

## UNIVERSITY SENATE

### Minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2023

- Present:** Professor Steve Decent (Chair), Dr Bipasha Ahmed, Professor Rachel Baker, Professor Tuleen Boutaleb, Dr Jane Burt, Fiona Campbell, Professor Iain Cameron, Kanwal Chaudhry, Dr Diane Dickson, Dr Lyle Grey, Jan Hulme, Claire Hulsen, Professor John Lennon, Professor Mike Mannion, Samantha MacLean, Wendy Mazzucco, Professor Kerri McPherson, Mrs Susan Mitchell, Professor Andrea Nelson, Dr Val Ness, Chidozie Nwaigwe, Professor Angela O'Hagan, Bolaji Oyewo, Professor Ole Pahl, Dr Adrian Pierotti, Professor Alastair Robertson, Professor Carl Schaschke, Aryan Stravastava, Linda Shearer, Professor Anita Simmers, Brian Smith, Professor Sheila Smith, Professor Bonnie Steves, Laiba Tareen, and Professor Bruce Wood.
- Apologies:** Professor Mohamed Farrag, Dr Karen Fryer, Dr Catriona Khamisha, Tom McAlear, Irene Mains, Dr Alexandra Mavroeidi, Aspen Milledge, Dr Nadia Northway and Dr Karen Thomson.
- In Attendance:** Stephen Lopez, Academic Registrar  
Dr Linda Walsh, Vice Chair, Senate Disciplinary Committee  
Robert Ruthven, Director of Library Services
- Deborah Donnet, Acting Head of Governance and Clerk to Senate
- Observers:** Ian Kerr (Lay Governor), Paul Brown (Governance and Legal Services), Louise Clark (Governance and Legal Services), Anastasia Fliatoura (Governance and Legal Services), Rory MacLean (Admissions), Lesley McAleavy (Quality Assurance and Enhancement) and Christine Reid (People Services)

### Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone to the third meeting of Senate in academic session 2022/23. As it was the first meeting of Senate since the Chair joined the University the previous month, all members and those in attendance were invited to introduce themselves and observers were welcomed. The Chair made reference to recent changes in the senior leadership team and the resultant impact on the ex officio membership of Senate, and informed that the composition of Senate would be reviewed as part of the Senate effectiveness review that would take place later in the year.

#### 1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

- 1.1 The Chair informed Senate that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022 had been approved by prior circulation.

## **2. Matters Arising**

- 2.1 Senate **noted** a report on the matters arising from the Senate meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022 and the actions taken since that meeting to address them.

## **3. Principal's Report to Senate**

- 3.1 Senate **noted** a report from the Chair on matters and priorities relating to academic functions, teaching & learning and research.
- 3.2 Appended to the report, for information, was a presentation on the Chair's first impressions of and visions for the University. The Chair informed Senate that he was going round each department and directorate to speak to staff and this would take some time to complete. In the meantime, should Senators have any issues they wished to discuss with him, he would be happy to meet on a one to one basis.
- 3.3 He provided a brief summary of his first impressions, key points of which were that the University was a leading Scottish modern university, with a strong reputation in widening access. He was keen to ensure it was a great place to work and study, providing excellent support for students. There would be a re-emphasis on core activities and investment in the campus. GCU London was thriving but faced different challenges to the Glasgow campus, and these would be explored. The University's inclusive approach to admissions would continue and there were opportunities to work with employers to maximise student employability. The University was on a strong research growth trajectory, as were other modern universities, and the sector landscape was shifting. A key opportunity was to become a civic university and better build, develop and curate partnerships. The University had recently experienced strong international growth in PGT courses, and this remained an important strategic growth area, however this needed to go hand in hand with internal investment. Priorities for action were the accommodation crisis facing students in Glasgow, the costs of living crisis and staff workloads.

