UNIVERSITY SENATE

Minutes of the meeting held on 08.06.22

Present:	Professor P Gillies (Chair), Professor B Alkali, Dr K Bannigan, Ms F Campbell, Dr M Ferguson, Dr K Fryer, Dr L Grey, Mr D Grimm, Ms J Hulme, Dr C Khamisha, Professor J Lennon, Professor G Loffler, Mr T McAlear, Dr B McConville, Professor S McMeekin (Vice for Professor Schaschke), Professor M Mannion (Vice for Dr Ahmed), Dr C Miller, Professor G Morison, Professor A Nelson, Dr N Northway, Dr S Ogden, Dr A O'Hagan, Dr A Pierotti, Professor A Robertson, Professor A Simmers, Mr B Smith, Professor B Steves, Ms L Tareen, Dr K Thomson and Dr O Uthmani
Apologies:	Dr B Ahmed, Dr T Boutaleb, Ms J Burt, Professor M E Farrag, Ms R Gibson, Mr A Kilpatrick, Mr N Kayani, Mr S Latta, Dr K McPherson, Mrs W Mazzucco, Professor J Miller, Mrs S Mitchell, Ms J Murdoch, Dr V Ness, Professor O Pahl and Professor C Schaschke
In Attendance:	Professor A Britton, Chair of the Senate Disciplinary Committee Mrs C Hulsen, Director of Strategy and Planning Mr S Lopez, Academic Registrar Ms J Main, Director of Student Life Mr R Ruthven, Director of Library Services Dr S Rate, Vice Dean GSBS Mrs D Donnet, Clerk to Senate
Observers:	Mr P Brown (Governance and Legal Services), Mrs L Clark (Governance and Legal Services), Miss J Crocket (Strategy, Planning and Business Intelligence), Dr T Cunningham (Academic Development), Mr C Fitch (Lay Governor), Mr D Gallagher (Lay Governor), Mrs L McGinley (Governance and Legal Services), Dr L Reather (People Services)

Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone to the 151st meeting of the University Senate. The Chair welcomed the new student members who were attending Senate for the first time. The Chair indicated that it was hoped to be able to resume in person Senate meetings for the next academic year.

1.   Minutes of Previous Meeting

Senate **noted** the minutes of the meeting of Senate held on 23rd February 2023 that had previously been approved by circulation and agreed to correct one minor spelling error.

ACTION: Clerk to Senate to revise previously approved minutes.

2.   Matters Arising

Senate **noted** a report on the matters arising from the Senate meeting on 23rd February 2022 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.

3.2   The report included updates on Scottish Funding Council (SFC) funding for 2022-23, the SFC Outcome Agreement, the Advanced Higher Hub submission to SFC, a Graduate work experience scheme funded by SFC, SFC Gaelic Language Plan 2022-27, Learning and Teaching Delivery Principles 2022/23 and the University receiving the Scottish Mentoring Network's Quality Award.

4.   Response to Covid-19

4.1   The VP People and Student Wellbeing informed Senate that whilst government regulations had changed since the last meeting of Senate, staff and students were still being encouraged to wear face coverings and socially distance where appropriate. Covid numbers within the University community were low and with two cases in Caledonian Court.

4.2   Some health and safety protocols that had been introduced as part of the Covid measures would be embedded into local level H&S plans. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee was still scheduled to meet bi-weekly but the last two meetings had been cancelled as there had been no new business, which was considered a positive sign.

4.3   The Principal advised that from an epidemiologist's perspective, she had anticipated that the pandemic would last around two years, hence the need for long term planning and science based decision making. It was likely that Covid-19 was now endemic but there was still the need to ensure there was flexibility and measures to support vulnerable staff and students. The feedback from students had highlighted the desire to get back to more face-to-face teaching as this would have wider mental health benefits and this view was reiterated by the Student President.

4.4   Senate **noted** the update.

5.   Research Excellence Framework (REF)

5.1   The PVC Research presented a report that informed of the excellent results in the Research Excellence Framework (REF), which was used to benchmark research and allocate research funds to Universities under the dual support system. The University submitted research in nine Units of Assessment (UoAs) and 72% of University research activity was rated as world-leading (4*) or internationally excellent (3*), making GCU the top Scottish post-92 for the proportion of research being at that level (3*/4*). In terms of world-leading research (4*) 27% of activity was assessed as being of this quality.

