

GLASGOW CALEDONIAN UNIVERSITY
TO: UNIVERSITY COURT

Report from the meeting of Senate held on 12th October 2018

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. Executive Board updates are available to GCU staff on [Caledonian Connected](#).

Additionally, Senate was informed

- Court had held its annual Strategy Day on 10th October to discuss the development of Strategy 2030. Staff and student members had been given an opportunity to share their thoughts on their vision for 2030. The discussion was the first in what would be a 14-month process which will involve wider engagement with staff and students about the type of university we want to be. From the discussion at the Strategy Day, it was clear that the University had a strong sense of purpose to deliver education, research and knowledge transfer for the common good across the whole university.
- Chancellor Dr Annie Lennox had recently launched the ['I'm a Global Feminist'](#) campaign" which focused on developing educational opportunities for girls and women worldwide and all staff and students were encourage to take part.
- The Principal had recently met Sir Alex Ferguson who was making a steady recovery from his recent illness, and remained committed to supporting the University.

2. Senate Composition

Senate received a report that outlined Court's intentions to ensure Statutory Instrument (SI) compliance with the 2016 HE Governance Act inasmuch as it affected the Senate and to highlight that detailed proposals on the composition of Senate to be captured in the Senate's Standing Orders will be brought to a later Senate. In the mean-time an interim arrangement to take effect from the December Senate which ensured that the significant increase in the number of heads of department occurring because of the Schools Refresh did not lead to a much enlarged Senate that was heavily weighted towards ex officii members and is thus in tension with the spirit of the 2016 HE Governance Act, was proposed.

Senate agreed to recommend to Court the interim arrangement that the current number of Heads of Academic Departments (9) on Senate be retained and that the Deans of the three Glasgow-based Schools be invited to each to nominate three Heads of Department from their School to fill these roles.

3. School Boards

Senate approved the establishment of a review group to consider the remit and composition of School Boards in light of the School Refresh and the recommendations from the Senate Effectiveness Review.

4. Annual Reports

Senate received and approved annual reports for the 2017/18 academic year from:

- Senate
- Academic Policy and Practice Committee

- University Research Committee
- International Committee
- School of Health and Life Science School Board
- School of Engineering and the Built Environment School Board
- Glasgow School for Business and Society School Board
- GCU London School Board

5. The National Student Survey 2018 and Overview of student Surveys and Module Evaluations 2017/18

Senate noted an updated on student surveys.

In the National Student Survey 2018 GCU's overall satisfaction remained at 81% and positive improvements were seen across a number of sections, in particular, Assessment & feedback (+5%), Student voice (+4%), Organisation & management (+3%) and Academic support (+3%). The academic School weighted averages for overall satisfaction, compared to last year, were GSBS 86% (+5%), SEBE 74% (-5%), and SHLS 83% (no change). The Dean of SCEBE expressed disappointment with the School's results and reassured Senate that work had already begin to address key areas and that this was a SMG focus. There was significant engagement with student, staff and partners and he was hopeful for making positive progress in 2018/19.

Work would continue with students and staff across the university to maintain high standards and address areas where further improvement was required.

Senate was also informed that in 2017/18, taught students at GCU in all years of study were given the opportunity to provide feedback on their course and non-final year undergraduate students and postgraduate taught students were given the opportunity to feedback via GCU's internal GCU Experience Surveys (GCUES) 2018. In addition, students were invited to participate in Trimester A, B and C module evaluations.

- Students in general reported higher levels of satisfaction at course level in most themes with the exceptions of Assessment and feedback and Organisation and management which were higher at module level.
- Overall satisfaction was highest among Level 1 and final year students (both 81%) at course level (in the student surveys). However, Level 1 also saw a significant drop in overall satisfaction (-8%), along with PGT students (-6%), and Level 3 students (-5%).
- In the module evaluations, overall satisfaction was highest among PGT students (74%), followed by Level 1 and Honours level students (both 72%).
- At course level, satisfaction among non-final year undergraduate students had dropped for most themes, most notably at Level 1 for overall satisfaction (-8%), satisfaction with teaching (-9%), assessment and feedback (-14%), and organisation and management (-11%). Final year student satisfaction, on the other hand, had either improved or remained the same across all themes.
- With regard to student voice, while 85% of final year students agree that they had opportunities to provide feedback, low proportions of students at all levels felt that their feedback is acted on. This could potentially be improved with efforts aimed at closing the feedback loop in 2018-19.

6. The Annual Statement on Enhancement Led Internal Subject Review and Quality Assurance Arrangements for the Academic Session 2017-2018.

