

UNIVERSITY SENATE

Minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2021

- Present:** Professor P Gillies (Chair), Dr B Ahmed, Dr K Bannigan, Dr T Boutaleb, Ms J Burt, Ms F Campbell, Mr J England, Professor M E Farrag, Dr M Ferguson, R Gowans, Dr L Grey, Ms J Hulme, Mr N Kayani, Dr C Khamisha, Mr S Latta, Professor G Loffler, Dr B McConville, Dr K McPherson, Professor M Mannion, Mrs W Mazzucco, Dr C Miller, Professor J Miller, Professor G Morison, Professor A Nelson, Dr V Ness, Dr N Northway, Ms T Nyariki, Dr A O'Hagan, Dr S Ogden, Professor O Pahl, Dr A Pierotti, Dr S Rate, Professor A Robertson, Professor A Simmers, Mr B Smith, Professor B Steves, Dr K Thomson, Dr O Uthmani and Mr V Waters .
- Apologies:** Professor B Alkali
Mr A Kilpatrick
Professor J Lennon
Mr T McAlear
- In Attendance:** Mr M Anderson, Director of Research & Innovation
Mrs 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
- Observers:** Mrs E Anderson (Executive Support), Mrs G Brash (QAE), Mrs J Burns (Executive Support), Mrs L Clark (Governance), Mr C Fitch (Lay Governor) from 10.15am, Mrs L McGinley (Governance), Mr A MacKinlay (QAE), Ms N Mahal (Lay Governor), Ms E Reather (People Services), Dr S Sinanovic (Electronic Engineering)

Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of Senate in academic session 2020/21, and in particular new members of Senate.

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

- 1.1 The Chair informed Senate that whilst the minutes of the previous meeting held on 6th June 2021 had been approved by prior circulation, an amendment was proposed to revise the wording in paragraph

20.138 in relation to the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism, replacing “signed” with “recognised” as follows:-

20.138 Resolved Senate agreed that a recommendation be submitted to Court that the definition be recognised with an accompanying caveat.

1.2 Senate **approved** the amended minutes.

2. Matters Arising

2.1 Senate **noted** a report on the matters arising from the Senate meeting on 9th June 2021 and the actions taken since that meeting to address them.

3. Principal & Vice Chancellor and Executive Board

3.1 Senate **noted** a report from the Principal & Vice-Chancellor that provided an update on substantive items considered by the Executive Board since the last meeting of Senate as well as informing on issues relating to learning, teaching, research and the wider higher education sector.

3.2 The Principal reported that it was very encouraging to see so many students and colleagues back on the Glasgow campus and everyone was very diligent in sticking to the Covid-19 regulations.

3.3 The Minister for Higher Education and Further Education, Jamie Hepburn, had recently visited the Glasgow campus and in addition to meeting the Principal, he met the Student President and Sabbatical Officers. The Principal had spoken to the Minister about the recent survey on student mental health, the results of which would be published on the 18th November, with the University receiving its own results before then. Results would be shared with Senate in due course.

4. Response to Covid-19

4.1 The Chief Operating Officer reported that Covid-19 cases remained very low, and there had been excellent take up of the vaccine via the bus that was on campus from time to time, and available to both students and staff. International students could also attend the bus for advice and vaccination as appropriate. Weekly meetings with the Government continued and recently had covered issues such as students who couldn't obtain a vaccine passport due to having been vaccinated elsewhere, and ventilation.

4.2 Senators were asked not to broadcast communications advising specific action if they became aware of any staff or students who had tested positive, as this would be done centrally by the University, if required, in line with public health standard protocols. Colleagues were again asked to inform the University if they had tested positive, even if they had not been on campus. Through this route the University was best able to assess risks and take appropriate action.

4.3 In discussion, it was noted that the different regulatory and social environment in England meant that the wearing of face coverings was not so prevalent in GCU London, although staff and students were mindful of maintaining physical distancing where possible. The matter had been discussed at the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee and the government advice to the HE sector remained that face coverings should be worn unless exempt. Refreshed additional communications had been agreed and issued to staff and students at the London campus.

4.4 The issue of ventilation was also raised and the Chief Operating Officer informed Senate that every teaching space had been examined in detail to ensure that it met ventilation requirements, with work being done where this was required. External assessment of ventilation had been carried out and the results had been shared with the Trade Unions, with positive feedback received. It was acknowledged

that keeping windows open was part of the official guidance and inevitably would become more challenging in the colder weather.

