

Unconfirmed minutes

## The University of Manchester

### SENATE

**Wednesday, 3 February 2010**

*Present:*

Professor Gilbert (in the Chair)

Professor Aarons, Dr Allan, Professors Bailey, Birse, Börjars, Dr Brockhaus-Grand, Professors Brown, Case, Coombs, Drs Cobb, Cotton, Davies, Professors Devine, Eccles, Esmail, Grey, Helliwell, Humphries, Mr Jones, Professor Kirschen, Drs Kitmitto, Malik, Professor Masters, Drs McBride, McCrohan, McGovern, Qualtrough, Professors Reece, Rothwell, Dr Sharma, Professor Stirling, Dr Timmermann, and Ms Wilkinson (34).

*For unreserved business:* Mr Chowdhury, Mr Hassan, Mr Jenkinson, Ms Little, and Mr Tahboub (Students' Union).

*By invitation:* Professor Clarke (School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences), Professor Duck (School of Mathematics), Professor Gibson (School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering), Professor Gleeson (School of Physics & Astronomy), Professor Guy (School of Environment & Development), Professor Luker (School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work), Professor Mackie (School of Dentistry), Professor Stansby (School of Mechanical, Aerospace and Civil Engineering) and Dr Sponder (Head of the Office of Student Support and Services).

*In attendance:* The Registrar and Secretary and the Head of the Student Services Centre.

#### 1. Minutes

**Confirmed:** the minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2009.

#### 2. Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda.

#### 3. Statement by the President and Vice-Chancellor

*The President and Vice-Chancellor provided an oral supplement to his written statement as follows:*

- (a) The Senior Executive Team was continuing to model and keep under review a range of possible financial scenarios, together with contingency plans for managing the University in the event that a particular scenario should materialize either before or after the General Election. Inevitably a wide spectrum of measures was under consideration from the most draconian to the more benign. However, it could be potentially damaging for these matters to be the subject of public discourse too early. For this reason they would be discussed initially at the forthcoming Faculties and Schools' Conference and thereafter at the Board of Governors' Conference in March so that real plans might be brought forward for wider discussion in due course. In the meantime, the Board of Governors had stated

clearly that whatever the circumstances the University had to operate in surplus and continue to respond strategically according to the *Manchester 2015* agenda.

- (b) Commenting on the recent announcement of his departure from the University the President and Vice-Chancellor explained that it was with regret that he had concluded that he was unable to continue in his role for health reasons. The Deputy President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor would assume the role of Acting President and Vice-Chancellor from 1 June 2010 to ensure continuity of leadership until a substantive appointment could be made. Arrangements to recruit to the post would commence shortly. While the selection process would be thorough there was an imperative to make an appointment as soon as was possible and thereby avoid any prolonged period of uncertainty.
- (c) In the meantime, it had been agreed that the decision that the Deputy President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor would assume overall responsibility for research and graduate education following the departure of Professor Simon Gaskell needed to be reviewed. The scale of her responsibilities in her forthcoming role as Acting President and Vice-Chancellor were such that responsibility for research and graduate education had been transferred, on an interim basis, to Professor Coombs who would become Vice-President for Research and Innovation pending the appointment of a new President and Vice-Chancellor who would inevitably wish to review the portfolios of all senior appointments.
- (e) Following the Director of Finance's resignation in December 2009, arrangements were in hand to appoint an Interim Director and the process to make a permanent appointment was already underway.
- (f) In response to a question regarding the University's financial position relative to the rest of the sector, the President and Vice-Chancellor explained that the merger between UMIST and VUM had been timely in that the single University had benefited from significant capital investment. He noted that while Lord Mandelson's letter of 22 December 2009 to HEFCE had provided overall guidance on higher education funding for 2010-11 it would not be until 17 March 2010 that the precise outcomes for individual institutions would be known. Notwithstanding this indications for the University of Manchester in the 1 February 2010 preliminary communication from HEFCE were encouraging.

