

UNIVERSITY SENATE

Minutes of the meeting held on 16th March 2018

Present: Dr T Boutaleb, Prof I Cameron, Prof. C Donaldson, Mr J England, Dr M Ferguson, Dr H Gallagher, Prof. P Gillies (Chair), Dr A Grant, Prof. T Hilton Ms J Hulme, Mr T Kilpatrick, Dr D Lukic, Dr J McCallum, Mr B McConville, Prof. S McMeekin, Mr A Middleton, Prof. J Miller, Mr V McKay, Dr S Ogden, Dr A Pierotti, Mr B Pillans, Prof A Simmers, Mr B Smith, Prof. V Webster and Ms S Wilson.

Apologies: Ms J Campbell, Mr K Campbell, Dr D Chalmers, Mr M Gallagher, Dr J Gregersen-Hermans, Mrs C Hulsen, Mr A Killick Miss M Jorgensen, Prof. M Mannion, Dr S McChlery Dr C Miller, Miss D Rankin and Prof B Steves.

In Attendance: Prof A Britton, Chair of Senate Disciplinary Committee
Mr S Lopez, Academic Registrar
Ms J Main, Director of Student Life
Ms K Roden, Deputy Director of Strategy and Planning
Mr R Ruthven, Director of Library Services
Prof R Whittaker, Director Academic Quality and Development

Mrs D Donnet, Clerk to Senate

By Invitation Mrs H Brown, African Leadership College Academic Lead

Observers: Mrs L Breslin (Communication and Public Affairs), Mrs J Burns (Executive Support), Ms F Campbell (People Services), Mrs L Clark, (Governance), Mr C Fitzgerald (Communication and Public Affairs) and Dr M Williams (SHLS).

Chairs Opening Remarks

Following the postponement of Senate scheduled for 2nd March due to adverse weather, the Chair thanked Senators for making arrangements to attend this meeting of Senate, which had been organised at short notice. She informed Senate that the new Chair of Court, Mr Rob Woodward, had taken up office on 6th February, and had intended to attend the meeting, he was however unable to make the rescheduled date. He was planning on attending the next meeting on 1st June 2018.

PART A (FOR CONSIDERATION)

Minutes

17.100 Received: The unconfirmed draft minutes of the meeting of Senate held 15th December 2017 (**Doc S17/24/1**).

17.101 Resolved: That the minutes be approved as an accurate record.

Matters Arising Briefing Note

17.102 Approved The Matters Arising Briefing Note (**Doc S17/26/1**).

Principal & Vice Chancellor and Executive Board Report

17.103 Considered 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 (**Doc S 17/25/1**).

17.104 Reported i. That the Principal and new Chair of Court had written jointly to the Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science, with a view to meeting her to put forward a proposal for the University to offer teacher training. The Minister had been reminded of the University's excellent HESA data, and the ground breaking work undertaken by the Caledonian Club and the Advanced Higher Hub. These demonstrated that the University was committed to looking at the whole education system and therefore was ideally placed to be a provider of teacher education. This would be a major academic development for the University, and Senate's guidance and analysis would be valuable.

ii. It was noted that the University was not involved in the strike action against changes to the USS pension that was taking place across a large number of Universities across the UK. The Principal informed Senate that she had made it clear to UUK that she was very supportive of continued discussions to find an acceptable resolution to this difficult and contentious issue.

17.105 Resolved To note the report.

Schools' Refresh

17.106 Considered A verbal update from the DVC (Academic) on the Schools' Refresh.

17.107 Reported Court and Executive Board had recently endorsed moving to wider consultation with staff on the set of proposals that had emerged as a result of the initial consultation in Schools about the refresh. It was restated that the aim of the refresh was to re-energise and grow in order to be able to deliver the best possible student and staff experience. To facilitate the wider consultation, all relevant documents were available to staff on SharePoint.

The proposals focussed on the academic coherence and future of each academic discipline, and the substructures within Schools. There were proposals to remove a layer of management to promote greater leadership amongst staff. Increased leadership would be a cultural change within academic areas, but it linked well with the values work being undertaken.

Additionally, each School had identified areas for growth and these would be discussed further before going to Executive Board. There were all staff meetings planned for the following week and thereafter there would be a 4 week consultation period including a number of workshops. The outcome of this would then go to Executive Board before being brought to Senate.

