

Academic Committee

Wednesday 31 March 2021

at 2:00pm

Via MS Teams

<p>Present: Ex Officio Professor Geoff Smith Professor Niamh Downing Professor Castulus Kolo</p> <p>Professor Mark Alinson</p> <p>Professor Lawrence Phillips Professor Gill Stark Beverley Roberts Carl Teigh Paul Loftus <i>Vacant</i> David Eleferiou Gerry Greyling Pam Taylor Anya Nikolaeva Charlotte Davis Goldenberg</p> <p>Elected Representatives Amparo Lallana Professor Zubin Sethna <i>Vacant</i> <i>Subject to election</i></p> <p>Elise Goodman</p>	<p>Vice-Chancellor & CEO (Chair) Provost & Deputy Vice-Chancellor President, Macromedia University & Non-executive Board member Associate Provost & Head of Academic and Educational Development Associate Provost Associate Provost Head of Quality & Enhancement Director of Finance Director of Enrolment Management Director of Human Resources Director of Strategic Projects Director of Academic Services Head of Student Support Vice-President of the Student Union – Academic Affairs Vice-President of the Student Union – Student Experience</p> <p>Academic Representative at Director level Academic Representative at Director level Academic Representative at Director level Academic Representative at Assistant Professor / Senior Lecturer level Representative for Professional Service</p>
<p>Apologies: Pascal Senn</p>	<p>President of the Student Union</p>
<p>In attendance: Richard Reger</p>	<p>Head of Governance</p>

Opening Items

1. **Welcome from the Chair**
2. The Vice-Chancellor welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed that a quorum was present. The new HR Director, Valérie De Saegher, was joining Regent's shortly

and would be present at the next meeting. Gerry Greyling's role was expanding and his new job title would be Director of Academic Services.

3. Apologies for absence

- 3.1. Apologies were received from Pascal Senn, who had stepped aside from Student Union business temporarily to stand for re-election as SU President. Anya Nikolaeva, SU Vice-President - Academic Affairs, would be presenting the regular report on his behalf.

4. Declaration of Interests

- 4.1. There were no declarations of interests.

5. Minutes of the previous meeting – 18 November 2020

- 5.1. The Committee approved the minutes as a true record of the meeting held on 18 November 2020.

6. Actions and matters arising from the previous meeting

- 6.1. The HAED had considered MS Teams as an alternative platform to Collaborate for live sessions, but had concluded that it would be disruptive to change in the middle of an academic year.
- 6.2. The HAED reported that guidance on the new Student Voice meetings had been circulated.
- 6.3. The Student Protection Plan (SPP) had been updated and was now awaiting approval from the Office for Students.

Part A: Items for Discussion and / or Approval

7. Chair's Report and Chair's Actions

- 7.1. The Committee noted the Chair had approved minor amendments to the SPP. The most pressing change was to clarify that Regent's SPP, rather than that of the validating university, covered enrolled postgraduate research students.

8. Student Matters

- 8.1. Anya Nikolaeva, SU Vice-President - Academic Affairs, introduced the quarterly report on Student Union activities. The report set out key issues tackled by each Council President at the new Student Voice meetings. She also underlined the amount of work the SU was doing with the student community to improve interactions during the pandemic, including online social and academic events. Feedback from students had shown an increase in satisfaction with online learning over the months. Regular meetings with the Associate Provosts had allowed for much faster, clearer and transparent communication between the academic side of the Student Union and teaching staff.
- 8.2. Davis Goldenberg, SU Vice-President – Student Experience, presented a list of academic and social events. The second issue of the Student Union Magazine, Babel, would be published shortly, with articles from a diverse range of students and alumni to showcase the talents of the Regent's community.

- 8.3. The student representatives raised the issue of student mental health, which had been raised at Student Voice meetings and directly with the Student Union. While they appreciated the resources that were already in place to support students struggling with mental health issues, they thought that more could be done, and suggested:
- A mental health campaign via Regent's social media to promote the use of the resources available; and
 - To ask lecturers to include some informal questions in their classes to check in with students, and ask if they are struggling with work or feel they are getting the support they need, reminding them of the resources available if they need them.
- 8.4. Pam Taylor, Head of Student Support, reported that she had met with Davis following the most recent meeting of the Learning, Teaching & Student Experience Committee, at which this issue had been raised. She welcomed the proposals, adding that the Senior Student Support & Welfare Officer, was liaising with the Communications Team to promote the use of resources for mental health. The Cause for Concern process would be promoted again, and she asked that academics should help promote the available services.
- 8.5. Anya Nikolaeva suggested that items on mental health should also appear in the student newsletter.
- 8.6. The SU had also proposed an improvement to the process for choosing elective modules, which students currently found frustrating. It was proposed that a dropdown display for all electives, showing the basic information of the module, should be included in the e-vision portal, with a clickable link to the relevant Electives Booklet. This would save time and effort and ensure that students only chose elective they were really interested in. The Committee supported the proposal.
- 8.7. The issues that some students had encountered accessing campus was discussed. Anya Nikolaeva asked if the advance notice for booking could be reduced from 48 hours to 24 hours. The FD replied that the 48 hours' notice was to allow time to ensure there were sufficient staff on campus to support the numbers of students expected. Professor Niamh Downing, Provost & DVC, reported that the issue had been discussed at the recent LT&SE Committee meeting. She had subsequently investigated and believed there might have been a misunderstanding, as bookings were not found on the booking system, but she would take this forward with James Mayes, Strategic Projects Manager.
New Action: AC 20/21 2.1 The Provost & DVC to take forward issue of student access to Campus with the Strategic Projects Manager.