- 4.5 On behalf of Senate, the Chair acknowledged the work being done by the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee in ensuring the safety of all campus users.

5. Standing Committee and School Board Summary reports

- 5.1 Senate **noted** reports from the following standing Committees and School boards:-

5.2 Academic Policy and Practice Committee (APPC) held on 15th September 2021. The Acting PVC Learning and Teaching informed Senate that the University was aware of postings by students of GCU teaching materials on external websites. This was a breach of the University's copyright and intellectual property, and as such was a breach of the Code of Student Conduct and consideration was being given to amend the Code to make it this breach more explicit. Guidance would be issued to students to make them aware of the position. It was also reported that discussions were underway to streamline committee activity, and consideration was being given to merging the Learning and Teaching Sub-Committee with the Enhancing the Student Experience Steering Group and a report would be submitted to the next meeting of APPC.

5.3 University Research Committee held on 1st September 2021. In addition to the matters detailed in the summary report the VP Research informed Senate that work was underway to profile the REF submission by age and sex. In response to a question whether the University had data by equality characteristics for recipients, Senate was informed that this was not available but this would be feedback to the research reboot.

5.4 International Committee held on 20th September 2021.

5.5 The School of Computing Engineering and the Built Environment School Boards held on 12th May 2021. Highlighting that the School had been awarded Athena Swan Silver, one of only two awards for similar departments in Scotland, and the University had also received the Silver institution award, the Dean reported that work had begun to explore applying for Athena Swan Gold.

5.6 The Glasgow School for Business and Society School Boards held on 17th February 2021, 14th April 2021, and 8th September 2021.

6. IHRA Definition of anti-Semitism

6.1 Senate at its meeting on 9th June 2021, considered a report outlining that the University had been asked to sign the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism. Following discussion, during which concern was expressed about an example accompanying the definition, Senate agreed to recommend to Court that the definition be recognised, subject to an accompanying caveat, as had been done by some other HEIs. This was subsequently considered by Court on 17th June 2021, when it was agreed that the University should recognise the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism on the basis that it should be accompanied by a caveat, to be agreed, to protect the University's moral and statutory responsibilities to uphold academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law.

6.2 Accordingly, Senate received a report that proposed the following caveat:-

"The University utterly rejects anti-Semitism and accepts the IHRA working definition of anti-Semitism. In accepting the IHRA working definition and noting that it is associated with examples presented by the IHRA as illustrations which guide it in its work, the Court and Senate of Glasgow Caledonian University reaffirm their absolute commitment to academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law. The Court welcomes the assurance within the IHRA's statement that 'criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as anti-Semitic'. The acceptance of the

IHRA definition by the Court accommodates the lawful expression of political criticism concerning, for example, the actions of the State of Israel or other individuals, organisations or nation states.”

- 6.3 Senate **endorsed** the caveat and **agreed** to recommend it to Court to accompany the recognition of the IHRA Definition of anti-Semitism.

7. **Hybrid Working – Consideration re one face to face meeting of Senate per year**

- 7.1 The Chair sought Senate’s views on holding, once regulations allow, one face to face Senate meeting each year. In discussion, Senators welcomed the accessibility benefits of on-line meetings, but it was acknowledged that face to face meetings provided better opportunities for social connection. It was proposed that having an equal number of online and face to face meetings might be a suitable way forward and it was **agreed** to explore this.

8. **Annual Report on Institution-Led Review of Quality & Governing Body Statement of Assurance 2020/21**

- 8.1 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. Whilst it had been a very challenging year, it was recognised that the University had maintained high academic standards. The Governing Body Statement of Assurance was approved by Court at its meeting on 9th September 2021.

9. **NSS Overview**

- 9.1 Senate **noted** a report that provided an update on the NSS 2021 results, information on the open comments, and an appendix with the full NSS results dataset. It was noted that the overall satisfaction rate of 78% was a 7% drop on the previous year’s result, however the University outperformed the UK sector across six NSS categories, including overall satisfaction, learning resources, and organisation and management. It was reported that the University had also performed well in optional questions relating to the University’s management of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 9.2 In discussion it was highlighted that students were generally unaware of experience of other students elsewhere in the sector and as such it was hard to compare results. The Student President commented that from his experience in talking to students from other universities, the University performed well in providing a positive student experience and there was a high degree of engagement between the student body and the University’s executive.
- 9.3 It was also raised that more work would be done to ensure that students recognised better what constituted feedback. The NSS results would be triangulated with the University’s own data to get a clearer understanding of the situation.