The Principal stressed that the focus of the refresh was growth and

developing new ways of working to underpin this. The focus should be on what we do best, and how to position our offering to offer the best to students and the wider society that the University served. In order to do this quality and value must be kept to the fore, rather than making broad ranging cuts.

- 17.108 Discussed
- i. The rationale behind the refresh was welcomed by Senators. In response to a question about when firm proposals would be available for staff to consider the DVC (Academic) stressed that firm proposals would not be available until after the conclusion of the current consultation exercise. The proposals being put forward were to address the issues highlighted in the initial consultation exercise, so it was all staff led. There would be variation between each of the Schools, and it was not intended that a “one size fits all” approach would be taken.
 - ii. It was highlighted that there was variation between Schools on how widespread the results of the initial consultation had been discussed and disseminated within the Schools, and the Principal reassured Senate that there would be a report back on the initial findings made available to all relevant staff before moving on to the next phase.
- 17.109 Resolved
- The update on the Schools’ refresh was noted and it was agreed that collated reports on the outcome be circulated prior to moving onto the next phase.

Apprenticeship Update

- 17.110 Considered
- A paper updating Senate on the background and progress made on the development of Graduate and Degree Apprenticeships (**Doc S17/31/01**).
- 17.111 Reported
- By the DVC (Academic) that the Graduate and Degree Apprenticeships were a collaboration between the academic Schools and the School for Work Based Education, with the School for Engineering and the Built Environment being the primary academic School so far.
- The report outlined how the Graduate Apprenticeships (GA) operated in Scotland the Degree Apprenticeships (DA) in England, and how the University had engaged with the programme.
- GAs and DAs were an important area of growth for the University, and with campuses in both Scotland and England we were ideally placed to participate in both schemes.
- 17.112 Resolved
- To note the position

African Leadership College Partnership – Progress Update

- 17.113 Considered
- An update on the progress of the academic partnership between the African Leadership College (ALC) and the University (**Doc S17/32/1**).
- 17.114 Reported
- By the African Leadership College Academic Lead, that overall the partnership was working well and this was supported by recent student results which showed a good level of performance. The first cohort had started in January 2017, with a further cohort in January 2018 and a third cohort was due in September 2018.

More than 40 GCU staff had been involved in the delivery of programmes and had visited ALC, with very encouraging feedback being given. A new Chief Academic Officer based in ALC had started in August and had she implemented a number of positive changes.

- 17.115 Discussed
- i. In response to a question about quality assurance, Senate was advised that the University was working with ALC on quality assurance, and there were no concerns. It was noted that where possible, the ALC mirrored GCU policies and procedures, although some had to be modified to meet local requirements (e.g. data protection) and it was agreed that information on ALC policies would be circulated to Senators.
 - ii. It was noted that the update report highlighted that some students registered on the Leadership Core had left prior to entering the degree programme due to funding issues. Senate was advised that these students were mainly scholarship students and ALC had recognised this as an issue and had taken step to mitigate against this happening in future cohorts.
 - iii. It was further noted that ALC had revised downward its projected overall student numbers. Initially, ALC had planned on 10,000 students, however the University had always considered this a heavily aspirational figure, and the contract with the ALC was based on a gradual increase in numbers. Overall the African Leadership group had reviewed its growth strategy, and whilst it currently had ALC in Mauritius and another campus in Rwanda, it had agreed that there would be no additional campuses for 5 years in order to focus attention on developing its existing provision.
 - iv. Working with ALC had brought benefits to GCU by enhancing the delivery of distance learning, and developing capacity and capability in challenging circumstances. It also enabled the University to consider how technology could be used to reach the poorest communities, how learning may evolve in the future.
 - v. Whilst it was acknowledged that ALC had placed additional burdens on academic staff, the overall experience of those involved was positive, and staff were encouraged by the good marks and progression figures. Benefits also extended to GCU students, and a small group of Glasgow based students had recently spent time at the ALC and on their return had described the experiences as life changing. Additionally, a group of ALC students were currently visiting the Glasgow campus.
 - vi. The need to capture and share the positive benefits of staff and student involvement in ALC was raised. Whilst each School had ALC academic leads and information was submitted to School Boards, the need to disseminate information more widely was recognised.
- 17.116 Resolved
- a) To note the update and the positive performance of ALC students to date;
 - b) To circulate information on ALC policies to Senators; and
 - c) That more information about ALC and staff and student experiences be disseminated.