Senate received the Annual Statement on Enhancement Led Subject Review and Quality Assurance Arrangements for the Academic Session 2017-2018. This is part of the University's reporting arrangements

to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) in addition to the Outcome Agreement and statutory financial and data returns. Information and guidance on the University's quality enhancement and assurance procedures was provided in the current Quality Enhancement and Assurance Handbook. The processes and procedures outlined within the handbook applied to all GCU awards regardless of mode or location of delivery, and include any award delivered with or on behalf of GCU.

Senate was informed that it was intended to submit a refreshed ELISR in light of the School Refresh.

**7. Academic Quality Policy & Practice (AQPP)
2018 V.1.1 (V1.0 Approved - APPC18-05-01)**

Senate endorsed the new Academic Quality Policy and Practice 2018 V1.1 document.

8. Beyond Lecture Capture

Senate discussed a report that gave a brief overview of the benefits, challenges, opportunities and practicalities of developing an institutional lecture capture system as part of a wider notion of 'learning' capture which built on the University's existing infrastructure and on-going development of more active forms of learning and teaching. Learning capture was used extensively in the sector as a means of supporting lectures. Technology existed within the University to support this, and there were already some examples within the university where this was being successfully delivered. Consultation, training and support for staff would be essential to ensure they were confident and comfortable engaging with the concept and technology. Student members welcomed the further development of supportive and engaging online education.

Senate supported the taking forward of a University wide consultation with students, staff and trade unions that would consider a range of aspects and sector data including the technology, pedagogy, infrastructure & estate requirements, staff and student development needs and endorsed the further exploration of a range of possible solutions and costs including the use of Collaborate Ultra and edShare under our current agreements.

9. Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)

Senate received an update on the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). The majority of Scottish institutions, including GCU, had opted not to participate in the TEF Year Two and had agreed to maintain a watching brief on the TEF reserving the right to join TEF at a future point. The Scottish sector maintained its view that TEF was at odds with the QAA's Enhancement Led Institutional Review (ELIR) which gave full and measured consideration to key areas of learning and teaching through an enhancement-led approach. Concerns had also been raised about the potentially negative impact on the Scottish sector in the calculation of key metrics.

Despite the concerns raised by the sector, five institutions in Scotland opted to participate in TEF Year Two. The Universities of Dundee, Robert Gordon and St Andrews were awarded Gold and Abertay and Heriot-Watt were awarded Silver. No Scottish institutions participated in TEF Year Three. If GCU had participated in Year Two or Year Three the initial hypothesis based on the core metric flags would have resulted in a Bronze outcome.

It was noted that the University would maintain a watching brief and would continue to engage in sector discussions about TEF through Universities Scotland, the Scottish Government and the Scottish Funding Council.

10 Schools Refresh Update

The DVC Academic reminded Senate that the revised departmental structures had been endorsed by Court in June. Both GSBS and SCEBE had appointed their new Heads of Department, and in SHLS where interviews had been delayed slightly to allow the new Dean to participate, it was intended that appointments would be announced the following week. Work was now ongoing on implementing School governance arrangements and Senate would be kept updated on progress.

11 Revisions to the Mitigating Circumstances Policy

Senate approved revisions to the Mitigating Circumstances Policy. In addition to revised guidelines, key changes to the policy included:

- The role of Personal Tutor to be central to the Mitigating Circumstances process; for corroboration, post-board support and attendance at the University Mitigating Circumstances Board.
- The introduction of a new University Mitigating Circumstances Board, to be piloted in 2018/19, to consider the small number of applications that indicate very challenging circumstances, or highlight a pattern of events and behaviours related to complex mental, emotional, social or physical health challenges, and/or severe and complicated life circumstances, that would be beyond the scope of a School Mits Board.
- Linkages with Fitness to Study Policy and joined up approach between Mitigating Circumstances Board/s and Student Wellbeing Team

12. Other Matters Approved

- The appointment of Professor James Miller, Deputy Vice Chancellor Strategy, as Vice Chair of Senate for the period up to 1 August 2018.
- Following recommendations from the Higher Degree Committee, Senate confirmed the award of 35 PhDs, 4 Prof.Ds and one PhD by previous publication.
- Honorary and Visiting appointments.
- Chair's Action approving the appointment of Mrs Gillian Kellock Hay as GSBS academic staff member on the Senate Disciplinary Committee for the period 1st September 2018 to 31 August 2021.

13. Other Matters Noted

- The annual statement on Research Integrity
- Recent academic staff appointments.
- The confirmed minutes of the Academic Policy and Practice Committee held on 1st May 2018.
- The confirmed minutes of the Research Committee held on 2nd May 2018
- The confirmed minute of the meetings of the International Committee held on 8th June 2018.
- The confirmed minutes of University Court held on 21 June 2018 and 27 September 2018.

Date of the next scheduled meeting of Senate is Wednesday 12th December 2018