UNIVERSITY SENATE

Minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 6 July 2020

Present:	Dr T Boutaleb, Ms S Docherty, Dr S Dolan, Professor C Donaldson, Dr M Ferguson, Professor P Gillies (Chair), Ms J Hulme, Dr C Khamisha, Professor J Lennon, Dr S Lodge, Professor G Loffler, Dr D Lukic, Mr T McAlear, Professor J McCallum, Dr B McConville, Dr K McPherson Professor M Mannion, Mrs W Mazzucco, Dr C Miller, Professor J Miller, Professor A Nelson, Dr S Ogden, Dr A Pierotti, Mr B Smith, Professor S Smith, Professor B Steves, Dr K Thomson, Dr M Tong, Professor V Webster and Professor B Wood.
Apologies:	Professor A Britton, Dr D Chalmers, Mr N Clark, Mr J England, Mr D Halliday, Professor A Morgan, Ms K Mumme
In Attendance:	Mr M Anderson, Director of Research & Innovation Ms F Campbell, Director of People Mc C Hulsen, Director of Strategy and Planning, Mr S Lopez, Academic Registrar Ms J Main, Director of Student Life Mrs S Mitchell, COO Mr R Ruthven, Director of Library Services Mrs D Donnet, Clerk to Senate
By Invitation	Professor A Robertson, Director of Academic Development and Student Learning
Observers:	Mrs E Anderson (Executive Support), Ms J Anderson (Registry), Dr S Blumenthal (SHLS), Dr J Butcher (BIO), Mrs C Clark (Executive Support), Mrs N Cook (Comms), Mr C Fitch (Lay Governor), Mrs E Fry (Executive Support), Dr K Fryer (Management), Dr G Hunter (BIO), Professor S Hunter (SHLS), Miss L Johnson (Executive Support), Mr I Kerr (Lay Governor), Mrs L McGinley (Governance), Dr C Milligan (Academic Development), Ms F Mohammed (Computing), Dr A O'Hagan (Sociology), Mr A Rahoo (Students' Association), Professor A Simmers (SHLS), Dr M Williams (SHLS), Mr R Woodward (Chair of Court)

Chairs Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone to the extraordinary meeting of Senate.

PART A (FOR CONSIDERATION)

Update on Progression & Award Boards

19.179	Noted	A verbal update from the Academic Registrar on Progression and Awards Boards (PABs). Senate was reminded that additional time was provided to module and programme teams to review module and individual student profiles, and this proved to be a worthwhile move. Module leaders were asked to compare Tri B

results with those of up to the last three years, and in the overwhelming majority of cases the results were comparative, and only six requests for normalisation were made to the DVC (Learning Teaching and Student Experience). Whilst some students deferred assessments, particularly dissertations or projects, most did not. The virtual PABs all ran smoothly with positive feedback from external examiners on the University's response to the covid-19 pandemic. There would be a review and enhancement of the virtual process, one benefit of which was a saving of around 150,000 sheets of paper and removing the need for circa 4.5k signatures. The usual analysis of student performance and progression data was underway by Strategy and Planning, and this would be presented to the next scheduled meeting of Senate.

GCU Going Digital – GCU Going Digital Framework

19.180	Considered	The updated overarching GCU Going Digital Framework (**Doc S19/73/1**), that had been revised to take account of the feedback and clarification requested by Senate at its meeting on 8th June 2020
19.181	Reported	By the Director of Academic Development and Student Learning that the Framework would support the University during the transition to online delivery for Trimester A, and an enhanced blended approach thereafter. The paper outlined a range of pedagogical principles and the enabling pillars that collectively provide a holistic approach for implementing the GCU Going Digital Framework.

19.182   Discussed

The updated report was welcomed by Senate. The following issues were raised in discussion:

- Concern that the language was too definitive, and whilst it was accepted that Tri A would predominantly be delivered on line, the framework should have scope for this to be reviewed and amended for Tri B onwards if circumstances and guidelines supported that;
- The importance of the personalisation of the student experience;
- Issues in relation to the operationalisation of the framework and the resources required to enable that;
- Guidance around what would be delivered synchronously and asynchronously, and the need to ensure that student engagement was not impacted and students were active participants rather than observers;
- Clarity around e-portfolios, especially in the case of SHSL students who may have NHS e-portfolios; and
- The need to include workplace learning and practice placement, and input from providers

It was clarified that everything timetabled as a lecture would be delivered online in Tri A, and this would free up space for essential on-campus activity, and that separate guidance was being prepared, in conjunction with the Trade Unions, around issues relating to the recording of lectures.