HESA Performance Indicators 2018

17.117	Considered		A report on the HESA Performance Indicators 2018 (Doc S17/34/1).
17.118	Reported	i.	<p>By the DVC (Strategy) the University performed very well in the 2018 HESA Performance Indicators in the context of the sector in Scotland and against our Strategy 2020 KPIs. Key points were:-</p> <p>Participation of under-represented groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The proportion of entrants from state school or college had been maintained at 97%, remaining well ahead of the Scottish sector average of 86.5%. <p>Degree completion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Projected degree completion at GCU had increased by 1.8% from 79.1% to 80.9%, the highest rate ever achieved by GCU, ahead of the Scottish sector average of 80.6%.• GCU is second top modern for degree completion to Robert Gordon University following an increase of 0.9% in its completion rate to 81.7%. <p>Drop-out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The University's drop-out rate improved by 1.5%, from 10.1% in 2017 to 8.6%, ahead of the Scottish sector average (9.7%). <p>Non-continuation after one year of study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• GCU's non-continuation rate for all full-time first degree entrants was 6.8%, an improvement of 2.1% compared to last year. This was the best rate achieved by GCU, ahead of the Scottish Sector average (7.5%) and the top Scottish modern university.• Non-continuation of young entrants at GCU improved by 2% to 5.9%, ahead of the sector average of 6.2%. There were improvements in the performance of mature entrants by 2.8% to 8.1%, ahead of the sector average of 11.5%.• GCU was the top performing modern University for non-continuation for both young and mature entrants, the latter signalling success in retention of articulating students.
		ii.	<p>The results had been considered by Court at its meeting the previous day and the role of academic and professional support staff in supporting students to reach these positive outcomes was acknowledged.</p>
17.119	Resolved		<p>a) Senate noted the report and welcomed the excellent results.</p> <p>b) That the results be widely disseminated amongst staff and students.</p>

Complaints Handling Procedure

17.120	Considered		An overview of complaints received by the University for the period 1 st August 2016 to 31 st July 2017 (Doc S17/27/1).
17.121	Reported		By the Clerk to Senate, that overall there had been a slight increase in the number of stage 1, frontline complaints from 108 in 2015/16 to 127 in 2016/17. Stage 2 complaints had decreased from 17 in 2015/16 to 11 in 2016/17.

17.122 Discussed It was noted that some stage 2 complaints were very complex requiring extensive input from colleagues in Schools and professional support departments, and in particular the role of Department of Governance in managing complex complaints was acknowledged.

17.123 Resolved To note
a) The report
b) That data from the report would be published on the University website and that the report would be submitted to the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman.

Senate Disciplinary Committee: Session 2016/17 Overview

17.124 Considered An overview of disciplinary offences considered under the Code of Student Conduct during the period 1st August 2016 to 31st July 2017 (**Doc S17/28/1**).

17.125 Reported i. By the Chair of the Senate Disciplinary Committee that there had been an increase in the number of alleged disciplinary offences from 34 in 2015/16 to 52 in 2016/17. Procedures had been reviewed and streamlined, which meant that cases relating to minor technical examination infringements were now dealt with via a letter of guidance, and this allowed the Senate Disciplinary Committee (SDC) to focus on more serious cases.

ii. 33 cases had been referred to the SDC for consideration. Some cases were complex and involved significant engagement with the referring department, the student and external organisations. In relation to allegations involving criminal investigations, the University followed guidance issued by UUK and Pinsent Mason to ensure that all parties involved were supported as appropriate.

17.126 Resolved To note the report and thank the Chair of SDC and those involved in implementing the Code of Student Conduct.

PART B (FOR FORMAL APPROVAL)

Confirmed Awards from the Research Degrees Committee

17.127 Approved The award of the following degrees from the Higher Degrees Committee. (**Doc S17/19/1**):-

7 PhDs
1 Prof D

Honorary Appointments

17.128 Approved The following honorary appointments awarded by the University Executive Board:

Title	Post	Field of expertise	School
Mr Andrew Lowndes	Honorary Lecturer	Playlist for Life	SHLS
Prof John Craft	Emeritus Chair	Human health/disease & environmental pollutants	SHLS
Dr Iain Wallace, Jonathan Mark Barber, Graham Ellis, Roy Scott, Eamonn Brankin	Honorary Professors	Primary & secondary care, medicine & surgery, long term condition management	SHLS
Prof Alex Clark	Visiting Professor	Nursing	SHLS
Dr Matthew Buman	Visiting Senior Research Fellow	Citizen science & lifestyle behaviours research	SHLS
Associate Prof Mark Davis	Visiting Reader	Public health	SHLS