#### **4. Research**

##### **Reported:**

- (a) That, working with the Associate Vice-Presidents, Associate Deans and colleagues in Faculties and Schools, research focus and quality would continue to be the key priorities for the Vice-President for Research and Innovation. Significant progress had been made in recent years but there was more work to be done, particularly with respect to the University's research capabilities and engagement with external stakeholders. To facilitate this work he would chair the University Research Group with an extended membership to include the Director of Business Relations and the Associate Deans for Business Development. Among other things the Group would promote and enable institutional level consideration of those elements of research strategy that transcend Faculty boundaries, explore the long term benefits of eScholar for capturing and utilising information on the University's research capabilities and focus on the measurement of research impact, including how the insights from the University's participation in the HEFCE pilot of research impact assessment might be shared.
- (b) That Professor Nalin Thakker had been appointed as Associate Vice-President for Research Integrity. This new role would focus on best practice and conduct in research,

particularly around regulatory requirements concerning clinical trials and research involving human tissue, with a wider remit to ensure that all of the University's research was conducted at the highest standard. While he would report to the Deputy President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor he would also work closely with the Vice-President for Research and Innovation.

- (g) That the University's current Research Profiling Exercise (RPE) had been completed so that the grade profiles at a School level, together with a final report from the RPE Group, would be published shortly. Staff would be able to request their individual grade and feedback from their line manager in due course. In the meantime, feedback from the external advisors involved had been positive and in some cases had included useful suggestions for future refinement and development. This had been a substantial exercise so that particular thanks were due to those colleagues, both academic and administrative, across the University who had worked especially hard to ensure that it was completed.
- (h) In response to a question from a member of Senate, the Deputy President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor confirmed that individual staff grades would not be used in consideration of promotion cases unless put forward by the individual member of staff concerned.

## 5. Teaching and Learning

- (a) Report from the Vice-President (Teaching and Learning)

*The Vice-President (Teaching and Learning) provided an oral supplement to his written report as follows:*

### 2010 recruitment data

- (i) HEFCE had imposed a cap on student numbers in 2009-10 in order to constrain over-recruitment and there was an expectation that numbers would continue to be capped for the foreseeable future. The University had met its recruitment targets for 2009-10 and would therefore not be subject to any financial penalties from HEFCE.
- (ii) The most recent recruitment data for entry in September 2010 were presented for information. Overall applications to the University were up by 4% to date but early indications were that this was relatively low compared to the rest of the sector. This overall increase hid some significant decreases on last year in applications to course in several Schools. There were a number of possible reasons for this but a clear correlation between decreases in applications and poor results in the National Student Survey appeared to be emerging.

### Revised Policy on Feedback to Students

- (i) The latest version of a *Policy on feedback to students* had been prepared by an Assessment and Feedback Working Group chaired by Dr Chris Davies, Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning in the Faculty of Humanities following extensive consultation with the Students' Union and the wider student body as well as a staff consultation exercise which had generated approximately 110 pages of comments. These comments indicated broad support for the principles of the policy but had also provided constructive suggestions to improve its detail.
- (ii) It was reported that successive NSS results and unit evaluation questionnaire results indicated that there was much concern among students regarding feedback but did not provide an analysis of the exact nature of the problem. Therefore, the

Assessment and Feedback Working Group had undertaken an extensive consultation with students from all parts of the University. This made clear that students had specific concerns regarding the timeliness and personalised nature of feedback with the majority of students who took part in the consultation suggesting two to three weeks as an optimum time for receiving feedback. It was for this reason that the policy included the principle that feedback should be returned 15 days after the final submission deadline.

- (iii) There had been a delay in the staff consultation exercised in one Faculty so that their feedback had not been incorporated into the version of the policy that had been submitted to Senate. However, the Vice-President acknowledged that while the majority of the feedback that had since been received related to mostly minor points there was a more significant issue regarding the feasibility of returning feedback to students in large class groups within 15 days which needed consideration. He was, therefore, content to accept an amendment to allow for Faculties to approve, in exceptional circumstances, for feedback to be provided up to 20 working days after the final submission deadline.

