

UNIVERSITY SENATE

Minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2023

- Present:** Professor Steve Decent (Chair), Dr Bipasha Ahmed, Professor Babakalli Alkali, Dawn Anderson, Professor Tuleen Boutaleb, Professor Iain Cameron, Sofia Congradyova, Professor Mohamed Emad Farrag, Dr Karen Fryer, Dr Lyle Grey, Professor Christine Horrocks, Jan Hulme, Claire Hulsen, Professor Kerri McPherson, Samantha MacLean, Wendy Mazzucco, Professor Ehsan Mesbahi, Susan Mitchell, Professor Andrea Nelson, Dr Val Ness, Chidozie Nwaigwe, Professor Angela O'Hagan, Professor Ole Pahl, Dr James Paterson, Dr Mark Phillipson, Dr Shirley Rate, Professor Alastair Robertson, Dr Emmanuel Silva, Professor Anita Simmers, Brian Smith, Professor Bonnie Steves, Dr Karen Thomson, Dr Omair Uthmani, and Anita Volkert.
- Apologies:** Professor Mark Anderson, Fiona Campbell, Professor John Connolly, Dr Diane Dickson, Dr Sharon Jackson, Naveed Kayani, Dr Rob Kivits, Steven Latta, Professor John Lennon, Tom McAlear, Professor Simon McKerrell, Dr Adrian Pierotti, Louisa Richardson, Dr Laura Sweeney.
- In Attendance:** Stephen Lopez, Academic Registrar
Jackie Main, Director of Student Life
Robert Ruthven, Director of Library Services

Deborah Donnet, Clerk to Senate
- Observers:** Julie Burns (Executive Support), Judith Crocket (Strategy and Planning), Danny Gallagher (Lay Governor), Karen McMillan (Governance and Legal Services), Lizzie Reather (People Services), Fiona Rieley (Executive Support).

Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone to the second meeting of Senate in academic session 2023/24, and in particular new members of Senate, and Professor Christine Horrocks who had recently joined the University as Dean, School of Computing Engineering and Built Environment on a temporary basis whilst recruitment for the Dean role was underway.

Senate was informed that personal support had been offered to the small number of students from Gaza and Israel, and support will be informed by various upcoming meetings, including with the University Chaplains

The Chair reported that the Strategy 2030 was in the process of being reviewed. The Strategy had been launched in 2021, and it was considered that it was now appropriate to review it in the post Covid context and light of the new University leadership team. The refresh would involve collaboration with staff, students and external stakeholders and it was proposed to organise a Senate Strategy session, and further information on this would be provided in due course.

Secretary note: Senate Strategy session arranged for 18th January 2024.

Senate noted that the University had achieved its undergraduate recruitment target for the first time in several years, and the Chair extended thanks to all involved. There had been growth in key recruitment areas including SIMD 20 and Graduate Apprenticeships.

The Academic Calendar would also be reviewed this academic year and further information on this would be provided in due course.

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

1.1 The Chair informed Senate that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 7th June 2023 had been approved by prior circulation and members **approved** the minutes of the meeting of Senate held on 12th September 2023.

2. Matters Arising

2.1 Senate **noted** a report on the matters arising from the Senate meetings on 7th June 2023 and 12th September and the actions taken since those meetings to address them.

2.2 Senate received a verbal update from the PVC Learning and Teaching on the review of the Fit to Sit process. Feedback was being sought from both staff and students, and Senators were encouraged to provide any feedback they had. In discussion, the following points were raised:

- Uncertainty from students about how to submit a Fit to Sit application;
- The need to ensure that staff were advising staff correctly about Fit to Sit;
- Challenges in providing the specific module and assessment data in the current online form;
- A request to include partners, such as placement providers, in the review.

2.3 Senate noted the update and that a paper would be submitted to the December meeting of Senate.

Action: PVC L&T – Paper on Review of Fit to Sit to be submitted to December meeting of Senate.