## **4. Student Partnership Agreement: Refresh**

- 4.1 The PVC Learning and Teaching introduced a paper that provided a draft update to the GCU Student Partnership Agreement that was first developed in 2016/17. The paper had been drafted following consultation with students and staff and considering the University's 2030 Strategy and the Students' Association 2025 Strategic Plan.
- 4.2 The Partnership Agreement is underpinned by the concept of community, based on the premise that all members of the Glasgow Caledonian University community – students, staff and the Students' Association – are responsible for partnership working in practice. The University and Students' Association are committed to the continuous enhancement of the student experience and the Partnership Agreement outlines how all involved will work together to achieve this.
- 4.3 The Partnership Agreement outlined the shared responsibility to -
- Ensure all members of our University's community feel a strong sense of belonging;
  - Enhance our high quality learning, teaching and research;
  - Enrich our wider GCU experience; and
  - Enact positive change in our communities for the Common Good.
- 4.4 The Student President confirmed that the Student's Association, including in GCU London, had been heavily involved in the refresh of the agreement. In discussion, it was suggested opportunities for student civic engagement or engagement with employers, reference to Graduate Apprenticeships and linkages with the Dignity at Work and Study Policy should be included.

4.5 Senate **endorsed** the refreshed Student Partnership Agreement, noting that it would be reviewed in light of feedback given, before being submitted to University Executive Group, and then Court and the Students' Association Trustee Board for approval.

**5. Implementing Strategy for Learning 2030: Embedding the Sustainable Development Goals through inclusive curricula.**

5.1 The PVC Learning and Teaching introduced a paper that proposed an enhancement-led programme of staff development to share existing good practice and support future curriculum development. The paper further proposed that evidence of pedagogic approaches that facilitate students' literacy of sustainability matters would be explicitly sought within the University's quality processes for provision. Approval was sought in AY23/24 and for all existing programmes from AY24/25 as part of the University's commitment to SDGs and EDI set within the broader strategy for enhancing student outcomes and graduates' employability.

5.2 The Chair outlined that the proposals would enhance student employability. It wasn't a "tick box" exercise and the developmental approach proposed, ensured that how it was implemented would be a matter of academic judgement within each discipline. Work of this nature was already underway within the University, although at differing stages.

5.3 It was highlighted that there was no specific reference to gender, other than in relation to Athena Swan, and it was suggested that gender needed to be more prevalent in wellbeing and student experience as well as in the curriculum. The PVC Learning and Teaching welcomed this feedback and agreed to take this on board. In relation to wider EDI issues, he advised that an EDI self-evaluation toolkit would be piloted. He also reported that a Steering Group would be established, as would staff development resources and a means to share good practice.

5.4 The Senate **endorsed** the proposed approach.

**6. Research Integrity Annual Statement and Report 2021/22**

6.1 The Interim Provost and DVC presented the Research Integrity Annual Statement and Report for 2021/22. The report, which was part of the commitment to the Universities UK Concordat to support research integrity, provided a summary of actions and activities that had been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and applications of research integrity issues; provided assurance that the processes for dealing with allegations of misconduct were transparent, robust, fair and appropriate; and informed that no cases of research misconduct were reported during session 2021-22.

6.2 The Senate **approved** the Research Integrity Annual Statement and Report 2021-22 for submission to the University Court.

**7. Research Report for 2022/2023 Quarter 2**

7.1 The Interim Provost and DVC presented the 2022/23 Research Report for the second quarter of 2022/23, that provided a summary of research and innovation applications, awards and "success" rates by volume and value to GCU by School.

7.2 The Senate **noted** the report.

**8. Senate Disciplinary Committee Annual Report 2021/2022**

8.1 The Acting Head of Governance presented the Senate Disciplinary Committee Report for 2021/2022, that provided an overview of the misconduct offences considered under the terms of the Code of Student Conduct for the academic session 2021/2022.