19.184   Agreed

To endorse the GCU Going Digital Framework subject to the inclusion of amendments taking account of the issues raised and clarifications provided at the meeting.

GCU Going Digital – GCU Going Digital Pillar 1: Guidelines for Quality and Standards of Digital Learning

19.185   Considered

A paper from the DVC (Learning Teaching and Student Experience), that set out guidelines for the first GCU Going Digital Enabling Pillar: Guidelines for Quality and Standards of Digital Learning **(Doc S19/74/1)**.

19.186	Reported	By the Director of Academic Development and Student Learning that this enabling pillar comprised of:

- Academic Quality considerations;
- A set of baseline digital learning standards for all taught provision at the University along with illustrative examples of enhanced and leading practice;
- A common GCU Learn module structure template that used the new Blackboard Ultra format; and
- Suggested Module-Level Accessibility Statement

Staff were highly recommended to use this guidance in conjunction with the range of other resources developed for staff to adapt modules for online and blended delivery. The document had been circulated to academic staff on 18th June for feedback.

19.187	Discussed	Further clarity on the what was considered mandatory and what was optional was requested, as was whether directed reading should count towards contact hours.

19.188	Agreed	To endorse the GCU Going Digital Enabling Pillar: Guidelines for Quality and Standards of Digital Learning subject to consideration of the issues raised in discussion.

GCU Going Digital – GCU Going Digital Pillar 3: Supporting our Students to Learn Online

19.189	Considered	A report from the DVC (Learning Teaching and Student Experience) on the student academic development and support framework being developed to support students to engage with their studies and benefit their online learning experience. (**Doc S19/75/1**)

19.190	Reported	By the Director of Academic Development and Student Learning, that this was in the early stages of development, and five distinct areas of the student online learning experience had been identified. Initial discussions had identified a range of resources/ learning objects currently available or in development within individual Schools that could be used to contribute to a University wide 'toolkit' for supporting students to learn online, and that even when a full return to campus was implemented, the principles within this pillar would still apply. The ongoing development of this pillar would be taken forward by a working group of stakeholders across the University, including the Students' Association.

19.191	Discussed	The following issues were raised in discussion:-

- The need to have clear information, for both staff and students, about the minimum internet requirements to provide/undertake online learning, together with information on support if staff/students did not have this (this to be included in a pre-semester checklist for students);
- It was important to ensure that students had access to appropriate equipment, and a suitable environment to study in, and it was noted this was currently being explored within the University;
- Clear pathways for raising and escalating problems with online learning; and
- The need to assess students' individual digital capabilities.

19.192	Agreed	To note the report and the feedback provided, and that an updated report on this would be submitted to Senate in due course.

GCU Going Digital – GCU Going Digital Pillar 4: Draft Evaluation Strategy

19.193	Considered	A report from the DVC (Learning Teaching and Student Experience) on GCU Going Digital Pillar 4: Draft Evaluation Strategy (**S19/76/1**)
19.194	Reported	By the Director of Academic Development and Student Learning, that evaluation was a key element of the Going Digital Framework and that it would allow the University to evaluate its efficacy and provide evidence to inform future decision. It was proposed that the evaluation would adhere to a set of five guiding principles and five strands.
19.195	Discussed	It was considered that Tri C was too late to receive interim findings and that these should be available at the end of every trimester in order to take on board feedback for the next trimester. It was also proposed that placement and workplace learning providers should be included in the evaluation.
19.196	Agreed	To note the draft evaluation framework and that the comments received would be incorporated in the final document that would be considered by Senate in due course.

Date of Next meeting

| 19.197 | Noted | That the next scheduled meeting of Senate would be changed from Friday 16 October 2020 at 9.30am to Monday 19 October 2020 to accommodate "no meeting Friday". |

Chair's Closing Remarks

The Chair reiterated her thanks expressed at the last scheduled Senate in June, to all Senators for whom this was their last meeting, and thanked all Senators for their hard work over the year.