5.2   There were increases across the sector in size of submissions and overall quality. For overall research quality as determined by grade point average (GPA) from 2.67 to 2.95 compared with the previous exercise in 2014.   The Times Higher Education rankings listed the University as 72nd in the UK by GPA rank, an increase by 3 places and 10th in Scotland, an increase in 1 place. For research power, the University is ranked 85th in the UK, a drop compared to 2014 due to an increase in submission volume across the sector.

5.3   For five UoAs there had been an increase in the percentage of activity rated as world-leading (4*) and seven of the nine units of assessment had an increase in the percentage of world-leading or

internationally excellent (3*/4*) activity. Five units of assessment had a percentage of activity deemed internationally excellent or world-leading (3*/4*) exceeding the Strategy 2030 target level of 50.

5.4   The results in health research were particularly encouraging with 86% considered to have outstanding impact (4*), placing health research at GCU as second equal overall in the UK to King's College London and equal top in Scotland.

5.5   The PVC Research stressed that the results were owned by every member of staff in the University as it was a team effort to build an environment where research flourished and impact garnered.

5.6   In discussion, Senate welcomed the exceptional results and the benefits, both financially and reputationally, that they would bring to the University. The need to communicate the results was raised as was the need to build on this position to ensure continued success and both these topics would be subject to further discussion.

5.7   Senate **noted** the report.

6.   GCU response to consultation on the Future Research Assessment Exercise

6.1   Senate noted a report that provided the University's response to a consultation exercise on the UK's next research assessment system, as part of the Future Research Assessment Programme (FRAP). This was aimed at exploring possible approaches to the assessment of UK higher education research performance and sought to encourage and strengthen the emphasis on delivering excellent research and impact, and to support a positive research culture, while simplifying and reducing the administrative burden on the HE sector.

6.2   In compiling the University's response, GCU Research leaders were surveyed and consulted to ascertain their feedback on the future approach to research assessment.

6.3   Senate **noted** the report and that it would be kept updated as more information became available.

7.   Draft Researcher Development Concordat and HR Excellence in Research Award Action Plan 2022-23

7.1   Senate received a draft of the Researcher Development Concordat and HR Excellence in Research Award Action plan 2022-23, inclusive of first consultations with early career researchers, research leaders and Professional Services departments, the Graduate School, RIO and People Services. It also included actions and measures of success arising from the Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS) 2021 report, which identified areas of strength and areas for improvement in the researcher experience at GCU.

7.2   The PVC Research informed Senate that the paper would be reviewed and refined through wider consultation of the researcher community from April to June 2022 towards completion as the GCU RD Concordat and HR Excellence in Research Award action plan for 2022-23, prior to submission to Court and inclusion in the University's forward action plan as part of its HR Excellence in Research Award 8 year external review submission which was due on 7 July 2022.

8.   GCU Teaching Impact Awards

8.1   Senate **approved** proposals to refresh the awards for teaching first introduced in 2015.

8.2   The PVC Learning and Teaching informed Senate that the Annual GCU Teaching Impact Awards would recognise those who demonstrate an exceptional contribution in Learning & Teaching and/or enhancing the student learning experience at Glasgow Caledonian University [GCU]. All staff who teach and support student learning in any capacity at GCU would be eligible. There would be four awards per year, one in each of the following categories:

        o   Early Career – Individual Award
        o   Inclusive Practice – Individual Award
        o   Academic Leadership – Individual Award
        o   Collaborative Teaching – Team Award

9.   GCU Module Evaluations - Trimesters A and B 2021-22

9.1   Senate considered a paper that provided an overview of the key outcomes of the Trimesters A and B module evaluations in academic year 2021-22 for GCU overall; by School and GCU London; and by module level. In addition, the paper set out an overview of results for masters level home and overseas students.

9.2   The Director of Strategy, Planning and Business Intelligence reported that the Tri A evaluations achieved an overall response rate of 30% while the overall response rate achieved in Tri B was 23%. Overall satisfaction improved by +5pp to 80% in Tri A and by +5pp to 79% in Tri B. These were the highest overall satisfaction ratings since module evaluations were centralised in 2016-17. Agreement levels in both trimesters improved for all core questions compared to the same trimester in the previous year, most notably for Learning Community (+16pp to 78% in Tri A, and +17pp to 78% in Tri B). Overall satisfaction improved for all three Glasgow Schools across both trimesters.