- 8.2 Key points to note were
- a small increase in the number of GBV related cases, which whilst concerning, was not unexpected given the campaigns, internal and external, to highlight the unacceptability of Gender Based Violence and also the launch in November 2021, of Report and Support, the University's online reporting tool for all forms of inappropriate behaviour; and
  - in line with the rest of the sector, a significant increase in academic misconduct including plagiarism, cheating in digital assessments and ghostwriting.
- 8.3 In discussion, the challenges in ensuring academic integrity, including the emerging challenges brought about by predatory ghostwriters and AI were discussed, including ensuring that students were aware of the range of support services within the University, including the Learning Development Centres, and how to appropriately use them.
- 8.4 A student Senator noted that additional support in academic writing would be welcomed by international students, many of whom had different educational backgrounds prior to studying in GCU. The need for students to engage in induction was also raised as an important way for students to gain an awareness of academic standards and integrity and support services.
- 8.5 The impact of increasing academic misconduct on workloads was also highlighted and the need for staff to be better informed and supported.
- 8.6 The PVC Learning and Teaching acknowledged the issues raised, and advised that work was ongoing in relation to comms to students about the need for academic integrity and highlighting support. He advised that consideration would be given to looking at more support for academic writing and guidance for staff.
- 8.7 Senate **noted** the report.

## 9. **Complaints Annual Report 2021/2022**

- 9.1 The Acting Head of Governance presented the Annual Complaints Report for 2021/22, that provided an overview of the complaints received by the University in the period 1<sup>st</sup> August 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022.
- 9.2 It was highlighted that there were 179 Stage 1 (frontline) complaints and 10 Stage 2 complaints (complaint investigations) received. One complaint was referred by the complainants to the SPSO on completion of the University's complaints handling procedure but it was not taken forward for investigation by the SPSO.
- 9.3 Senate **noted** the report.

## 10. **Standing Committee & School Board Summary Reports**

- 10.1 Senate **noted** reports from the following Standing Committees and School Boards and the respective Chairs highlighted key points from the reports:
- Academic Policy and Practice Committee held on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2023
  - University Research Committee held on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023
  - School of Health and Life Sciences School Board held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022
  - School of Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment School Board held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022
  - Glasgow School for Business and Society School Board held on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023

## **11. Senate Composition and Membership**

11.1 The paper provided the current Senate composition updated to take account of recent changes at Executive level in the University. The paper also informed that Prof Nelson, as Interim Provost and DVC, was the Vice Chair of Senate.

11.2 As stated at the start of the meeting, the Chair reiterated that the composition of Senate would be considered as part of the Senate effectiveness review.

11.3 Senate **noted** the updated composition and membership.

## **12. Research Degrees Committee**

12.1 Senate approved the award of 10 PhDs.

## **13. Senate and Standing Committees Calendar of Meetings 2023/2024**

13.1 Senate received the Calendar of meetings for Senate and its Standing Committees for the academic year 2023/2024.

13.2 Senate **approved** the calendar of meetings.

## **14. Fitness to Study Policy**

14.1 The Director of Student Life presented the updated Fitness to Study Policy that was initially implemented in 2018.

14.2 Senate **approved** the updated Fitness to Study Policy.

## **15. Date of the Next meeting**

15.1 Senate noted that the date of the next meeting was on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

## **16 AOCB**

### **16.1 Changes to Latest Date of Registration**

The Chair informed Senate that he would be asking Senate to consider, before the next scheduled meeting, a proposal that would bring forward the latest date of student registration. This was considered necessary because of challenges in progression and academic workload arising due to the increasing number of students registering later in the term. This was a live issue and more work needed to be done before presenting Senate with a firm proposal.

16.2 The proposal was welcomed by both staff and student members, however it was noted that many students' arrivals in the UK were delayed because of issues in receiving CAS letters in good time, so this was a matter that needed to be resolved. This was acknowledged and it was something that would be looked into.

16.3 Having obtained agreement in principle for the proposal, the Chair advised that a detailed proposal, with dates driven by operational requirements, would be submitted electronically to Senate, in due course, for approval.

### **16.4 Fit to Sit**

A student member raised that he was aware of some international students who had to submit Fit to Sit applications due to illness, but that this now meant that they would now finish their studies later than

planned. Due to the timing of assessments, these students would not be eligible to apply for a post study work visa.

- 16.5 The PVC Learning and Teaching advised that the University was aware of this issue and steps would be taken to address this, as had happened in the past. An academic member of Senate requested early notification of action to be taken in order to manage workload, and this was acknowledged.