

# UNIVERSITY OF BATH

## EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW OF SENATE 2012/13

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An effectiveness review is undertaken of Senate and its committees normally every three years. This report summarises the review undertaken in 2012/13.

The principal finding was that Senate could continue to be assured of its effectiveness having regard to assessment of the four key effectiveness factors identified by Senate and other relevant good practice.

### REPORT

#### 1. Background

1.1 The Committee of University Chairs (CUC) Governance Code of Practice states that the governing body of the University (i.e. Council) will ensure that an effectiveness review is undertaken of the senate/academic board and its committees.

1.2 This full review of the effectiveness of Senate was commissioned by Senate on 5th December 2012. This is in accordance with the timescale previously set by Senate (i.e. at three year intervals, the extent of review (i.e. interim or full) to be alternated).

1.3 The next effectiveness review of Senate will be conducted during 2015/16 and will be an interim review.

#### 2. Scope of the Review

2.1 The review investigated four key effectiveness factors as identified by Senate. Firstly, on the effectiveness of the membership of Senate, the review identified scope for broadening the membership of Senate and enhancing the induction process for new members.

2.2 Secondly, the effectiveness of the operation of Senate was one of the aspects of review which generated the most interest and discussion. Recommendations were agreed for further enhancing the arrangements for meetings and addressing the issue of constructive challenge and debate at Senate.

2.3 Thirdly, the effectiveness of processes within the remit of Senate was explored. The processes within the remit of Senate were found to be effective. The sole recommendation agreed was in respect of the arrangements for members of Council elected by Senate or Academic Assembly who were subsequently appointed as ProVice-Chancellor or Dean.

2.4 The final aspect of the review considered the effectiveness of information and communication. It identified scope for improved presentation of information to Senate and more effective communication both from and to Senate.

#### 3. Process

3.1 Members of Senate were invited to complete an electronic survey on 13th February 2013. The deadline for response was 8th March 2013. 22 responses from 41 Senate members were received.

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3.2 The arrangements for the consultation with key stakeholders were:

- an article on the website of the University published on 18th February 2013. This invited submission of comments by 8th March 2013. 1 response was received;
- e-mails inviting comments from Chairs of Senate and Joint Council/Senate Committees, Associate Deans, Heads of Department, Directors of Studies, Directors of Administration, recent former members of Senate and those who regularly attend meetings of Senate. 7 responses were received;
- four focus groups were held for the different categories of members of Senate and those who regularly attend meetings of Senate. Between three and seven people attended each.

### **4. Recommendations**

The implementation plan for the recommendations, as submitted to Council, is at the Appendix.

Professor Chris Jennison

Chair of Effectiveness Review of Senate

## APPENDIX

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| <b>PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS<br/>OF EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW GROUP APPROVED BY SENATE</b> |
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| ACTION   | ACTION BY           | TARGET FOR COMPLETION |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------|
| <p><b>Recommendation 1</b><br/>To review membership of Senate</p> <p>i) nominations be encouraged by Deans (for the Professoriate vacancies) and the Chair of Academic Assembly (for the Academic Assembly vacancies) from under-represented academic disciplines and/or members of the Education and Research Job Family for election to the vacancies from 1st August 2014.</p> <p>ii) Add Chair of the Programmes and Partnerships Approval Committee as an ex-officio member of Senate (add to Ordinance 9.3).</p> | Secretary to Senate | 2013/14               |
| <p><b>Recommendation 2</b><br/>To enhance the induction process</p> <p>i) Offer a review session for each cohort of new members of Senate to establish how they are progressing after six months;</p> <p>ii) Add a summary on Senate Committees and on academic departments to the induction pack to provide links to further background context for new members.</p>  | Secretary to Senate | 2013/14               |
|  | Secretary to        | 2013/14               |

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| <p><b>Recommendation 3</b><br/>To ensure effective membership of Committees</p> <p>i) Encourage members of Senate to stand for election to committees.</p> | Senate |  |
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| <p><b>Recommendation 4</b><br/>To ensure Senate meetings are fit for purpose</p> <p>i) Invite guest presenters to be present at the meeting or summon them to attend at the appropriate time;<br/>ii) Flag the main items for discussion on the agenda;<br/>iii) Submit a forward programme of anticipated business to the October meeting of Senate to provide the opportunity to discuss and influence forward business planning; iv) Send an e-mail request for agenda items for Senate to all members of Senate in advance of each meeting.</p> | Secretary to Senate | 2013/14 |
| <p><b>Recommendation 5</b><br/>To encourage debate at meetings of Senate</p> <p>i) Consider means of encouraging debate and providing members of Senate with the opportunity to contribute to major issues at an earlier stage.</p>   | VC                  |         |



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| <p>ii) Provide documents on the LMF as a single PDF for download rather than a series of PDF documents;<br/>         iii) Investigate the possibility of providing the minutes of previous meetings of Senate on the Learning Materials Filestore for reference by members of Senate.</p>   | <p>Secretary to Senate</p> | <p>2013/14</p> |
| <p><b>Recommendation 8</b><br/>         To improve communication to and from Senate</p> <p>i) Circulate the Vice-Chancellor’s Report to Senate to all staff for information after each meeting;<br/>         ii) Ensure more timely formal notification of decisions of Senate setting out the next steps for implementation by actions including the following as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- continuation of the web summary of the meeting on the home page;</li> <li>- a general e-mail to members of Academic Assembly to raise awareness of the decisions;</li> <li>- an e-mail to those responsible for implementing decisions.</li> </ul> | <p>Secretary to Senate</p> | <p>2013/14</p> |