

## **Report from the meeting of Senate held on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021**

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

Senate received a report from the Principal and Vice Chancellor and Executive Board to update members on substantive items considered by the Executive Board since the last meeting of Senate.

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.

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 18<sup>th</sup> November, with the University receiving its own results before then. Results would be shared in due course.

### **2. Response to Covid 19**

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.

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 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.

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.

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.

### **3. Reports from Standing Committees**

Senate noted reports from the following standing committees: -

- Academic Policy and Practice Committee 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021
- University Research Committee 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021
- International Committee held on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021
- Glasgow School for Business and Society held on 17<sup>th</sup> February, 14<sup>th</sup> April and 8<sup>th</sup> September 2021

- The School of Computing Engineering and the Built Environment held on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2021

#### **4. IHRA Definition of anti-Semitism**

Following discussion at Senate on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2021 and Court on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021 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 protect the University's moral and statutory responsibilities to uphold academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law. Accordingly, Senate considered and approved for onward transmission to Court a report proposing a statement of the University's position accepting the definition and incorporating an appropriate safeguard.

#### **5. Senate Hybrid Working**

The Principal 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.

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

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 (SFC). The Governing Body Statement of Assurance was approved by Court at its meeting on 9th September 2021.

#### **7. National Student Survey Overview 2021**

Senate received 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.

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.

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.

Senate noted the report.

#### **8. Graduate Outcomes 2018/19**

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.

## **9. Research Integrity Annual Statement and Report**

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 are transparent, robust and fair, and that they continue 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 will be published on the University's Research Integrity webpage.

## **10. Summary REF Submission**

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.

## **11. Research Degrees Committee**

Senate approved the award of 18 PhDs and 1 DBA.

## **12. Senate Chair's Actions**

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

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

## **13 Senate Composition and Membership Session 2021/22 and appointment of Vice-Chair**

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.

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

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

## **14 Addition to GCU Awards Portfolio - Bachelor of Business Administration**

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.

**15. Other Matters Approved/Noted/Received for Information.**

- Senate Programme of Work 2021/22
- Honorary Appointments.
- Recent academic staff appointments.
- Senate Standing Committees Composition, Membership and Terms of Reference 2021/22
- Senate Disciplinary Committee Membership for Session 2021/22
- The summary report from the meeting of University Court held on 17<sup>th</sup> June and 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021
- Research Bulletin for Trimester C Session 2020/21

**The next scheduled meeting of Senate will be held on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021**