9.3   In discussion, whilst welcoming the positive results, concern was raised about the low response rate and the number of surveys students were asked to participate in. The PVC Learning and Teaching indicated that work with the Students' Association and Schools was required to maximise participation in this and other key student surveys. Student members of Senate acknowledged that students often were not fully aware of the purpose and value of surveys of this nature, and whilst the move to more online learning may have impacted overall student engagement, better explanation may help improve response rates.

9.4   Senate **noted** the report and that further consideration on improving engagement with the MEQs would take place.

10.   HESA Performance Indicators 2022

Senate received an overview of GCU's performance in the 2022 HESA Performance Indicators (PIs) relating to widening participation, projected learning outcomes and non-continuation. GCU's outcomes in the 2022 PIs demonstrated an exceptional performance by the University, particularly in the context of the sector in Scotland and against Strategy 2030 KPI to achieve high degree completion rates. Key highlights included:-

Entrants from state schools or colleges -
•   In 2020-21, 97% of GCU young first degree entrants came from a state school or college;
•   GCU's proportion was well ahead of the Scottish sector average of 86.4%.

Projected learning outcomes -
•   Our strong performance in the projected degree completion PI had been improved and was at 84.5%, our highest percentage ever for this PI;
•   GCU had the highest projected degree completion in terms of Scottish modern universities, ahead of many universities and the Scottish sector as a whole (84.3%);
•   The PI for "Neither award nor transfer" was 6.6%, with GCU outperforming the Scottish sector (7.5%) and achieving the lowest drop-out rate in terms of Scottish modern universities.

Non-continuation after first year of study -
•   GCU's non-continuation rate across all entrants improved by 2.4 pp to 6.1% compared to the previous year;
•   GCU had the lowest percentage of non-continuation across all entrants compared to Scottish modern universities. GCU equalled the sector average for this measure;

- The non-continuation rate for young entrants improved from 8.5% last year to 5.7% and the rate for mature entrants improved from 8.6% to 6.7%;
- GCU had the lowest percentage of non-continuation across young entrants compared to other Scottish modern universities;
- GCU had excellent outcomes in relation to mature student performance in particular. At 6.7% non-continuation, we outperform the Scottish sector average of 9.8% and are ahead of ten Scottish universities including Glasgow, Dundee, Strathclyde, Stirling, Heriot-Watt and all modern universities.

Senate **noted** the University's very positive performance in the 2022 HESA Performance Indicators.

11.   Honours Degree Classification Trends

11.1   Senate received a report that provided a high level summary of degree classification trends at GCU, set within the sector context, between 2016-17 and 2020-21. Key points included -
- Compared to the previous year, in 2020-21 First class honours prevalence at GCU increased marginally (+1pp) to 33%, the lowest increase at the University over the most recent five-year period but following on from a sharp increase in 2019-20. In 2020-21, the University was broadly in-line with key comparator groupings for this metric;
- There was an increase in First class honours prevalence at 12 of Scotland's 15 main universities in 2020-21. GCU's First class honours degree rate in 2020-21 was mid-range compared to other Scottish modern universities, with UHI highest (38%) and Abertay lowest (27%);
- Driven by increased First class honours prevalence, GCU has seen its overall "Good honours" degree rate increase by 14pp between 2016-17 and 2020-21. This rate dipped (-1pp) in 2020-21 to 86% meaning that the University was in line with the Scottish sector as a whole and ahead of the Scottish modern university sector (82%) for this metric.

11.2   Senate **noted** the report and that further work on the impact of a banded grading model on Merit/Distinction calculations and a review of degree classification algorithms will be taken forward by the Banded Grading Working Group.

12.   Student data – Protected characteristics and SIMD

12.1   Senate considered the annual overview of student data by protected characteristics (ethnicity, sex, disability) and SIMD background, in relation to applications, entrants and student performance. The summary related to Scottish domiciled undergraduate students, as these were the focus of SFC monitoring, reporting and funding and directly related to Outcome Agreement National Measures. The full ethnicity report included summary data on international undergraduate students and postgraduate entrants, to further support the work of the Tackling Racism @ GCU Working Group.