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. In further explanation to his report, the Chair highlighted the following matters:-

- The University's positive performance in recently published league tables;
- The potential for a shift in Scottish Government HE priorities and the need for the review of the Strategy 2030 to be mindful of this;
- The need for the University to consider how it could capitalise on the UK having re-joined Horizon UK;
- Ongoing discussions with the University of Glasgow on the joint delivery of a programme that would expand access to studying medicine, with the initial three years of study being undertaken at Glasgow Caledonian and the final three years at the University of Glasgow. The discussions also covered opportunities for inter-professional learning and complementary research and there was close alignment between the two Universities. An application to the Scottish Government was being prepared and Senate would be kept informed.

3.2 In response to a question on resourcing, the Chair reported that some new posts had been released in areas of greatest need and further analysis of current student numbers and corresponding income was being undertaken, noting that student numbers were not yet finalised. It was anticipated that there would be a clear picture of student enrolments by week five and that would then help inform

discussions around staffing. Consideration of what the overall shape and size of the University should be would be a key focus of the Strategy 2030 review.

- 3.3 In response to a question about the staff/student ratio and how this may impact on international student achievement, it was acknowledged that a number of factors impacted on this including late registration and poor engagement with induction, increasing English language requirements, support for literacy and numeracy and all of these matters were being looked at.

4. Review of the impact of MAB on Student Decisions and Academic Quality – Interim Report

- 4.1 Senate considered a report on the impact of the marking and assessment boycott (MAB) that took place between 20th April and 6th September 2023, on student decisions and academic quality. The report advised that a number of mitigating measures were put in place, including the review and refreshing of existing Senate approved guidelines (as considered at Senate on 5th May 2023) for handling situations where marks were missing due to industrial action. As a result of these measures, all assessments were available to students and all associated marking was completed, and there were no missing marks due to the MAB at the Progression and Assessment Boards (PAB). Therefore, all students considered at a PAB had decisions taken on their full set of available marks. In addition, all students eligible for a classified award received a final classification and therefore all those eligible to graduate in the summer were able to do so.
- 4.2 The PVC Learning and Teaching thanked all staff, and especially Heads of Department, who undertook additional work to ensure that no students were adversely impacted as a result of the MAB. Additionally, it was reported that External Examiner reports were being reviewed as these were received, and to date no concerns relating to the maintaining of academic standards or any of the mitigations that were in place have been raised. The PAB minutes had also been reviewed, and again no concerns had been raised.
- 4.3 Senate noted the report and that a final update once all outstanding EE reports had been received would be provided at the next meeting. It was also noted that Court would be updated at its meeting in November.

5. Module Monitoring and Closing the Feedback Loop 2023/2024

- 5.1 Senate considered a report that proposed a streamlined approach for module enhancement and module evaluations for immediate implementation. The following proposals had been endorsed by Education Committee:
- Closing the Feedback Loop (CTFL) to be formally integrated into University policy relating to module quality assurance and enhancement, and in doing so, completion becomes mandatory for staff;
 - Retention of the streamlined approach to MEP reporting but raise the benchmark for all modules with less than 80% student satisfaction to complete an enhancement plan, to enhance consistency of performance across all provision;
 - Retention of the 75% benchmark for first diet pass rate for all modules and continued requirement for an enhancement plan; and
 - For all modules with 80% or more establish and/or enhance mechanisms to share good performance and practice within a programme and across departments. The Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement will establish current practice across Schools, GCU London and IU2B to establish an approach.
- 5.2 In discussion, concern was raised about the impact the proposals would have on staff workload in relation to the benefits they would bring. Further, it was commented that enhancement plans alone did not necessarily lead to increased transparency for students on changes that had been made to

modules, and there were a number of factors that were beyond the control of staff, such as student engagement, late enrolment that needed to be taken into account.

- 5.3 Accordingly, Senate requested that further work be done and that the process for Trimester A be same as in 2022/23.

Action: PVC L&T to undertake further work taking account of the points raised and refer back to Senate at a later date.