University Assessment Regulations Working Group

- 17.129 Received Recommendations and updates from the University Assessment Regulations Working Group (Doc APPC17/28/02).
- 17.130 Reported By the Dean of the School of Health and Life Science and Chair of Assessment Regulations Working Group (ARWG), that the work plan for the ARWG had been approved by Senate in June 2017. Each of the proposals had been discussed in detail by the Academic Policy and Practice Committee (APPC) and revisions made, where appropriate, to take account of APPC feedback.
- 17.131 Considered Threshold Minimum Marks
- Senate at its meeting on 2nd June 2017 had approved the re-introduction, no later than 2018/19, of threshold minimum marks for all elements of assessment. Following discussion between the Chair of ARWG and the DVC (Academic), an incremental approach to the implementation of threshold minimum marks for all elements of assessment had been proposed. This would commence in September 2018 for SCQF Level 7 and SQCF Level 11 modules. In subsequent years, the roll out would cover SCQF Levels 8 – 10, incrementally (1 level per year) until steady state is achieved. This approach allows the majority of currently registered students to complete their programme of study using the set of Assessment Regulations in force at the commencement of their programme of study. There would be some exceptions and these were identified in the report
- 17.132 Resolved a) That threshold minimums be introduced for new students only, with

new module codes generated for those modules requiring amendments; and

- b) The Academic Registrar undertakes a process review to avoid the need for full workflow submission for these modules.

17.133 Noted

Generic Award Titles

Generic Award titles were last approved by Academic Policy Committee (APC) in 2011 and School Boards had been asked to consider the on-going relevance of titles, to ensure that they remained fit for purpose and meaningful for students and prospective employers. Feedback was being collated from Schools and any proposed amendments would be submitted for consideration and endorsement at a future meeting of APPC prior to submission to Senate for approval.

17.134 Noted

Extra Time for International Students

Following a request from the PVC (International), the ARWG had reviewed the decision made by APC in June 2014, to remove additional examination time for international students for whom English was a second language. A sector review highlighted that only 1 of 27 HE Institutions currently provided additional time and therefore GCU was currently in line with sector norms. APPC had therefore agreed that there be no change to the current position.

17.135 Considered

Amendment to Operation of Assessment Boards

At present, the normal convention, with few exceptions, was that every student was verbally presented at the Assessment Board. This, however, was not a compulsory requirement of current regulations/policies. There were concerns that presenting every student did not leave sufficient time for a full academic discussion around complex cases. It was therefore proposed that all students who have a recommended pass/proceed decision code be presented to an Assessment Board as given and without discussion. Full discussion would still take place at pre-board, and there would remain the opportunity for any student to be discussed at Assessment Board if required or if they had not been presented at pre-board. It was noted that this highlighted the importance of the pre-board and the need for that to be quorate.

17.136 Resolved i.

To implement for academic session 2018/19 that the Terms of Reference and Operations of Assessment Boards is updated, as detailed in Appendix 3 of the report, to explicitly allow for:

- a) All students who had a recommended pass/proceed decision code (C class FRP) to be presented to an Assessment Board as given, without the need to go through each individual student.
- b) All other cases, including Awards (A), Resits/Deferrals (R) and withdrawals (L) must be presented student by student, where their recommended outcome is confirmed on an individual basis.

Requirements for bulk presentation of C-coded recommendations:

- c) All students, irrespective of their recommended decision, must have been considered on an individual basis at a Pre-Board. The Programme Leader must confirm to the Assessment Board that this

has taken place. Where a student has not been considered in this manner at a pre-board then they must be presented in an individual manner at the main board meeting.

- d) All profiles being presented at an Assessment Board must be physically presented at the meeting. Any member of the Assessment Board may request that a student, whose decision is due to be presented as tabled, to be considered on an individual basis, where they believe there are valid reasons
- e) The chair, external examiner and Registry Representative to be provided with a full set of printed profiles for ALL students at the main assessment board.

ii. The ARWG to review the operation of pre-boards.