12.2   In response to a question about criticism the University had received regarding the number of students who had applied for Disability Support Allowance, it was acknowledged that the DSA application rate did not map to the overall number of disabled students. The VP People and Student Wellbeing reported that this had been discussed and there were a number of potential reasons for this, however there needed to be a better understanding of any barriers and what support was needed to overcome this and further consideration of this would be given.

12.3   Senate **noted** the report.

13.   Report on Widening Access

13.1   Senate **noted** a report that provided a summary of the SFC Report on Widening Access 2020-21 published in May 2022, and internal data on entrants from SIMD 20 areas up to 2021-22.

13.2   Overall the report highlighted that the University had the second highest percentage of entrants from a SIMD 20 area amongst Scottish universities and GCU's percentage of full-time first degree entrants was

higher than in 2019-20. Based on full-time first degree students, the University's retention rate to year 2 was higher than in 2019-20 and remained ahead of the sector average and ahead of all modern universities. The retention of students from 2019-20 into 2020-21, overall and for students from SIMD 20 areas, was the highest in the period of available data (from 2013-14).

14.   Standing Committee and School Board Summary reports

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

•   Academic Policy and Practice Committee on 23rd March and 4th May 2022
•   University Research Committee 30th March and 18th May 2022
•   International Committee held on 5th May 2022
•   Glasgow School for Business and Society held on 22nd March and 20th April 2022
•   The School of Computing Engineering and the Built Environment held on 11th May 2022
•   The School of Health and Life Sciences held on 2nd February and 13th April 2022

15.   Research Degrees Committee

Senate approved the award of 23 PhDs, 2 DBAs and 1 ProfD

16.   Revised Ethical Guidelines and Policies for Students, Staff and Research Ethics Committees

16.1   Senate considered the Ethical Guidelines and Policies for Students, Staff, and Research Ethics Committees. This document brought together in one document, for the first time, updated ethical guidance for staff and students.

16.2   In discussion, concern was raised about the timing of introducing the revised guidelines for level four undergraduate students in time for the start of 2022/23 and it was suggested that implementation be delayed one year for this cohort only.

16.3   Senate **approved** the revised guidelines subject to further discussion at Research Committee (which was to be held later that day) around the timing of introducing it for level 4 students.

17.   Programme Withdrawal: MSc Diabetes Care and Management

Senate **approved** the withdrawal of the MSc Diabetes Care and Management programme. The Dean SHLS highlighted this pathway had not recruited as anticipated and it was proposed to introduce a new FT and PT pathway to the existing SHLS MSc Advanced Practice programme to allow students to specialise and graduate with a named award in MSc Advanced Practice (Diabetes Care).

18.   Recommendations of the Assessment Regulations Sub-Committee

18.1   A re-frame and revision of GCU's existing, 'Digital Assessment Policy'.

18.2   Senate considered the revised GCU Digital Assessment Policy for implementation for the 2022/23 academic session. The Policy had been updated following sector scoping and took account of sector trends associated with online assessment. The revised policy would include all SCQF levels (SCQF 7 and 8 had previously been excluded). The need for staff development was highlighted in the report and the policy made reference to accessible guidance material for academic staff.

18.3   It was noted that online invigilation was excluded from the Policy and sector consideration of this was ongoing. However, a suite of guidance information and videos to raise awareness of cheating/collusion and bad practice for students had been developed and was available for students.

18.4   Senate **approved** the revised GCU Digital Assessment Policy, noting that it would be reviewed after one year, to consider any internal and/or external developments in the evolving area of digital assessment. Further, it was noted that institutional guidance would be produced to support the anonymous marking of online formal examinations.

18.5.   "Fit to Sit Policy" to replace the existing, 'Consideration of Mitigating Circumstances Policy'

18.6   Senate considered proposals to replace the "Consideration of Mitigating Circumstances Policy" with a "Fit to Sit Policy", as had been agreed by Senate in March 2020. Whilst initial proposals had been considered at that time, a short life working group had been convened to consider outstanding issues and in particular the timeframe in which students could submit a declaration, after an assessment, that they were not fit to sit, as concern had been raised that the proposed two-day window was not long enough. The proposed Fit to Sit policy, following work undertaken by the short life working group, therefore proposed a period up to five days before and five days following the date of exam/coursework submission to allow students to confirm that they were unfit to sit/submit.