10. **Graduate Outcomes**

- 10.1 Senate **noted** a report that provided information on the recently published Graduate Outcomes data, which surveyed graduates approximately 15 months after completing their studies. Overall, 90% of GCU graduates were in employment and/or further study, placing the University second equal in Scotland. Eighty percent of GCU graduates who were in employment were in highly skilled occupations, and this was the highest proportion compared to other Scottish moderns, and 2% above the Scottish sector average. Graduate salaries were broadly on a par with other Scottish modern universities. The University slightly exceeded the Scottish sector for all three questions on graduate reflections, and in particular was first in Scotland for graduates agreeing that their current activity was meaningful.

11. Research Integrity Annual Statement and Report

11.1 Senate **noted** the annual statement on Research Integrity, which provided

- a summary of actions and activities that had been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues;
- assurances that the processes in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct were transparent, robust and fair, and that they continued to be appropriate to the needs of the organisation; and
- a high-level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that had been undertaken and outlining any lessons learned from the process.

The final version of the statement would be published on the University's Research Integrity webpage.

12. Summary REF Submission

12.1 Senate **noted** a report introduced by the PVC Research that summarised the University's submission to the 2021 Research Excellence Framework and set out the overall content of the submission, comprising a common set of data for nine Units of Assessment. Results would be known in May 2022.

13. Senate Programme of Work 2021/22

13.1 Senate's Programme of Work for 2021/22 was **noted**.

14. Research Degrees Committee

14.1 Senate **approved** the award of 18 PhDs and 1 DBA.

15. Senate Chairs Action

15.1 Senate **homologated** the following Chair's Actions that had been taken since the last meeting of Senate:

- a. The addition of 'Doctor of Physiotherapy (Pre-Registration)' to the University Awards Portfolio within the GCU Qualifications Framework.
- b. Updates to the membership of the Senate Disciplinary Committee.

16. Senate Composition and Membership 2021/22

16.1 Senate **approved** a report that outlined amendments to its composition to take account of the recent changes within the Executive Board, noting that these changes did not impact the overall balance of ex officio to elected members.

16.2 In accordance with Senate Standing Orders, Senate also **approved** Professor James Miller, Deputy Vice Chancellor as Vice-Chair of Senate for 2021/22.

16.3 The updated Senate membership for 2021/22 was also **noted**.

17. Addition to GCU Awards Portfolio

17.1 Senate **approved** an addition to the Awards Portfolio to include Bachelor of Business Administration, for exceptional use and the sole purpose of a Transnational Education (TNE) partnership with the Ace International Business School in Nepal. This award nomenclature was a requirement of the regulating body for universities in Nepal.

18.1 Honorary Appointments

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

Post	Title	School
Emeritus Professor	Prof. Geoff Whittam	GSBS
Emeritus Professor	Prof. Rona Beattie	GSBS
Emeritus Professor	Dr Sean McNiven	GSBS
Emeritus Professor	Prof. Valerie Webster	SHLS
Honorary Professor (Renewal)	Dr Will Storrar	Yunus Centre
Honorary Professor	Dr Gerry Hassan	Yunus Centre
Honorary Professor	Mr William Roe	Centre for Climate Justice

19. Academic Appointments

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

20. Honorary Awards

20.1 Senate received, an update on the Honorary Degrees awarded during Summer 2021 as approved by the Honorary Degrees Committee.

21. Senate Standing Committee Composition, Membership and Terms of Reference 2021-22

21.1 Senate received the Composition, Membership and Terms of Reference for Session 2021/22 for the following standing Committees:

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

22. SDC Membership

22.1 Senate received a note of the Senate Disciplinary Committee Membership for Session 2021/22.

23. Summary Report of Court

23.1 Senate received the summary Reports of the meetings of University Court held on:

- 17th June 2021 (Doc S21/16/1)
- 9th September 2021 (Doc S21/17/1)

24. Research Bulletin for Trimester C Session 2020-21

24.1 Senate received an update on research from the PVC Research.