

## **Report from the meeting of Senate held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020**

### **1. Principal and Vice Chancellor's and Executive Board Report**

Senate received a report from the Principal and Vice Chancellor and Executive Board to update members on substantive items considered by the Executive Board since the last meeting of Senate.

It was raised that in light of the diverging approaches of the Scottish and Westminster Governments in relation to Covid-19, specific advice was required for GCU London students and staff. Senate was advised that this was due to be discussed at the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee and thereafter further information and guidance would be issued.

### **2. Response to Covid 19**

The Chief Operating Officer advised that the student asymptomatic testing centre had opened on the Glasgow campus earlier in the week. This employed 73 people, 52 of whom were GCU students, including a significant proportion of nursing students. There had been a good take up of appointments and the centre was due to remain open until 12th December, however arrangements could be made in advance, for students who required testing after this date. In line with the Common Good mission, the University was also providing testing for students at the Conservatoire, and the City of Glasgow and Kelvin Colleges. Arrangements had also been made with a partner institution, for asymptomatic testing for GCU London students. Information was awaited from the Government on the testing of students returning after the break, and students and staff would be kept updated as appropriate.

### **3. Going Digital Evaluation**

Senate received an update from the Director of Academic Development and Student Learning, on the evaluation of the GCU Going Digital Framework. There had been a 20% response rate to the student survey, and the overall satisfaction rate for first year students was 77%. This high level of satisfaction was attributed to first year students' acceptance of on line teaching and learning, whereby students in other years had previous years' face to face teaching to compare to. The positive feedback from first year students was welcomed, and it was acknowledged that it was important to ensure that feedback was followed up on. It was observed that there were high levels of anxiety amongst students, and the importance of regular and timely communication was stressed. This view was reiterated by student members. The details of a staff survey were being finalised. The recently received very positive ELIR Early Draft Outcome report included a recommendation relating to the development of blended learning, and this aligned with the work already underway via the Going Digital Framework.

### **4. Assessment Guidance**

Senate noted proposed minor changes to the to the approach for assessments for Trimester A 2020-2021. These minor changes had been developed to support a consistent approach to assessments, whilst allowing for discipline-specific requirements to be met. The adaptations had been proposed following feedback from staff, students and Students Association in relation to the Tri B and Tri C 2019-20 assessment periods and through academic planning discussions for Session 2020-21. In particular, the proposed changes allowed additional time for all students undertaking online examinations, in order to allow time to upload answers and other relevant materials associated with the assessment. There was scope for differing arrangements for different assessments, and arrangements would be clearly communicated to students.

## **5. Preparation for Trimester B**

Plans for Tri B would echo those for Tri A and would be reviewed regularly in line with public health guidance for both Glasgow and London. It was anticipated that there would be more on campus activity to accommodate those modules that that could not be deferred or delivered online. As such, a cautious, risk based phased return was planned and this would be undertaken in consultation with the Trade Unions and Students' Association. This would include safe study spaces for students and staff on campus and there would be additional infrastructure investment to support this. Overall, feedback on the approach taken by the University continued to be positive, and the approach would continue to take account of lessons learned and feedback received. The cautious approach was welcomed by Senate, and it was raised by a Senator who was also a Trade Union representative, that the University's approach was one of the best examples in the sector. The collegiate approach of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee was also commended.

## **6. Enhancement Led Institutional Review**

The DVC (LTSE) reported that the Early Draft Outcome Report stated that the University had effective arrangements for managing academic standards and the student learning experience. This was a positive judgement, which meant the University met sector expectations in securing the academic standards of its awards and enhancing the quality of the student learning experience it provides, currently and into the future. This judgement confirmed there could be public confidence in the University's awards and in the quality of the learning experience it provides for its students.

In particular, the Early Draft Outcome Report highlighted five areas for commendation:

- The institutional approach to articulating and implementing strategy;
- Student Experience Action Plans
- Student partnership;
- Strategic approach to widening participation; and
- Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion.

The University was asked to consider recommendations in four areas:

- Feedback on assessment;
- Streamlining quality assurance and enhancement processes;
- Supporting the development of a blended student experience; and
- Communication of policy/approach,

and it was noted that these were issues that the University had already been looking at.

Senate welcomed the very positive ELIR outcome and commended the DVC (LTSE), the Head of Academic Quality, staff in the Department of Academic Quality, the Student President and all staff and students who contributed to the ELIR, for their role in achieving the excellent outcome, especially in light of the current circumstances. In particular, the excellent collaborative working between the University and the Students' Association was welcomed, and it was noted that this had been highlighted by the ELIR panel. The final report, once received, would be made available to staff.

## **7. Reports from Standing Committees**

Senate noted reports from the following standing committees: -

- Academic Policy and Practice Committee 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020
- University Research Committee 18 November 2020
- International Committee held on 5 November 2020

- Glasgow School for Business and Society held on 14 October 2020
- The School of Computing Engineering and the Built Environment held on 29 October 2020
- The School of Health and Life Sciences held on 9 October 2020

#### **8. School Board Terms of Reference**

Senate approved minor amendments to the Terms of Reference of School Boards to cover

- Updates in relation to role titles and School Research Committee title
- Specific reference to quoracy; and
- Minor typographical amendments.

#### **9. Minor Procedural Amendments to the, 'Terms of Reference and Standard Operations of Progression and Award Boards and Associated Groups.'**

Senate approved some minor procedural amendments to the Terms of Reference and Standard Operations of Progression and Award Boards and Associated Groups, to ensure that all progression and award boards and associated activity would be paperless from 2020/21 onwards.

#### **10. Research Degrees Committee**

Senate approved the award of 1 PhD and 1 MPhil.

#### **11. Professional Recognition of Teaching and Supporting Learning**

Senate received the annual update on staff achieving professional recognition as part of the University's KPI for 75% of staff to hold higher level qualifications including professional recognition of teaching. The Chair expressed Senate's congratulations to all colleagues on their achievements, and in particular to the Student President who had achieved Associate Fellowship.

#### **12. Other Matters Noted/Received for Information.**

- Honorary Appointments.
- Recent academic staff appointments.
- The confirmed minutes of International Committee held on 11 June 2020.
- The confirmed minutes of the School of Health and Life Sciences School Board held on 8 April 2020.
- The summary report from the meeting of University Court held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2020
- The updated Senate membership for session 2020/21 to include newly elected student members.

**Date of the next scheduled meeting of Senate is Wednesday 24 February 2021**