

UNIVERSITY SENATE

Minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2022

- Present:** Professor Pamela Gillies (Chair), Dr Bipasha Ahmed, Professor Tuleen Boutaleb, Jane Burt, Fiona Campbell, Dr Karen Fryer, Professor Helen Gallagher (vice Professor Simmers) Dr Lyle Grey, Jan Hulme, Naveed Kayani, Dr Christine Khamisha, Tom McAlear, Dr Kerri McPherson, Wendy Mazzucco, Dr Ben Middleton, Professor James Miller, Professor Gordon Morison, Professor Andrea Nelson, Dr Val Ness, Dr Nadia Northway, Professor Angela O'Hagan, Dr Shirley Rate (vice Professor Lennon), Professor Alastair Robertson, Professor Carl Schaschke, Linda Shearer, Brian Smith, Professor Bonnie Steves, Dr Karen Thomson, Dr Michael Tong and Professor Bruce Wood.
- Apologies:** Professor Katrina Bannigan, Professor Iain Cameron, Professor Emad Farrag, Dr Sharon Jackson, Steven Latta, Professor John Lennon, Professor Gunter Loffler, S McLean, Jodie Murdoch, Professor Ole Pahl, Dr Adrian Pierotti, Professor Anita Simmers, Professor Shelia Smith, Laiba Tareen and Dr Omair Uthmani.
- In Attendance:** Claire Hulsen, Director of Strategy, Planning and Business Intelligence
Stephen Lopez, Academic Registrar
Jackie Main, Director of Student Life
Susan Mitchell, Chief Operating Officer
Robert Ruthven, Director of Library Services
- Deborah Donnet, Clerk to Senate
- Observers:** Julie Burns (Executive Support), Danny Gallagher (Lay Governor), Neena Mahal (Lay Governor), Professor Mike Mannion (Interim Director of GCU London), Lesley McGinley (Governance and Legal Services), Lizzie Reather (People Services)

Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of Senate in academic session 2022/23, and in particular new members of Senate.

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

- 1.1 The Chair informed Senate that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 8th June 2022 had been approved by prior circulation.

2. Matters Arising

2.1 Senate **noted** a report on the matters arising from the Senate meeting on 8th June 2022 and the actions taken since that meeting to address them.

2.2 The Chair extended thanks to Professor Alison Britton who had stood down as Chair of Senate Disciplinary Committee after almost 6 years. The work of the Committee benefitted from her knowledge and experience and she will continue to work with the Department of Governance and Legal Services on the review of the Code of Student Conduct.

3. Principal & Vice Chancellor and Executive Board

3.1 Senate **noted** a report from the Principal and Vice-Chancellor that provided an update on substantive items considered by the Executive Board since the last meeting of Senate.

3.2 The Chair extended her personal thanks to all staff across the University for the increased work at the start of term as a result of issues with the introduction of the new student information system. It was recognised that staff had worked very hard both to resolve the issues and to support students, and she advised that she would be writing to all staff to thank them.

3.3 Senate was updated on the work being undertaken to support students who were impacted by the accommodation crisis in Glasgow. The University was working on a number of solutions to address the immediate issue, and on a longer term basis, discussions with Glasgow City Council were underway about the supply of appropriate student accommodation.

4. Safe Return to Campus

4.1 The Chief Operating Officer reported that the Ministerial Covid Recovery Group had been wound up as had the Covid Leads' Group. Officially all Covid-19 adjustments had come to an end, and the University would be reviewing what measures the University still had in place and whether it was still preferable to keep these, taking into account the impact they had on wellbeing and the learning and teaching experience.

4.2 A meeting of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee was being arranged, and a risk assessed measured approach would continue to be taken. Consideration would also be given to the full breadth of the University's activities rather than the primary focus being on undergraduate teaching. Significant lessons had been learned over the last two years, and the University would be in a strong position to respond quickly should there be any need to reintroduce any measures.