17.137 Noted

Applicability of Assessment Regulations for Non-Standard Entrants

The ARWG established a short life working group to consider the applicability of the Assessment Regulations on students studying on non-standard start times. 14% of students were “non-standard” and this impacted on a quarter of Assessment Boards. Review of the issues highlighted that it was not the Assessment Regulations per se that could be problematic, but the timing of the operating cycle and the implementation of the Regulations, especially in relation to re-sits and the resubmission of failed coursework. The ARWG had recommended Registry review the assessment cycle calendar and impact on non-standard start dates. This would include a review of the re-sit assessment cycle expectations for non-standard start students. Appendix 4 of the report discussed a more flexible approach to relation to re-sits and the resubmission of failed coursework. The outcome of the review would be submitted to APPC and Senate as appropriate.

17.138 Considered

Current Honours Classification and Profiling Regulations

Due to concerns about potential inconsistencies and lack of clarity around Honours Degree Classifications, at the request of the DVC (Academic) a short life working group was established. Whilst the review confirmed that the Assessment Regulations were clear and fit for purpose on this matter, it was acknowledged, however, that profiling examples which used to be included in older versions of the regulations provided a suitable point of reference. The Group therefore recommend that these be reinstated in the regulations. Additionally, confirmation around exceptions to the standard regulations was required and that a further review be held to consider reducing the boundary limit from 3% to 1%.

17.139 Resolved

- a) That some minor textual updates are added to Section 19 of the Undergraduate Assessment Regulations (Appendix 5a) including the addition of the ‘Examples of Compensation, Merit, Distinction and Honours Profiling’ and minor changes to the Exceptions Committee form (Appendix 5a)
- b) That Programme Boards be contacted to confirm any exceptions to standard regulations and to ensure that these provide sufficient detail with respect to the classification and profiling mechanisms in force.
- c) That a review of the current 3% boundary be undertaken with respect to Honours profiling calculations, and whether it would be appropriate to consider reducing the boundary limit to 1%.

- 17.143 Noted
- i. That the ARWG work was ongoing in relation to
 - Project and Dissertation Supervision; and
 - Assessment Preparation Guidance for Academic Staff
 and it was expected that a report on these would be submitted to the June meeting of Senate.
 - ii. The Chair expressed thanks to the Chair and members of the ARWG for their continued work.

Senate Disciplinary Committee Membership

- 17.144 Approved The appointment of the following academic staff members to the Senate Disciplinary Committee.

Mrs Frances MacInnes	SHLS	for a period of 3 years
Prof. Agnieszka Klemm	SEBE	for a period of 1 year to cover secondment of Prof. Caroline Parker

Senate and Standing Committee Calendar of Meetings 2018/19

17. 145 Approved The proposed calendar of meetings for Senate and Standing Committees for Session 2018/19 (**Doc S17/33/1**).

PART C (FOR INFORMATION)

Academic Appointments

17. 146 Received A paper on academic appointments made since the last meeting of Senate. (**Doc S17/30/1**)

Minutes of Academic Policy and Practice Committee

17. 147 Received The confirmed minutes of the meeting of the Academic Policy and Practice Committee held on 15th November 2017 (**Doc APC17/27/1**).

Minutes of University Research Degrees Committee

- 17.148 Received The confirmed minute of the meeting of the University Research Committee held on 22nd November 2017 (**Doc REC17/18/01**).

Minutes of International Committee

17. 149 Received The confirmed minute of the meetings of the International Committee held on 29th November 2017 (**Doc IC17/27/1**).

Minutes of School Boards

- 17.150 Received The confirmed minutes from the under noted meetings of School Boards:-

School of Engineering and the Built Environment
10th October 2017 (**Doc EBESB17/01/14**)

School of Health and Life Sciences
6th December 2017 (**Doc HLS/SB/17/025**)

GCU London

22nd November 201 (Doc GCUL/SB/17/11)

Glasgow School for Business and Society

25th January 2017 (Doc GSBS/SB/16/04/01)

3rd May 2017 (Doc GSBS/SB/16/05/04)

21st June 2017 (Doc GSBS/SB/17/01/02)

Date of Next meeting

The next scheduled meeting of University Senate will be held on Friday 1st June 2018 at 09:30 Hrs in CEE06/07.

Chair's Closing remarks

The Chair advised that Professor Tony Hilton, Dean of the Glasgow School for Business and Society, would be leaving the University at the end of April to take up a new role of Head of the University of Brighton Business School. On behalf of Senate, the Principal thanked Professor Hilton for her contribution to the work of the University and wished her well in her new role.