

## UNIVERSITY SENATE

### Minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021

**Present:** Professor P Gillies (Chair), Dr B Ahmed, Dr K Bannigan, Dr T Boutaleb, Ms J Burt, Ms S Docherty, Professor C Donaldson, Mr J England, Professor M E Farrag, Dr M Ferguson, Ms E Fulton, Dr K Fryer, R Gowans, Dr L Grey, Ms J Hulme, Dr C Khamisha, Mr T Kilpatrick, Mr S Latta, Prof J Lennon, Professor G Loffler, Mr T McAlear, Professor J McCallum, Dr K McPherson, Professor M Mannion, Mrs W Mazucco, Professor J Miller, Ms K Mumme, Professor A Nelson, Mr A Nesbit, Dr V Ness, Dr A O'Hagan, Professor O Pahl, Dr A Pierotti, Dr J Riley, Ms R Russell, Miss L Shearer, Mr B Smith, Professor B Steves, Dr K Thomson, Dr O Uthmani, Mr V Waters and Professor V Webster

**In Attendance:** Mr M Anderson, Director of Research & Innovation  
Professor A Britton, Chair of the Senate Disciplinary Committee  
Ms F Campbell, Director of People  
Mrs C Hulsen, Director of Strategy and Planning,  
Mr S Lopez, Academic Registrar  
Ms J Main, Director of Student Life  
Mrs S Mitchell, COO  
Dr S Rate, Vice-Dean GSBS  
Mr R Ruthven, Director of Library Services  
Professor A Robertson, Director of Academic Development & Student Learning

Mrs D Donnet, Clerk to Senate

**Observers:** Mr D Areghan (Research Student), Mrs L Clark (Governance), Mr C Fitch (Lay Governor), Ms E Fry (Executive Support), Mr D Gallacher (Lay Governor), Mrs L Johnson (Executive Support) Mrs K McMillan (Executive Support), Prof A Priest (Lay Governor) and Mr A Sweeney (Lay Governor)

### Chairs Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone to the third meeting of Senate in academic session 2020/21, and welcomed student member, River Gowans to their first meeting.

The Chair thanked Senators for their prompt, electronic approval of Changes to the Academic Calendar.

### PART A (FOR CONSIDERATION)

#### Minutes

20.081 Received The minutes of the meeting of Senate held on 2 December 2020 as approved by circulation in advance of the meeting.  
**(Doc S20/36/1)**

### **Matters Arising**

20.082 Noted The matters arising briefing report and any matters arising on the minutes not otherwise provided for on the agenda.  
**(Doc S20/54/1)**

### **Principal & Vice Chancellor & Executive Board Report**

20.083 Noted A report from the Principal & Vice-Chancellor and Executives to update members on substantive items considered by the Executive Board since the last meeting of Senate.  
**(Doc S20/37/1)**

20.084 Discussed i. The Principal informed Senators that Executive Board had agreed to hold graduate ceremonies in 2022 for students for whom it has not been possible to hold traditional graduations due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Additionally, opportunities for graduates to have photographs with their robes and certificates were also being explored.

The Minister for Further Education Higher Education and Science had written the University Principals the previous day to advised that no more than 5% of each university's overall student population should be on campus after Easter. These students would be on programmes where there were essential practical elements, so a cautious approach was continuing to be taken. The Chief Operating Officer confirmed that the University was already operating within those parameters and numbers so no changes were required, and GCU London students and staff would be kept informed of the position that applied there.

ii. In response to a question about support for incoming international students with essential on campus teaching, who were required to self-isolate at a cost of £1700, it was reported that sector discussions were ongoing with the Scottish Government to see if students could undertake the mandatory self-isolation, supported by universities in university accommodation, rather than in government appointed hotels. Additionally, the Chief Operating Officer advised that SAAS had changed the terms of the student winter hardship funds and international students, who had previously been ineligible, could now apply for these. This funding could be used to assist any student with quarantine costs. The NUS was also campaigning for the cost of quarantine to be reduced for students. Consideration was also being given by the University to arrangements for international students who would be arriving later in the year for the 2021/22 academic session.

iii It was queried whether the additional hardship funds would be available to nursing student who had also been ineligible to apply and it was agreed to find this out. It was noted however, that there were hardship funds that student nurses could apply to.

*Secretary's Note: It was confirmed that nursing students could apply to this hardship fund.*

iv. With reference to the update in the report about workloads, it was raised that there had been concerns from students relating to the extension to the marking

period, and it was confirmed that there would be further communications to students about the need for this additional time.

### Response to Covid-19

- 20.085 Received
- i. A verbal update, from the Chief Operating Officer on the University's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Senate was informed that currently there were no cases of Covid-19 in Caledonian Court, and there had not been any for several months. As had been raised earlier, plans were now being made for the new 2021/22 academic year.
  - ii. The DVC (Strategy) indicated that current plans to support the return to campus for essential purposes were working well, and following feedback from some risk assessments, plans had been revised. It was not yet known what level of physical distancing, if any, the University would have to adhere to in the 2021/22 academic year, however plans based on 2m, 1m and zero physical distancing had been drawn up.
- 20.086 Resolved
- Senate noted the update and welcomed the work being done.