The following points made during the ensuing general discussion were **noted**:

- (iv) A concern of some members that the Senate agenda had not stated clearly that the policy was to be considered for approval at the meeting.
- (v) The suggestion that since the first draft of the revised policy had been presented to Senate as if it were a draft and that several amendments had been subsequently reported orally, final approval of the policy should be deferred until the next meeting of Senate.
- (vi) The concern of some members that the policy as it had been presented to the meeting had resource implications for those staff who mark assessments from a number of units at the same time.
- (vii) Concerns from the Students' Union members of Senate, who tabled a statement in support of the policy, that although feedback was improving in some areas the University overall was moving too slowly in addressing student dissatisfaction regarding feedback and that this dissatisfaction would only intensify if approval of the policy was delayed.

At this point the President and Vice-Chancellor expressed his view that, notwithstanding an acknowledgement that the policy required further editing, it would be unforgivable for Senate not to approve the principles of the policy given the level of student dissatisfaction with feedback. Furthermore, given the energy and commitment which students had put into the development of the policy, he was not prepared to defer approval until the next meeting of Senate in April. It was therefore his intention to proceed to consider each of the clauses listed in the policy.

During the subsequent consideration of the policy, on a clause by clause basis, the following points were **noted**:

- (viii) Grade descriptors varied between disciplines. The Students' Union members of Senate suggested that there was a student perception that higher marks were easier to achieve in certain areas. It was agreed that, whilst different disciplines may have different conventions for describing student performance, all units should have grade descriptors, that those descriptors should be clear and accessible, and that feedback should be linked to them. It was, therefore, agreed that clause 11 of the

policy should be amended to reflect the fact that grade descriptors should be consistent across the units in a given programme and should be readily accessible to students in unit and programme handbooks or equivalent.

- (ix) That clause 13 of the policy should be redrafted to take account of the point referred to at (iii) above and state '*For all formative assessments and assessed coursework the maximum time for feedback to be given is normally 15 working days after the final submission deadline but, under exceptional circumstances approved by the Faculty, up to 20 working days after the final submission deadline*'. It was noted that many units in the School of Social Sciences were taught to classes of over 600 students so that these would be submitted to the Faculty of Humanities for approval of an extension to 20 days.
- (x) That clause 19 of the policy was lengthy so that it should be redrafted to state clearly that Schools must facilitate individual student requests to see exam scripts, without charge, although students should not be permitted to take the scripts away with them. The concern of some members who suggested that comments on exam scripts were intended to help External Examiners only and, therefore, might create confusion and dissatisfaction for students requesting to see their scripts were noted. However, other members stated that the full annotation of exam scripts was required for quality assurance purposes and suggested that it was indefensible to use minimal annotations or to claim that comments might confuse students. Some parts of the University already provided students with the opportunity to access their scripts and whilst take-up was not high the opportunity was nonetheless valued by those students.
- (xi) It was agreed that clause 21 of the policy should be redrafted to clarify that comments should be made on why students had been awarded the given mark and how they could improve their work, including any recommendations for further reading where appropriate.
- (xii) It was agreed that clause 24 of the policy should be amended to clarify that feedback should be comparable in scope and scale between students and between units that were similar in style or structure.
- (xiii) It was agreed that clause 25 of the policy should be redrafted to clarify that written comments should be provided on all exam scripts and coursework and must be clear and legible, enabling students to understand which part of their work comments refer to. Students should have the opportunity, within reason, to seek clarification and further feedback.

The *Policy on feedback to students* was thereby approved, subject to the amendment to clause 13 specified in paragraph (ix) above and the revisions to the wording in clauses 11, 19, 21, 24 and 25 as described in paragraphs (vii), (x), (xi), (xii) and (xiii) respectively.

Degree ceremonies for students graduating with a postgraduate diploma or postgraduate certificate

**Approved:** the proposal that, with effect from the summer of 2010, all students graduating with a postgraduate diploma or postgraduate certificate (including PGCE) be invited to attend a University degree ceremony.

