speech, including:

   a. A new OfS condition of registration relating to free speech and academic freedom;
   b. New free speech duties, including a duty for universities and colleges to promote freedom of speech;
   c. An extension to the OfS regulation on free speech to apply directly to Students’ Unions;
   d. A new complaints scheme, run by the OfS, to consider free speech complaints about universities or relevant Students’ Unions – from students, staff and visiting speakers;
   e. Prohibition of non-disclosure agreements in complaints relating to harassment and sexual misconduct;
   f. A new role of Director for Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom;
   g. The introduction of a statutory tort for breach of the free speech duty;
   h. The OfS would have the power to monitor overseas funding received by HE Institutions, with a view to assess the extent to which such funding might present a risk to free speech and academic freedom.

iii. Whilst the University had established good practice in this area, a range of policies and procedures would be reviewed to ensure compliance. SLT had recently approved the establishment of a University working group to oversee an institutional response to identifying and updating any areas of University provision connected to the HE (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023, and incoming OfS regulatory powers.

NOTED:

iv. There had been two recent examples of employment tribunals in the sector, relating to freedom of speech, that had attracted a lot of media attention. In both examples, the tribunals had found in favour of the individuals (unfair dismissal and constructive dismissal), citing they had been dismissed based on their views. Whilst both cases had been portrayed as relating to Freedom of Speech/Academic Freedom, both cases had actually rested on the Equality Act. This highlighted the complexity and potential challenges for institutions in upholding both their responsibilities around Freedom of Speech and Equality, which could potentially conflict at times.

v. Whilst the University was regulated by the OfS, and the Guild of Students by the Charity Commission, both institutions had committed to working closely together in response to incoming changes.

BUSINESS FROM FACULTIES

No business received from the Faculties.
REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

8. Collaborative Provision Committee (CPC)

RECEIVED:

i. A report on the meeting of the CPC held on 2 February 2024, covering:
   - HELP University, Malaysia – Institutional Review Report
   - International Medical University Institutional Review Report
   - XJTLU
   - Review of the Recruitment Agreements Approval Process
   - Joint Validation of the MSc Human Evolution with Liverpool John Moores University.

REPORTED:

ii. Following an institutional review of HELP University, Malaysia, CPC had recommended for approval the renewal of the partnership for a further period of five years. Under the current arrangement, students who met agreed entry requirements at HELP were able to transfer into level 5 or 6 of the UoL LLB Law or level 4 or 5 of a suite of ULMS programmes. The partnership was well-established and usually involved the transfer of approximately 12 students per academic year.

AGREED:

iii. The renewal of the partnership with HELP University for a further period of five years should be approved.

9. Education Committee

RECEIVED:

i. A report on the meeting of the Education Committee held on 9 February 2024, covering:
   - Access and Participation Plan
   - Strategy 2031: Curriculum Review Project and KPIs for Curriculum Pillars
   - Liverpool Online Portfolio Development
   - Maths School Annual Report
   - Student Success Board
   - Annual Update on Degree Apprenticeships
   - Generative Artificial Intelligence
   - Interim Graduate Outcome Survey Update
   - 100 Day Survey – Preliminary Results.

NOTED:

ii. Whilst the confirmation that a special Senate meeting would be held on 22 May was welcomed by Senate members, there were concerns raised by a number of Senate members on the approach that had been taken to date, with regard to
the Curriculum Project, specifically on how decisions had been made and issues with communication. There was a perception from a number of Senate members that the Curriculum Project had already been approved. Senate was assured that this was not the case.

iii. A request was made that the paper to accompany the meeting in May reflected on the risks associated with this Project, including timings and resources. This should also include ensuring staff have capacity to deliver.

iv. The Curriculum Project was much broader than the potential changes to the existing credit structure, and it would be important that the discussion in May considered all aspects of the review, to achieve a balanced position.

v. Clarification was sought to understand what problem the Curriculum Project was solving. In response to this, it was explained 1) there was a widespread belief that the University was over teaching/assessing and this was leading to excessive workloads for both staff and students, and 2) the University had a timetable that arrived relatively late and unstable for both staff and students. So, one focus of the Project would be to deliver a more simple timetable.

vi. It would be important for the University to engage with other Russell Group institutions for lessons learned and to share best practice.

vii. A request was made for more modelling to be undertaken to better understand the impact that this may have (e.g. both on workload and output).

viii. A query was raised on whether there would be exceptions to the credit structure for certain modules (e.g. would it apply to non-modular projects).

10. Postgraduate Research (PGR) Committee

RECEIVED:

i. A report on the meeting of the PGR Committee held on 1 March 2024, covering:

- Updates to the PGR Committee Terms of Reference and Membership
- Revisions to Appendices 7 & 8 of the PGR Code of Practice: Thesis Submission Policy and Exams Policy
- Revisions to Online Professional Doctorate Progress Procedures: Annexe 1 to Appendix 12 of the PGR Code of Practice
- Proposed amendment to Ordinance 57(A)ii
- PGR Enhancement Project
- PGR Flagship Scheme
- PGR Exit Survey (draft)
- Research Collaboration Advice Team Update
- Task & Finish Groups
- Marketing Update
- XJTLU Strategy Update
- Graduate Route Visa
• Faculty Update Reports
• Report on PGR Development Initiatives from The Academy.