5. Research Report 2021/2022

5.1 Senate **noted** the Research Report for 2021/2022. The report provided a summary of the quarterly and annual applications, awards, annual research income and trajectory and REF related activity, including benchmarking against the wider sector, together with summaries of research income and research degree completions.

5.2 The PVC Research informed Senate that there had been an increase in research grant applications, and research income was up by around 5% over the previous year and was on a trajectory towards Strategy 2030 ambitions. The University has received confidential feedback on the REF Units of Assessment as well as Institutional level Environment, and preparations for a REF reflection meeting was under way to consider lessons learned from our submission and process.

5.3 The Chair welcomed the positive information contained in the report and highlighted that the University's research impact was impressive given its position as a modern university.

6. Supporting Families Policy for PGR Students

- 6.1 Senate received a report that outlined that Executive Board had approved proposals to group together updated policies for Post-Graduate Research Students on maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoption leave into a new Supporting Families Policy (Research Students).
- 6.2 This new combined policy would provide information on leave (paid and unpaid), and stipend provision for those students who received a GCU studentship. In discussion it was confirmed that the policy also provided guidance on carers leave.
- 6.3 Senate **noted** the report and welcomed the introduction of the combined policy.

7. NSS Outcomes 2022

- 7.1 Senate received a report that provided an update on the NSS 2022 results. The paper outlined the performance at institution, sector, School, programme and subject levels as well as outcomes from the additional bank questions and analysis of the programmes having most impact on GCUs overall position. It was noted that the overall satisfaction rate 79%, increased by 1% since 2021, put GCU on a par with the Scottish Sector an ahead of the UK sector by +3pp. It was also noted that the University was on a par with, or above, the Scottish and UK sectors in 7 out of the 9 key NSS categories and was ahead of the Scottish and UK sectors for Learning Resources and ahead of the Scottish sector for Assessment & Feedback, and Student Voice. The University was now placed 10th in Scotland for overall satisfaction, an improvement from 12th last year.
- 7.2 The Director of Strategy, Planning and Business Intelligence informed Senate that this was the final year of the current format of the NSS but as yet, no information on the new format had been released. As data had to be supplied by the end of the month, it was hoped that information would be forthcoming in the very near future.
- 7.3 In discussion, concern was expressed that the recent issues with registration had impacted students and may have a knock on impact on overall student satisfaction. It was therefore important to make sure lessons were learned so there could be no repeat. This was acknowledged, and the need to engage with students, stakeholders and staff was highlighted. Work was underway to avoid similar issues with the next release of SIMS. It was further noted that the University had not participated in the International Student Barometer in recent years, but this was something that had been reconsidered given the increasing levels of international students and the outcomes of the ISB would be available early in Trimester B.
- 7.4 There was also discussion around the confidence level of the NSS data, and the Director of Strategy, Planning and Business Intelligence advised that this was +/-2% for the University overall, but there was variation at subject level. She agreed to circulate more detailed information on the confidence intervals to Senators after the meeting.
- 7.5 In response to a question about student numbers, Senate was informed that data on this was being finalised and would be available on GCU DASH.
- 7.6 Senate welcomed the positive results of the NSS survey and **noted** the report.

ACTION: Director of Strategy, Planning and Business Intelligence to circulate information on NSS confidence levels

8. Graduate Outcomes 2019/2020

- 8.1 Senate **noted** a report on Graduate Outcomes for 2019/2020. The paper provided a summary of the 2019/20 graduate cohort outcomes for the Scottish sector by activity, including Standard Occupational Classification, salary bands and graduate reflections. Information at Institutional and School level was included.
- 8.2 Overall, 93% of graduates were in employment and/or further study (a 3pp increase over the previous year) and the University was ahead of the Scottish sector by +3pp, and was first equal in Scotland. The percentage of GCU graduates in employment in highly skilled occupations was 79%, and the University retained its position as the Scottish modern University with the highest proportion of graduates in highly skilled occupations.