### SDC Annual Report 2019/20

- 20.087 Noted
- i. The SDC Annual Report 2019/20 which reported on student misconduct offences considered under the terms of the Code of Student Conduct during Session 2019/20. The overall number of cases referred to the Senate Disciplinary was marginally lower than in the previous year. Misconduct in exams and contract cheating/ghostwriting remained the most frequent forms of misconduct and there had been an increase in the number of incidents of the latter. This was a common problem in the sector.
  - ii. It was noted that the report included the May and August assessment periods, when the University had moved to online assessment. The Chair of Senate Disciplinary Committee (SDC) informed Senate that SDC had taken a supportive approach to academic misconduct during this period where students had evidence of substantial Covid-19 related mitigation.

### Complaints Annual Report 2019/20

- 20.088 Received
- The Complaints Annual Report 2019/20  
**(Doc S20/38/1)**
- 20.089 Reported
- There had been 178 Stage 1 (frontline) complaints and 12 stage 2 complaints (complaint investigation) received. Of the stage 2 complaints, 9 were not upheld, 2 were partially upheld and one was upheld. One complaint was referred by the complainant to the SPSO on completion of the University's complaints handling procedure, but this was not taken forward for investigation by the SPSO. Whilst there had been an increase in reported stage 1 complaints, the number of staged two complaints had remained stable, indicating stage 1 were being appropriately responded to.
- 20.90 Resolved
- To note the report, and that it would be submitted to Court and then the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

### Standing Committee and School Board Summary Reports

Senate received summary reports highlighting key items discussed at the following Senate Standing Committees and School Boards:

i Academic Policy and Practice Committee held on 27 January 2021  
(Doc S20/55/1)

The DVC (Academic) highlighted that due to increased workloads, the work of the Assessment Regulation Working Group had been suspended for the remainder of this academic year, and the workplan for APPC had been revised. Changes to regulations due to Covid-19 would continue to be considered by APPC and Senate.

APPC had considered principles developed by the School of Health and Life Sciences which set out the approach to managing placements fairly, to be used if programmes with integral placements leading to professional registration/eligibility faced a shortage of placements. In response to a question about international students, who were not currently considered for priority allocation, and the challenges they faced in making arrangements to be in the UK to undertake placement, the DVC (Academic) advised that the document would be reviewed and refreshed as the position and challenges were clearer.

ii University Research Committee held on 3 February 2021 (Doc S20/44/1)

The PVC Research highlighted that the Committee was working in parallel with the REF Management Group, leading up to the planned submission at the end of March. All was proceeding well and he expressed thanks to academic and support staff across the University for their contribution to the REF submission.

iii International Committee held on 4 February 2021 (Doc S20/45/1)

The DVC (Strategy) reported that the British Council had extended its funding for outbound student exchange.

iv Glasgow School for Business and Society held on 16 December 2020  
(Doc S20/40/1)

This report covered updates from the Dean, and Student Representatives, and information in relation to student experience, research, internationals student numbers and TNE activity, and health and safety.

v The School of Computing Engineering and the Built Environment held on 9 December 2020(Doc S20/41/1)

The Dean of SCEBE reported that since the last School Board, the School had undertaken 4 ELISRs and he thanked colleagues in School and Quality Assurance and Enhancement for all their hard work.

vi The School of Health and Life Sciences held on:

- a. 9 December 2020 (Doc S20/42/1)
- b. 3 February 2021 (Doc S20/43/1)

The Dean of SHLS reported that there had been very positive and increased engagement with Students Association representatives.

- 20.096 Received
- i. A progress update on the development of Strategy for Learning 2030. **(DocS20/56/1)**. The update outlines the key aspects of the draft new learning and teaching strategy which had been developed taking account of initial feedback from Executive Board, Staff, Students Association and students.
  - ii. The primary goal of the new Strategy was “Transforming Education” to be delivered via five Delivering Transformative Education intentions:-
    - Champion equality of participation and attainment for all student
    - Deliver excellence in teaching and the student experience, underpinned by our holistic approach to student support
    - Enhance the employability of our students and graduates through collaborative and active learning
    - Embed a commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals within our research-led, globally aware curriculum
    - Facilitate innovative learning which supports flexible provision and a blend of campus, off-campus, and multi-campus experiences.

Delivery of the Strategy would be supported through three Strategic Enabling Plans (Infrastructure, Finance and People, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provided a guiding framework for all Enabling strategies, plus Schools would each have operational plans

- 20.097 Discussed
- The following points were raised in discussion:-
- The draft plan had been well received at Student Voice and would be discussed at SAGE with further feedback provided thereafter;
  - Each of the School operational plans should make reference to the BAME attainment gap;
  - Request that the Trade Unions were involved in consultations at an early stage given implications for workloads;
  - The financial implications of the Strategy would be discussed at the Executive Board Strategy Awayday in March; and
  - The “Transformative Education on a Page” summary was considered very helpful, and it was noted that it was intended to prepare an interactive version.