REPORTED:

ii. PGR Committee had recommended for approval the following revisions to appendices 7 & 8 of the PGR Code of Practice:

a. Updates to the Thesis Submission Policy:
   • Clarification in the introduction section that the policy applied to modified theses submitted for review by the Examiners, as well as theses submitted for examination (viva);
   • Recommendation that students submitting their modified thesis for assessment should be as explicit as possible in setting out how their revisions respond to the Examiners’ comments;
   • Inclusion of a note to specify that extensions to the modifications submission period must not result in the student exceeding their maximum period of registration.

b. Updates to the Exams Policy:
   • If an Internal Examiner becomes unavailable to assess a modified thesis it will be referred to the Dean of School/Institute or nominee for assessment;
   • It is the responsibility of the Internal Examiner to ensure that required thesis revisions are communicated clearly to students;
   • Where relevant, information about thesis modifications will identify where a named Examiner is responsible for assessing specific modifications;
   • It is the responsibility of the Internal Examiner to ensure that no additional thesis modifications are requested of students in addition to formal modifications communicated to the student in writing following the viva;
   • It is the responsibility of the Internal Examiner to ensure that students have an opportunity to respond to the Examiners’ feedback on their modified thesis.

AGREED:

iii. The proposal for the APVC Research Environment and Postgraduate Research, to assume the role of Chair of the PGR Committee should be approved.

iv. The revisions to Appendices 7 and 8 of the PGR Code of Practice: Thesis Submission Policy and Exams Policy, as highlighted above, should be approved.

v. The following revisions to Online Professional Doctorate Progress Procedures: Annexe 1 to Appendix 12 of the PGR Code of Practice, should be approved:

   • to specify that OPD students being deemed withdrawn as a result of failure to submit or re-submit their thesis by their thesis submission deadline will be managed by the relevant Professional Services Team in the School/Faculty rather than the Research Degree Administration Team.
(SAS), which has no role in the management of Online Professional Doctorates
• reference to APR (or equivalent) has been added and the standard PhD deadline removed to reflect the approach taken to the management of Online Professional Doctorates.

vi. The proposed amendment to Ordinance 57(A)ii., adding that “ULMS PhD candidates commencing studies from 2024/25 onwards will follow an extended programme and are expected to submit their thesis within five calendar years of initial registration”, should be approved.

11. Research and Impact Committee

RECEIVED and NOTED:

i. A report on the meeting of the Research and Impact Committee held on 7 March 2024, covering:

• Research Excellence Framework (REF)
• Research Income
• Annual Diversity & Equality Report.

OTHER ITEMS

12. Advance HE Academic Governance Collaborative Project – Update

RECEIVED:

i. A report summarising the results arising from the University’s participation in the recent Advance HE Academic Governance Benchmark Survey Collaborative Project alongside six other HE institutions.

REPORTED:

ii. The University had scored below benchmark (the average level of agreement across the seven participating institutions) in all sections of the Academic Governance Benchmark Survey. There were, however, notable differences between the organisations involved in the pilot and a clear divergence of opinion between ex officio members and nominated/elected members of our Senate.

iii. Valuable insight had been gained from participating in the project and several actions had already been identified that could be implemented before the end of this academic year, as follows:

• Enhance Senate member induction and develop a members’ handbook
• Invite Council lay members to observe Senate meetings on a rotational basis, and hold occasional joint meetings of Senate and Council to discuss key academic issues
• Include discussion of key strategic academic risks on the agenda, plus discussion on freedom of speech and academic freedom
• Share the Scheme of Delegation at the first meeting of each academic year to raise awareness of delegated powers
• Review Senate election processes to ensure they are clear, transparent, timed to enable good engagement, and communicated broadly to attract nominations from a diverse field of candidates
• Ensure timely circulation of papers
• Improve the Senate members’ SharePoint site so that it can be used as a repository for members to readily access Senate materials.

iv. Some of the matters raised would be addressed as part of the full Senate effectiveness review that was now underway. These issues included:

• Composition of a modern Senate
• Improved understanding of the role of a modern Senate
• Voting (including anonymous voting)
• Process for dealing with and recording proposed amendments
• Remit and membership of sub-committees and best practice in relation to reporting
• Communications out of Senate
• How best to more regularly review the effectiveness of Senate and its sub-committees.

NOTED:

v. By implementing the actions outlined and other actions that may emerge through the full Senate effectiveness review, it was believed that Senate’s upwards trajectory evident from some of the narrative comments received would continue.

vi. A final outcome report from the external Senate effectiveness review was expected to be shared with Senate in June 2024.

AGREED:

vii. The report and next steps as outlined above should be endorsed.

13. Student Complaints & Compliance Matters
[The Director of Student Experience and Enhancement, Dr Paul Redmond, attended for both items under 13 below.]