9. Annual Report on Institution-led Review of Quality and Governing Body Statement of Assurance for Academic Year 21/22, incorporating Executive Summary Report

- 9.1 Senate **noted** the Annual Report on Institution-led Review of Quality and the Governing Body Statement of Assurance that form part of the University's reporting arrangements to the Scottish Funding Council. The Governing Body Statement of Assurance was approved by Court at its meeting on 8th September 2022. The executive summary and report were submitted to the SFC on the 16th September 2022.

10. Senate Programme of Work 2022/23

- 10.1 Senate's Programme of work for 2022/23 was **noted**.

11. Sanding Committee and School Board Summary Reports

- 11.1 Senate **noted** reports from the following Standing Committees and School Boards: -
- Academic Policy and Practice Committee (APPC) held on 14th September
 - University Research Committee held on 31st August 2022
 - International Committee held on 15th September 2022
 - The Glasgow School for Business and Society held on 7th September 2022
 - School of Computing, Engineering & Built Environment held on 5th October 2022
- 11.2 In relation to the report from APPC, discussions took place about the newly introduced Fit to Sit Policy. Information on the number of applications for exceptions was requested and the PVC Learning and Teaching indicated it had been in the low 20's. He further advised that progression rates would be monitored after the Tri A assessment round. Concern was expressed about programmes with practical placements that had not been successful in applying for exemptions. It was raised that discussions would take place around the use of Fit to Sit in placements.
- 11.3 Further to the report from the GSBS School Board, the Vice Dean GSBS informed Senate that the University's MBA had been recognised as one of the best in the world in the Corporate Knights 2022 Better World MBA Rankings, ranking 18th out of 40 MBAs listed and Senate welcomed this achievement.

12. Research Degrees Committee

- 12.1. Senate approved the award of 17 PhDs, 1 PhD by previous publication and 2 Prof. Ds.

13. Merged Assessment Regulations (Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate)

- 13.1 Senate considered a paper that presented the merged and updated Assessment Regulations for Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate study. No significant changes had been made to the

regulations, but they included necessary updates to reflect changes in terminology and the replacement of the Mitigating Circumstances Policy with the new Fit to Sit Policy.

13.2 The merged Assessment Regulations had been endorsed by APPC at its meeting on the 14th September 2022. A minor change to Section 7 had subsequently been made to include explicit reference to reasonable adjustments to the maximum period of study, in line with the Equality Act 2010. Senate approved the Merged Assessment Regulations (Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate).

13.3 Senate **approved** the Merged Assessment Regulations (Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate)

14. Regulations for the Conduct of Exams

14.1 Senate **approved** the revised Regulations for the Conduct of Examinations, which had been updated to include a reference to online assessments, in line with the University's Digital Assessment Policy approved by Senate at its last meeting. The updated version also included a number of editorial changes and procedural clarifications.

15 Amendments to the Code of Student Conduct to include specific reference to Digital Assessments

15.1 In light of APPC and Senate's recent approval of the updated GCU Digital Assessment Policy (June 2022), it had been requested that specific reference to academic misconduct in digital assessments be referred to in the Code of Student Conduct to inform both staff and students on how misconduct in a digital assessment would be handled. Accordingly, Senate **approved** the inclusion of an additional section on digital assessment in the Code of Student Conduct

16. Admissions Policies

16.1 Senate considered and **approved** amendments to the following policies submitted by the Admissions and Enquiries Service for the new academic year: -

16.2 Admissions Policy: The updated policy introduced guidance on decisions of admission on the GCU programmes, the ATAS certificate for candidates applying for postgraduate study in science, technology and engineering subjects, withdrawal of offers, and changes and/or cancellations of programmes.

16.3 Criminal Convictions Policy: Full disclosure of all convictions would be required for admission on certain programmes involving interaction with children and/or vulnerable adults. A PVG Check administered by Disclosure Scotland would be required for these programmes. All applicants would be required to disclose to Academic Registrar any unspent criminal convictions received at any point after an application to study was submitted.