6. Generative Artificial Intelligence and Education at Glasgow Caledonian University

- 6.1 The PVC Learning and Teaching introduced a report that outlined the next stage in the University's developing approach to Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI). It was highlighted that it was a fast moving situation but it was important for the University to have a clear approach to AI in the context of ensuring Glasgow Caledonian students had appropriate awareness of and skills in AI, but that concerns relating to the use of AI in academic misconduct were appropriately signposted and addressed.
- 6.2 As such, the report proposed that the University adopt the recently published Russell Group Principles for AI and Education, adapted for the University's specific use, accompanied by a two-stage development and support programme for staff during this academic year. Additionally, two short-life working groups would be established to develop guidance for staff and students on the acceptable use of AI.
- 6.3 In discussion, it was acknowledged the University needed to embrace the appropriate use of AI and it would become more prevalent in everyday, academic and professional life. It was accepted that staff would have varying degrees of comfort around using it so it was important that there was support and guidance. It was noted that there were implications for research and research students too and this needed to be reflected in the University's approach.
- 6.4 Senate **agreed** that the University endorses the recently published Russell Group principles for AI and Education and adapts them to our specific context, and endorsed the proposed training and development priorities for staff.

Action: PVC Learning and Teaching to take forward work as outlined in the report.

7. NSS Outcomes 2023 Results Overview

- 7.1 Senate received a report that provided an update on the National Student Survey (NSS) 2023 results. The paper provided an overview of the results, and outlined a high-level summary of performance at institution, sector, School, and programme level.
- 7.2 Analysis of the quantitative data had been shared with Schools and Departments, and the open comments would be shared with each School to support their analysis of the programme level results. Key points highlighted included
- The University's response rate was 72% exceeding both the Scottish and UK response rates by +1 percentage point.
 - The University's strongest performing themes were Learning resources, Teaching on my course and Academic support, with the lowest performing themes being Student voice, Organisation and management, and Assessment and feedback.
 - The University was broadly on a par with the Scottish sector, either equalling or slightly exceeding the Scottish sector for all themes.
- 7.3 Senate welcomed the overall positive results of the NSS survey and **noted** the report.

8. NSS Outcomes 2023 – Areas for University-wide enhancement

- 8.1 Senate **noted** a report summarising the systemic priority areas for enhancement following analysis of the NSS Outcomes 2023.
- 8.2 There were three common areas for enhancement across the Schools:- Assessment and Feedback, Student Voice and Organisation and Management. For each of these themes, there was significant work in progress, at a local level, as evidenced by School action plans which were appended to the report, and at University level. Senate was reassured that the actions would be closely monitored and student feedback responded to.

9. Student Recruitment

- 9.1 Senate **noted** a report that provided an early overview of student recruitment for Trimester A 2023-24, at undergraduate and postgraduate taught levels, at early October 2023.
- 9.2 It was highlighted that home undergraduate student recruitment had been a priority focus for the University in recent months. As a result of this focussed approach, the SFC full-time non-controlled intake was above target. Further, the VP Strategy and Planning reported that there had been very strong results in recruiting to SFC controlled nursing places, Graduate Apprenticeships and from SMID 20 areas. There remained challenges in RUK and home taught postgraduate numbers, although numbers were up on the previous year. Data relating to international students remained subject to confirmation, however challenges relating to payments from a key market and changes in UK student immigration rules had impacted on overall international student numbers

10. Graduate Outcomes 2020/2021

- 10.1 Senate **noted** a report on Graduate Outcomes for 2020/2021. The paper provided a summary of the 2020/21 graduate cohort outcomes for the Scottish sector by activity, including Standard Occupational Classification, salary bands and graduate reflections. It also included Glasgow Caledonian institutional and School level information.
- 10.2 Overall the results were strong, with 91% of Glasgow Caledonian graduates in employment and/or further study and the University was ahead of the Scottish sector by +1pp, and was 6th equal in Scotland for this measure. The percentage of Glasgow Caledonian graduates in employment in highly skilled occupations was 83%, a +4pp improvement compared to the previous year and +3pp ahead of the Scottish sector. Glasgow Caledonian had the highest proportion of graduates in highly skilled occupations of a Scottish modern university.