13.1 Annual Complaints Monitoring Report for the Academic Session 2022/23

RECEIVED:

i. The Annual Complaints Monitoring Report for the Academic Session 2022/23.

REPORTED:

ii. In 2022/23 a total of 30 stage one complaints had been received, of which 13 (43%) were upheld in full or in part. This was a decrease on 2021/22 where 54 stage one complaints had been received, although the percentage of upheld in full or in part remained similar year on year. The number of Stage Two complaints had decreased this year by 25%.
iii. During the reporting period 20 cases were submitted to the OIA. Of the 20 cases that were decided, 15 were considered not justified (75%), two partly justified (10%) and two settled (10%) and one not eligible (5%). This provided a level of confidence that the University was applying its internal policies and procedures correctly and was making reasonable decisions as this is what the OIA considered when looking at a case.

NOTED:

iv. For future years, the Team would work with Schools to produce the annual report for earlier in the academic year.

13.2 Academic Compliance Report for the Academic Session 2022/23

RECEIVED and NOTED:

i. The Annual Compliance Report for 2022/23 which provided an annual anonymised summary of Assessment Appeals and cases brought before the Research Degree Appeals Board, the Board of Discipline, the Board of Appeal, University Disciplinary Panel, the Fitness to Practise Panel and the Senate Committee on the Progress of Students.

ii. There had been a 14% decrease in the number of Section One Appeals but the amount upheld was comparable to the previous year. There had been a 27% decrease in the number of Section Two Appeals, but the number submitted that had a valid case for consideration had increased year on year. A review had been carried out of the Assessment Appeals process and a new Policy had been approved and would be introduced next academic year.

iii. The number of Fitness to Practise cases had increased by 140% with this trend expected to continue. The Fitness to Practise Policy and Procedure had been revised and launched in January 2024.

iv. There had been sixteen non-academic misconduct cases referred to the University Disciplinary Panel in 2022/23, with an expectation for this to increase in the current academic year. Sexual misconduct continued to be the most common breach in Student Conduct Investigations and referrals to the University Disciplinary Panel.

v. As a further means of addressing growing concerns within the sector around sexual harassment and misconduct, the University was planning additional events during Welcome to engage students and further raise awareness of these important matters.

vi. A total of sixty-six Exam Misconduct reports had been made during the January, May and August assessment periods. Forty-nine of these were low level breaches that could be dealt with via a reminder of the regulations and seventeen were presented to the Board of Discipline with all but one being found proven. The Code of Practice on Assessment, Appendix D, Annexe 4 Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures was currently under review.
14. EDI Matters

14.1 Athena Swan Annual Report 2023

RECEIVED and NOTED:

i. A report providing an update on University Athena Swan activity from March 2023 (the date of the last Athena Swan Annual Report) until February 2024, including an overview of progress made in 2023 and next steps from the University’s current Athena Swan action plan (2022 – 2026).

14.2 Race Equality Charter Annual Report 2023

RECEIVED and NOTED:

i. A report providing an update on University Race Equality Charter (REC) activity from March 2023 (the date of the last REC Annual Report) until February 2024, including an overview of progress made in academic year 2023/24 to date, as well as next steps from the University’s current REC Action Plan (2023 – 2028).

15. Policy Updates

15.1 Intellectual Property Policy and Spinout Guidelines

RECEIVED and NOTED:

i. A copy of the revised IP Policy and associated Spinout Guidelines.

ii. The IP Policy set out the University’s approach to ownership, management and sharing of revenue resulting from successful commercialisation of University-owned intellectual property. A light touch review of the policy had been undertaken and updates were proposed to reflect the IP Commercialisation Team’s proposed new name (The Enterprise Team), and to make minor amendments to approvals and conflict resolution processes to reflect custom and practice.

iii. Based on an independent review, and following discussions by the Enterprise Board, a new Spinout Guidelines 2023 document had been developed to sit alongside the main IP Policy. It had been concluded that the University’s academic equity policy should be re-positioned to reduce barriers, enable successful ventures and facilitate higher numbers of spinout companies. In line with general practice across the sector and government guidelines, the new Spinout Guidelines reduced equity taken by the University at the point of founding new spinout companies from 50% to 20%. The reduced equity stake would be balanced by the University putting in place a royalty-bearing licence. A cap was placed on revenue shared with Schools, based on sale of shares, in the event of an exit.

iv. The Policy applied to all University staff, and postgraduate research students, who were treated as employees for the purposes of the Policy. It did not apply to undergraduates, or taught students. It would not apply to ‘spin-in’ companies, which would be negotiated on a case by case basis.
AGREED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL:

v. The Intellectual Property Policy and Spinout Guidelines should be approved.

16. Draft Forward Plan of Business

RECEIVED and NOTED:

i. A copy of the Senate draft forward plan of business for 2023/24.

17. Date of Next Meeting

NOTED:

i. The special Senate meeting would be held 2.30pm on Wednesday 22 May 2024. The next ordinary meeting would be held at 2pm on Wednesday 26 June 2024.