- (b) Procedure, pursuant to Statute XX.7, for the Consideration of Allegations of Academic Malpractice made after Graduation in respect of Work Submitted for an Award of the University

**Agreed:** to endorse the *Procedure for the Consideration of Allegations of Academic Malpractice made after Graduation in Respect of Work Submitted for an Award of the University* for onward transmission to the Board of Governors.

## 6. Amendments to Regulation XVII (Conduct and Discipline of Students)

**Received:** a paper prepared by the Head of the Office of Student Support and Services which proposed amendment to Regulation XVII as a consequence of the appointment of an Off Campus Student Affairs Manager and in the light of evolving experience and circumstances.

**Noted:**

- (a) That, together with the Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU), the University was in the process of appointing an Off Campus Student Affairs Manager whose responsibility it would be to:
  - co-ordinate the approach of both universities for all off-campus student and community affairs;
  - advise and support students on the achievement of responsible and mutually respectful relations with local communities.
- (b) That a similar role had been successful in Liverpool, Nottingham, Edinburgh, Belfast and Birmingham and had the support of the Students' Union.
- (c) That while the emphasis of the role was on developing and maintaining positive relationships between student and non-student residents, the post-holder would need to have authority to initiate disciplinary action against students where this might prove necessary. To this end the proposal was to extend the scope and applicability of Regulation XVII to cover the conduct of students in the local area as well as confirming summary disciplinary powers on an additional individual.

During the ensuing discussion concern was expressed by a representative from the Students' Union about the definition of *behaviour likely to damage the University's relationship with surrounding communities* and how and in what circumstances this might be applied. Consequently, the decision was taken to defer consideration of the proposed amendment to a future meeting of Senate to allow further consultation with the Students' Union and to take further advice.

## 7. Ethnicity and Degree Attainment

**Agreed:** that consideration of the paper prepared by the Associate Vice-President (Equality and Diversity) be deferred until the next meeting.

## 8. 2009-10 Student number performance

**Received:** a report of 2009-10 student number performance prepared by the Planning Support Office.

## 9. Matters for report to Senate

- (a) Report on exercise of delegations (on behalf of Senate and the Board of Governors)

### **Professorial appointments**

The following appointment had been approved on behalf of Senate and the Board of Governors:

#### ***Ad Personam* Promotional Chair in Common Law**

John Murphy, LLB (Hons), LLM (Southampton), previously Reader in Law at this University, as Professor of Common Law (in the School of Law) from 1 January 2010.

### **Grant of the title of Professor Emeritus**

Acting on behalf of Senate and the Board of Governors, the President and Vice-Chancellor had approved the conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus on the following:

Professor Richard Abadi, Professor of Visual Science (in the Faculty of Life Sciences) (*from 1 November 2009*)

Professor Peter Aczel, Professor of Mathematical Logic and Computing Science (in the School of Computer Science) (*from 1 October 2009*)

Professor Peter Halfpenny, Professor of Sociology (in the School of Social Sciences) (*from 1 October 2010*)

Professor Tudor Rickards, Professor of Creativity and Organisational Change (in the Manchester Business School) (*from 1 October 2009*)

Professor Alistair Ulph, Professor of Environmental Economics (in the Faculty of Humanities) (*from 1 October 2010*)

### **Other authorisations on behalf of the Senate**

Acting on behalf of Senate and the Board of Governors, and on the recommendation of the University's Awards and Honours Group, the President and Vice-Chancellor had approved the following nomination for the University Medal of Honour:

#### **Peter Sanderson**

Peter Sanderson had a successful career in banking before becoming involved in University technology transfer activity. Prior to the creation of the University in 2004, Peter was the Chairman of UMIST Ventures Ltd, a company which managed technology transfer, and the administrative management of all types of research and consultancy contracts, for UMIST. During the merger process he was necessarily involved in the discussions on how to best integrate the technology transfer activities of the two universities, which involved UMIST Ventures Ltd, and its counterpart company in the Victoria University – Manchester Innovation Ltd. An ambitious business model for the activity was required by the new University and the two predecessor companies had to be successfully integrated. Peter played a pivotal role in conceiving the new model, which eventually found expression in the UMIP company, which was different in many respects to both of its precursors. Peter was appointed Chairman of UMIP in 2004, and has served loyally in that role ever since. During that period UMIP has enjoyed considerable success, becoming widely admired as one of the most effective and professional university IP commercialisation organisations and companies in the UK and Europe, and achieving recognition by leading US offices. The company has regularly exceeded all of its business

targets, engaging more than 20% of academic staff in IP-related activity; generating a clear profit for the University on its activities, and catalysing the investment of over £160M into University spin-out companies. Peter has been directly involved in supporting the chief executive in leading the company, and especially in developing the relationship with the investment community. The high point of this process came in March 2008 when the UMIP Premier Fund was launched with external investment capital of £32M. This fund, which is unique in the UK, was first conceived as an idea by Peter in 2004. Its successful realisation 4 years later was the culmination of a superb team effort by UMIP and the University which Peter orchestrated and led, but which also required Peter to devote long hours to the detailed work of engaging with investors, lawyers, fund managers and others in making the case for this new concept. Peter's contribution as chairman of UMIP has given the University a very successful IP commercialisation operation, a very well-run and respected company in UMIP, and a unique resource in UPF, which raises the bar for all other Universities in this field. The University is rightly proud of these achievements, and is indebted to Peter for them. Peter Sanderson is highly deserving of the award of The University of Manchester's Medal of Honour.

- (b) New and amended undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes approved by Faculties on its behalf during the 2009-10 session (unless otherwise shown, the programmes will start in the 2010-11 session). Withdrawn or suspended programmes are listed for information.

### **Programme amendments**

#### **Faculty of Humanities**

*Undergraduate* **BSc (Hons) Management (Operations and Technology)** be renamed BSc (Hons) Management (Innovation, Sustainability & Entrepreneurship)

**BA (Hons) Practical Theology** - reduction in duration of degree (and consequent reduction of required credits) from 4 years to 3 years (480 credits to 360 credits)

**BA (Hons) Digital Live Arts** (*with validated partner Rose Bruford College*). Programme currently has three pathways (Performance Sound, Lighting Programming and Performance Video). Performance Video has been withdrawn due to low recruitment and the Performance Sound and Lighting Programming pathways are to become stand-alone BA programmes.

*Postgraduate* **MSc Human Resources for International Development: Human Resource Management and Development by Distance Learning** – change of title to MSc Human Resource Management & Development (International Development)

**MBA: Global Masters in Business Administration** – MBS to integrate eight current stand-alone programmes under the Global MBA 'umbrella' with MBS WW to become a single Global MBA with seven distinct streams.

**MSc in Executive Management** - addition of a PG Cert in Executive Management (Sports Management) pathway

**MSc Operations, Project & Supply Chain Management** - one compulsory unit in the 1st semester will be discontinued but will be



retained as an elective, and one additional elective will be added to the 1st semester and one to the 2nd semester.

**Programme withdrawals or suspensions**

**Faculty of Humanities** BSc (Hons) Management (Decision Science)  
 BSc (Hons) Management (Operations & Technology) be withdrawn and renamed BSc (Hons) Management (Innovation, Sustainability & Entrepreneurship)  
 BA (Hons) Management & Information Systems  
 BA (Hons) Education  
 BA (Hons) Islamic Studies & Muslim Societies – *programme has been suspended and not fully withdrawn*  
 BA (Hons) American & Latin American Studies  
 MA Theology, Culture & Society  
 MA in Counselling (non-accredited)  
 Master of Public Administration – *programme has been suspended and not fully withdrawn*

**Faculty of Engineering & Physical Science** MSc BioHealth Informatics

**Faculty of Medical & Human Sciences** MSc Clinical Nursing

**10. Any other business**

There was no other business.