11. Research Report Trimester C

- 11.1 Senate **noted** the Research Report for Trimester C. 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.
- 11.2 The Chair reported that there had been an external review of the University's research over the summer and a report on this would be submitted to the University Research Committee then Senate.

Action: PVC Research to submit report to Senate once it has been to University Research Committee.

12. Standing Committee and School Board Summary Reports

- 12.1 Senate **noted** reports from the following Standing Committees and School Boards: -

- Education Committee held on 13th September 2023
- University Research Committee held on 30th August 2023
- International Committee held on 14th September 2023
- The Glasgow School for Business and Society held on 12th April 2023

13. Senate Programme of Work 2023/24

13.1 Senate's Programme of work for 2023/24 was **noted**.

14. Research Degrees Committee

14.1 Senate **approved** the award of 22 PhDs, 1 PhD by previous publication and 2 Prof. Ds.

15.1 Senate Composition and Membership 2023/24

15.1 Senate received a paper informing of a proposal to change to the Senate composition to include the Director of GCU London as a Non Voting Advisor, and informing of changes in membership to take account of changes to the nominated Heads of Academic Departments for SCEBE, and elected academic staff members for GSBS and SHLS.

15.2 Senate **approved** the inclusion of the Director of GCU London in the Composition as a non-voting Advisor and the updated membership.

16. Senate Standing Committee Composition, Membership and Terms of Reference 2023/24

16.1 Senate **approved** the Terms of Reference, Composition, and Membership for Session 2023/24 of the following Standing Committees.

- Education Committee
- University Research Committee
- The International Committee

16.2 It was highlighted that the Terms of Reference for all Committees were unchanged from the previous year, and the only amendments to the Compositions were to reflect changes in role titles.

17. Senate Chair's Action

17.1 Senate **homologated** a Chair's Action to approve changes to the English Language Requirements for International Students at PGT level for 2024/2025 entry.

18. Editorial changes to the Code of Student Conduct Relating to plagiarism

18.1 Senate considered a report that proposed editorial changes to the existing code of Student Conduct. The changes were aimed at providing clarity for both staff and student and:

- Simplified the language around the definition of plagiarism;
- Included the inappropriate use of AI as an explicit breach of the Code to provide clarity to both staff and students;
- Provided further information, reflecting advice and guidance already in place, on how to conduct a ghostwriting investigation;
- Included a new section on how to conduct an investigation into inappropriate use of AI, to reflect the current approach and guidance to staff; and
- Clarified that Heads of Departments could delegate plagiarism investigations to appropriate members of staff.

- 18.2 It was further proposed to make editorial changes to a form within the Code (form 6a) to streamline the outcome process of a first offence of minor plagiarism to help reduce the workload associated with these investigations.
- 18.3 In discussion, concern was raised about the use of the term “viva” in plagiarism or inappropriate use of AI investigations, and it was clarified that in this context a viva would be an exploration of a student’s understanding and knowledge of the assessment they had submitted. In order to avoid confusion with a viva as a formal form of assessment, it was agreed to find a suitable alternative wording for this element of the investigation.
- 18.4 Senate approved the proposed editorial amendments to the Code of Student Conduct.

Action: Head of Governance and Legal Services to update the Code and to consult with the PVC L&T on alternative terminology to “viva”.

19. Honorary Appointment

- 19.1 Senate was informed that the following honorary appointment had been awarded by the University Executive Board.

Post	Title	School
Honorary Fellow	Dr Morag Ferguson	SCEBE

20. Academic Appointments

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

21. Summary Report of Court

- 21.1 Senate received the summary reports of the meetings of the University Court held on:
- 15th June 2023
 - 21st September 2023

22. Senate and Standing Committee Calendar of Meetings 2023/24

- 22.1 Senate received the Senate and Standing Committee Calendar of Meetings 2023/24.

23. Date of the Next Meeting

- 23.1 Senate noted that the date of the next meeting was Wednesday 13th December 2023 and that there would be a Senate Strategy session, date to be confirmed.