- 20.098 Resolved
- To note the draft Strategy for Learning 2030 and that it would be further developed prior to consideration at a special meeting of Senate on 31<sup>st</sup> march 2021.

#### **GCU Athena Swan Institutional Silver Submission**

- 20.099 Noted
- A report on the GCU Athena Swan Institutional Silver submission. **(Doc S20/46/1)**
- 20.100 Reported
- The submission had been prepared following wide consultation with Schools and professional support departments. In addition to this institutional submission, ‘department’ applications were also made by SCEBE (at silver level) and GSBS (at bronze level), and SHLS intended to submit in the next application

round, April 2021. It was hoped that the outcome of the Institutional Silver application would be known by late April 2021.

## **PART B (FOR FORMAL APPROVAL WITH WHATEVER LEVEL OF DISCUSSION IS APPROPRIATE)**

### **Research Degrees Committee**

20.101    Approved        The award of 5 PhDs and one DBA. **(Doc S20/50/1)**

### **2030 Research Enabling Strategy**

20.102    Considered        The draft 2030 Research Strategy. **(Doc S20/47/1)**

20.103    Reported        By the PVC Research that the Draft Strategy had been developed following extensive consultation across the University involving over 300 people.

The guiding framework for the University's research was the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), issued by United Nations in 2015, applying to all countries, in place until 2030, and which were an integral part of the overall University Strategy 2030.

The strategic research goals were to:

- Devise and carry out cutting-edge, interdisciplinary research, addressing the SDGs via our three societal challenges of Healthy Lives, Inclusive Societies and Sustainable Environments;
- Capture and promote evidence of research impact with our stakeholders in public and private sectors and in civil society;
- Extend our research capacity and capability, striving for the highest standards of excellence;
- Contribute to the continued development of academic culture and sense of community within the University through Group, Centre and cross-campus working on research-with-purpose; and
- Strengthen our research-teaching nexus.

The SDGs and the societal challenges would be addressed through a research architect consisting of:

- Cross-cutting research, facilitated by our approval and renewal process for endorsement of new and existing Research Centres, themed against the SDGs; and
- A set of less-formal research groups, of varying size and disciplinarity, some addressing multiple and single SDGs, some operating within, outside and across Research Centres and Schools

University resources would be targeted at facilitating the highest quality research within and across Centres, Research Groups and campuses, and through international partnerships.

In line with GCU 2030 Strategic Indicators, success would be measured against seven research outcomes.

20.104    Discussed        In discussion, the use of the SDG framework was welcomed. It was questioned how gender mainstreaming would be operationalised so that it was apparent

that this applied across the whole Strategy. The PVC Research noted that this could be more explicit and undertook to expand on this and BAME attainment in the final version to be submitted to Court. In further clarification around operationalisation, the DVC (Strategy) advised that individual School and departmental operational plans would reflect Strategy 2030 and the supporting Research and Learning and Teaching Strategies.

- 20.105 Resolved To endorse the draft Research Strategy 2030, subject to the clarifications outlined at 20.103 above, for submission to Court for final approval.

### Senate and Standing Committee Schedule of Meetings Session 2021/22

- 20.106 Approved The schedule of Senate and Senate Standing Committee meetings for Academic Session 2021/22 **(Doc S20/53/1)**

### Senate Standing Orders

- 20.107 Approved An update to Senate Standing Orders to include explicit reference to electronic approval of items. **(Doc S20/52/1)**

### PART C (FOR INFORMATION)

#### Honorary Appointments

- 20.108 Received Notification that the following honorary appointment was awarded by the University Executive Board.

Post	Title	Field of expertise	School
Honorary Professor (Renewal)	Dr. Iain Wallace	Medical Advisor	SHLS
Honorary Professor (Renewal)	J. Mark Barber	Geriatric Medicine	SHLS
Honorary Professor (Renewal)	Graham Ellis	Geriatric Medicine	SHLS
Honorary Professor (Renewal)	Roy N. Scott	Vascular Surgery	SHLS
Honorary Professor (Renewal)	Dr. Eamonn Brankin	Primary Care	SHLS
Honorary Professor (Renewal)	Dr Andrew Collier	Diabetes	SHLS
Honorary Professor	Dr Nicola Steedman	Science Research and Policy	SHLS
Honorary Senior Lecturer	Dr Gary Tanner	Psychological Services	SHLS

#### Academic Appointments

- 20.109 Received A paper on academic appointments made since the last meeting of Senate.

**(Doc S20/48/1)**

**Research Bulletin for Trimester A Session 2020-21**

20.110 Received An update on Research from the PVC Research  
**(Doc S20/49/1)**

**Graduations Update**

20.111 Received An update on GCU Graduation Ceremonies  
**(Doc S20/51/1)**

**Date of Next Meeting**

20.112 Noted The date of the next regular meeting of Senate was 8<sup>th</sup> June 2021, but prior to that there would be a special meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, primarily to consider the updated draft of the 2030 Learning and Teaching Strategy