9. Update on Student Recruitment

[REDACTED]

10. Update on Work Allocation Model (WAM) implementation

- 10.1. Professor Lawrence Phillips reported that the revised Work Allocation Model (WAM) was now in the detailed implementation phase. The project had begun ten months ago and

included curriculum planning, budgeting and timetabling. Specialist software from Simitive was being rolled out in April and was expected to go live in May. This had been a significant undertaking for Regent's and brought into play the new academic structure. Implementation of the revised WAM would lead to the 2021/22 timetable planning taking place much earlier than usual, with Directors of People also discussing workload with academic staff much earlier than before. The project was nearing its end and would shortly become business as usual.

10.2. Professor Niamh Downing, Provost & DVC, thanked colleagues, particularly Professor Lawrence Phillips, Gerry Greyling and Professor Zubin Sethna, for their work in such a significant undertaking.

11. Collaborative Provision

11.1. Professor Niamh Downing gave a short presentation on Regent's partnerships. The aims of partnerships included:

- Increasing staff and student mobility with partner institutions;
- Increasing Regent's reach through transnational education, working in validation, franchise and other collaborative arrangements; and
- Knowledge exchange through short term collaboration.

11.2. Partnership types included:

- Profile partnerships, to enhance the quality of Regent's academic profile and to enrich its teaching and learning;
- Commercial partnerships, which would contribute financially, including through validation or franchise partnerships; and
- Enhancement Partnerships, where working with an external institution would augment an area of teaching and learning through placements and other models.

11.3. Professor Gill Stark reported that [REDACTED] had completed a mock validation the previous day, and she considered that it would be a very rich partnership bringing benefits to students at both institutions. Niamh added that there were several other opportunities being explored within the Galileo group.

12. People Project

12.1. Professor Niamh Downing reported that the new academic structure had gone live in early January. Much work still lay ahead in fulfilling the ambitions of the project in, for example, Organisational Development, Business Process Review, mobilising Alliances and so on. A refreshed strategic plan would be launched in May, supported by a series of priority projects.

13. Review of Risk Register

13.1. The Committee noted the report and that a set of additional risks would flow from the refreshed strategy.

Part B: Items for Noting

14. Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes

- 14.1. The Committee **noted** the minutes of the following meetings:
- Senate Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee - 25 November 2020
 - Senate Student Experience Committee 2 December 2020
 - Quality Committee – 24 February 2021
- 14.2. Beverly Roberts confirmed that the Quality Team would contact Directors of Content when external examiners' contracts were nearing their end.

15. Conferment Lists

- 15.1. The Committee reviewed and **noted** the conferment lists for awards made in January. Beverly Roberts confirmed that the Quality Committee reviewed the distribution of marks for different courses and benchmarked these against HESA data. These were tracked from year to year, but not term to term. Comparisons were also carried out at the module level.

Closing Items

16. Any Other Business

- 16.1. Anya Nikolaeva commented that the timing of the next meeting was not particularly convenient for student members of the Committee, as it fell outside term time. **New Action: AC 202/21 – 2.2 Head of Governance to review the calendar of meetings with colleagues and the SU and make a recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor on the schedule of meetings of the Academic Committee.**

17. Date of next meeting

- 17.1. **Wednesday 7 July 2021 at 2.00pm**

The meeting closed at 3:30pm

Item	Action Required	Staff responsible	Due Date
New Actions:			
AC 20/21 – 2.1	The Provost & DVC to take forward issue of student access to Campus with the Strategic Projects Manager.	Provost & DVC	April 2021
AC 20/21- 2.2	Head of Governance to review the calendar of meetings with colleagues and the SU and make a recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor on the schedule of meetings of the Academic Committee.	Head of Governance	June 2021
On-going Actions:			
AC 20/21 – 1.3	The Provost & DVC to include a section on collaborative provision in the Student Protection Plan	Provost & DVC	July 2021
Closed Actions since the last meeting:			
AC 20/21 – 1.1	The HAED to consider MS Teams as an alternative platform to Collaborate for live sessions.	HAED	December 2020
AC 20/21 – 1.2	The HAED will prepare guidance on how the new Student Voice meetings should be managed.	HAED	December 2020