18.7   In discussion, concerns were raised that this window was too long and this timeframe could have a detrimental impact on students, staff workloads and practical assessments. Further, concern was expressed that there was no scope for information to be included in the declaration that would allow for a Wellbeing referral. Others noted that a five-day period of self-assessment, without evidence of a student being unable to sit examinations, may lead to this being used inappropriately by students wishing to improve their grades following discussion of the exam with their peers.

18.8   Senate **agreed** that consideration be given to the points raised in discussion and that following this, another draft policy be circulated electronically for consideration by Senate.

18.9   Revised Banded Grading Framework

18.10   Senate considered a revised framework for Banded Grading.

18.11   Senate **approved** the revised framework and workplan of the Banded Grading Working Group with the proviso that if implementation in 2023/24 as planned was not possible, a revised workplan would be submitted to Senate.

18.12   Revisions to the Code of Student Conduct

18.13   Senate noted work that was ongoing on the revision of the Code of Student Conduct and endorsed the direction of travel.

18.14   Proposed revision to a single set of taught Assessment Regulations

18.15   Senate **noted** a recommendation to combine Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Assessment Regulations into a single set of Assessment Regulations

18.16   Academic Regulations

18.17   Senate noted that work to review the Academic Regulations landing page on the website, to bring greater visibility to policies and regulations, would continue over the summer period

19.   APPC Composition Changes

Senate approved a recommendation to amend the composition of APPC to include Head of Academic Development and the International Director as ex officio members.

20. Policy and Practice in the Teaching and Assessment in a Language other than English

20.1   Senate considered a request to approve a revision to the University's Transnational Education (TNE) and Academic Partnerships Policy and Practice to make provision for teaching and assessment in a language other than English. The request had been in response to positive discussions around delivering the Global MBA in Mandarin with a reputable partner institution in Singapore.

20.2   It was highlighted that it was not intended to move to an open position of delivery in a language other than English but instead the proposed policy statement required a robust case to be presented in addition to careful consideration of the University's capacity alongside existing TNE partnerships to deliver and support.

20.3   Senate **agreed** to approve the revision to the policy on the basis that there was sufficient funding to support the reverse translation from Mandarin to guarantee academic integrity.

21. Honorary Appointments

Senate received notification that the following honorary appointments had been awarded by Executive Board:-

Post	Title	School
Honorary Professor	Dr Rak Nandwani	SHLS – Public Health
Honorary Fellow	Jamie Quin	SHLS – Podiatry
Honorary Fellow	Scott McNab	SHLS – Podiatry
Honorary Fellow	Janice McClymond	SHLS – Occupational Therapy
Honorary Professor (Renewal)	Neil Craig	Yunus Centre
Honorary Senior Research Fellow (Renewal)	Dr Eric Carlin	SHLS – Public Health

22. Academic Appointments

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

23. Summary Report of Court

Senate received the summary Report of the meeting of University Court held on 21st April 2022.

24. GCU London Campus Board

Senate received the minute of the GCU London Campus Board held on 14th December 2021

25. Academic Calendar 22/23 and 23/24

Senate received the Academic Calendar 22/23 and 23/24.

26. QAA ELIR Year-On Response

Senate received the final year-on response to the Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) endorsed by University Court on 21 April 2022.

27.   Date of next meeting

Senate **noted** that the **date of the next meeting was Wednesday 19ᵗʰ October 2022**

Chair's closing remarks

The Chair congratulated Jan Hulme, University Secretary and VP Governance on being awarded an MBE for services to higher education in Scotland and Professor Jacquie Reilly on being awarded a CBE for services to Healthcare and Public Health.

The Chair also thanked outgoing Senate members Professor Catriona Miller, Dr Morag Ferguson, Professor Gunter Loffler, Dr Ben McConville and Dr Susan Ogden for their contribution to the work of Senate. Mr Tom McAlear and Dr Karen Thomson were congratulated on being re-elected for a further 4-year term as elected academic staff members from SHLS.

As this was the last scheduled meeting of Senate of the 2021/22 Academic Year, the Chair wished all present well for the summer period.