

Report from the meeting of Senate held on 8 December 2021

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

The Principal reported the results of the Thriving Learners Survey research project, led by Universities Scotland and undertaken by The Mental Health Foundation, that had recently been published. The project focussed on higher education student experiences in Scotland, and comprised a survey of around 15,000 Scottish HE students, including almost 2,000 GCU students, administered between April and June 2021, and interviews and focus groups with people working in student mental health and wellbeing services within HEIs. The survey responses indicated a number of serious causes for concern to the sector. The GCU outcomes were largely in line with the sector average across the majority of questions and where differences existed, these may be due to the distinct demographics of the GCU population. The majority of students reported their own wellbeing as low and the general health of survey respondents in both sector data and the GCU sample was lower than the Scottish national figure for adult general health. Senate noted the results with concern and that work would continue to highlight the wellbeing and other support that was available in the University.

2. Response to Covid 19

The Chief Operating Officer reported that cases of Covid-19 within the University remained low and there had been no transmission within a learning and teaching setting. The new Omicron variant meant that the situation was changing rapidly, and the University would continue to follow Government guidelines. It was intended that the blend of online and on campus teaching would go ahead as planned for the remainder of the trimester, but that would be reviewed if guidelines were changed. Consideration was being given to plans for online and, where required on campus, exams in the new year. Staff were being strongly recommended to postpone their Christmas celebrations. A drop-in vaccine bus would be on campus on 14th December and staff and students were encouraged to attend to get required vaccinations.

The approach that the University continued to take in responding to the pandemic was welcomed by both staff and student members of Senate. It was highlighted that there appeared to be high levels of compliance regarding face coverings in a teaching setting, but less so in some other areas, and it was agreed to reinforce the messaging around this. The importance of on campus activity, especially in light of the earlier discussion on mental health, was acknowledged and the Chair reassured Senate that this was being monitored

3. Reports from Standing Committees

Senate noted reports from the following standing committees: -

- Academic Policy and Practice Committee on 3 November 2021
- University Research Committee 17 November 2021
- International Committee held on 4 November 2021
- Glasgow School for Business and Society held on 20 October 2021
- The School of Computing Engineering and the Built Environment held on 6 October 2021

4. Strategy for Learning 2030: Draft Implementation Roadmap until the end of 2022/23

Senate considered a report outlining guidance on priorities and target outcomes for learning and teaching to help inform Schools' and Services' 2022/23 operational plans, and provide an implementation roadmap for Strategy for Learning 2030 until the end of 2022/23. The roadmap had been designed to align with operational planning, and priority actions developed in consultation with stakeholders. The documentation was not intended to be prescriptive but provide guidance, and it would be reviewed and updated as required. It would be for each

School to determine their own priorities. Senate endorsed in principle the draft Strategy for Learning 2022/23 Implementation Roadmap (subject to minor amendments as raised at the meeting), with the plan being updated in early 2022 following an analysis of Schools and Services Learning and Teaching-related operational plans.

5. Student Survey Approval Process

Senate noted a paper outlining the new Student Survey Approval Process for inclusion in the University's Student Survey and Evaluation Policy. The new process had been informed by a sector review and developed in consultation with the Student Survey Working Group. The paper also highlighted amendments to the Student Survey and Module Evaluation Policy as a result of the new approval process, including additional text included in the policy covering the approval process itself as well as guidance around the process, and updates to the "Coverage" of the policy.

6. Research Degrees Committee

Senate approved the award of 2 PhDs.

7. Programme Withdrawal - Degree Apprenticeship Quantity Surveying (GCU London)

Senate approved the withdrawal of the Degree Apprenticeship Quantity Surveying (GCU London) programme. It was noted that the demand for the DA Quantity Surveying didn't materialise, despite interest from the sector, and there were no students on the programme.

8. Generic Award Proposal: Health and Social Care Studies

Senate approved a proposal to provide a generic award for post graduate students within the School of Health and Life Sciences aligned to the current Nursing and Community Health, and AHP programmes within the School. The new generic award would be at PGC and PDG level as a generic MSc was already in place.

9. Other Matters Approved/Noted/Received for Information.

- Senate and Standing Committees Calendar of Meetings 2022/23 were approved.
- The updated University Research Committee Composition and Terms of Reference 2021/22 were approved.
- Recent academic staff appointments.
- The summary report from the meeting of University Court held on 11 November 2021
- Senate received notification of Staff achieving professional recognition of teaching and supporting student learning through HEA Fellowships (UKPSF, 2011) in 2019-2020 and 2020 – 2021.

The next scheduled meeting of Senate will be held on 23rd February 2022