16.4 Contextualised Admissions Policy: The policy introduced updates in relation to the admission of applicants who apply via the Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP) and applicants who have undertaken the FOCUS West Top-Up programme or Lothians Equal Access Program for Schools (LEAPS). The policy was extended to offer Minimum Entry Requirements for Scottish domiciled students entering the University at level 1 of undergraduate, meeting one or more of the contextual factors. Scottish domiciled Care Experienced applicants entering an undergraduate degree programme at any level with a Higher National Qualification (HN), could be made an offer on reduced entry criteria.

16.5 Discussion took place on increasing pressure on student support, particularly in relation to the increasing number of international students. Whilst the University's experience was in line with others in the sector, consideration was being given English language support and additional resourcing for LDCs had been approved.

17. Outline Principles for the approval of a GCU Programme for Delivery in Foreign Language

17.1 At its previous meeting, Senate had approved a policy amendment that permitted partnerships involving teaching and assessment in a language other than English in a very specific circumstances, and subject to the condition that learning resources were back translated into English so that the University is assured of the integrity of the content. Subsequent to this, the Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, had developed a set of core principles and guidelines to cover arrangements to assure academic standards and the student learning experience.

17.1 Senate **approved** the supplementary core principles and guidelines in support of the revised policy statement allowing for the delivery in a language other than English.

18.1 Senate Composition and Membership 2022/23

18.1 Senate received the composition and updated membership for 2022/23.

18.2 In line with Senate Standing Orders, Senate **approved** the appointment of the Deputy Vice Chancellor as Vice Chair of Senate, noting that the role was currently held by Professor James Miller and following his departure from the University later in the month, Professor Mike Mannion would be Acting DVC, and therefore Vice Chair, of Senate from 24th October 2022.

19. Senate Chairs Action

19.1 Senate **homologated** Chair's Action to approve revisions to the membership of Senate Disciplinary Committee.

20. Honorary Appointments

20.1 Senate was informed that the following honorary appointments were awarded by the University Executive Board.

Post	Title	Field of Expertise	School
Emeritus Professor	Prof. Nick Hytiris	Civil Engineering	SCEBE
Honorary Research Fellow	Dr Alec Werson	Management and HRM	GSBS
Honorary Research Fellow	Dr Les Huckfield	Management and Yunus Centre	GSBS
Honorary Fellow (Renewal)	Peter Gerrard McCrossan	Allied Health Professionals	SHLS
Honorary Fellow (Renewal)	Margot Russel	Nursing	SHLS
Honorary Senior Lecturer (Renewal)	Dr Claire James	Podiatry	SHLS

21. Academic Appointments

21.1 Senate received a paper on academic appointments made since the last meeting of Senate.

22. Summary Report of Court

22.1 Senate received the summary reports of the meetings of the University Court held on:

- 16th June 2022
- 8th September 2022

23. Senate Standing Committee Composition, Membership and Terms of Reference 2022/23

23.1 Senate received the Composition, Membership and Terms of Reference for Session 2022/23 for the following Standing Committees:

- Academic Policy and Practice Committee
- University Research Committee
- The International Committee

24. SDC Membership

24.1 Senate received a note of the Senate Disciplinary Committee Membership for Session 2022/23.

25. Date of the Next Meeting

25.1 Senate noted that the date of the next meeting was Wednesday 14th December 2022.

26. Chair's Closing Remarks

26.1 The Chair expressed Senate's thanks and good wishes to Professor Gordon Morison who would be leaving the University to take up a new role in December 2022.

26.2 The Chair also expressed her warm appreciation and thanks to Professor James Miller, DVC who was leaving the University at the end of the month to become Vice Chancellor of the University of the West of Scotland.

The Principal left the meeting for the next item and Professor James Miller, Vice Chair of Senate, assumed the Chair.

27. AOCB - Professor Pamela Gillies, Emeritus Professorship

27.1 Senate **endorsed** the decision by Executive Board to appoint Professor Pamela Gillies as an Emeritus Professor in the School of Health and Life Sciences, when she steps down as Principal and Vice Chancellor at the end of the calendar year