

Report from the meeting of Senate held on 8th June 2020

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 Chair informed Senate that it had been announced there was to be a review of the FE and HE teaching and research provision in Scotland, and this would report to the Minister in August. This was considered to be a very significant review over a very short period of time and Senate would be kept informed of any update.

The Chair expressed the University's solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement, and the University would continue to work in partnership with the Students' Unions in raising awareness and tackling racism. In 2019 the University established the Tackling Racism Working Group, Chaired by Dr Boutaleb, and this would report into the People Committee in the autumn and feedback would be given to Senate.

2. Covid-19 Related Disruption to Postgraduate Research at GCU

Senate received a report that outlined the work undertaken by the University with the postgraduate research student community to address Covid-induced interruptions to their studies. The report outlined that there had been two rounds of surveys in order to get a clear understanding of the impact the Covid-19 related disruption had had on students' research and what support was required to address this. Executive Board had approved the development of a set of plans in three main areas: - Wellbeing and Resource Support; Time extensions support (to apply to self-funded as well as funded students; and Funding extensions support. It was noted that the Scottish Funding Council has agreed a funding boost for research and information was awaited on what GCU's allocation from this fund would be.

3. Safe Return to Campus

The Chief Operating Officer gave a verbal update on the plans in place to facilitate a safe, orderly and structured return to campus. It was reported that the Estates Management Group had already undertaken a significant amount of preparatory work to understand, mitigate and manage risks. The University was preparing a plan in line with the Scottish Government's four phased plan to lift lockdown, and this plan would take account of guidance for the sector issued by a number of sources. There would be a phased return to campus with priority given to first year and articulating 3rd year students, medical education and modules that could not be taught remotely. The human factor was central to the plans, and the need to be sensitive to individual circumstances was paramount.

In discussion, concern was raised about combining work with childcare and other caring responsibilities, and the Director of People advised that further guidance on this would be developed in consultation with the trade unions. Concern was also raised about students, and international students in particular, making arrangements for accommodation for the forthcoming academic year, and it was noted that communication about this would be sent as soon as clearer information was available.

4. Review of ELISR Schedule (Covid-19)

Senate noted a report that informed that the University had received confirmation from the SFC that it was content for the University to extend the review schedule for four Enhancement Lead Institutional Subject Reviews (ELISRs) due to Covid-19, noting that this may mean that the maximum six-year Institution-led Review cycle was exceeded.

5. Revisions to Senate's Standing Orders

Senate considered proposals for the revision of its Standing Orders which required to be reviewed as part of the regular cycle of reviewing standing orders and to ensure Senate was compliant with the HE Governance (Scotland) Act 2016. Whilst many of the changes were editorial to better reflect or clarify existing practice, there were some proposed revisions that were changes to the current Standing Orders. In discussing the proposed revisions, whilst Senate was generally supportive, clarification was requested and it was agreed that further work be done and the draft, revised Standing Orders be circulated electronically to Senate for agreement, prior to submission to Court for approval.

The revised Senate Standing Orders are on the agenda for this meeting, for Court's approval.

6. Assessment Regulations Sub-Committee

Senate discussed and noted a report from the Assessment Regulations Sub-Committee outlining recent work undertaken by the Sub-Committee.

Additionally, Senate approved:

- a) the revised GCU Study Abroad and Grade Conversion Policy and that the Operational Handbook would be owned by Academic Quality;
- b) the updated GCU Assessment Moderation Policy and revised GCU assessment review and moderation templates for academic session 2020/21; and
- c) updates to the Taught Postgraduate Assessment Regulations and Terms of Reference and Standard Operations of Progression and Award Boards and Associated Activities, and that these be implemented to allow Trimester B start students to resit at the next available diet.

7. GCU Going Digital

The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience) introduced a report that outlined the new GCU Going Digital Framework which incorporated a set of pedagogic principles and four enabling work-streams or 'pillars' designed to align with the University's new 2030 strategy and its education goal. The Framework would support GCU's underlying mission, vision and values as the University for the Common Good, and builds on work to date, incorporating principles already discussed at Academic Policy and Practice Committee and Senate. Going forward, the pedagogic principles would form a key part of the planned University wide consultation with staff and students to create the new 2030 Strategy for Learning.

Following discussion, Senate provided general feedback and endorsed the direction of travel. Further information/ guidance on required standards of delivery, especially in the current circumstances and guidance on the operationalisation of the framework was also requested. It was agreed to hold a special meeting of Senate to consider an updated report taking account of Senate's feedback.

8. Enhancement Lead Institutional Review

The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience) informed Senate that the ELIR scheduled for March that had been postponed due to Covid-19 would now take place from 16th to 20th November 2020 and would be an online event.

9. SFC Outcome Agreement 2020/21

Senate received and noted the Outcome Agreement for 2020/21 which had been submitted to the Scottish Funding Council for its deadline of 30th April 2020.

10. School of Health and Life Sciences: Portfolio Refresh and Programme Withdrawal

Senate approved a report from the School of Health and Life Science recommending the withdrawal of the Top-up Doctorate route in D.Psych Counselling Psychology. The report highlighted that the last students graduated within the 2018-19 session and the withdrawal had no bearing or impact on the Full-Time and Part-Time Doctorate Programmes in Counselling Psychology.

11. Approval of Chair's Action

Senate homologated a Senate Chair's Action on amendments to the Assessment Regulations in response to Covid-19.

12. Other Matters Approved

- The award of 17 PhDs, 1 Prof D, 1 DBA and one PhD by previous publication.
- Updated Senate membership for 20/21 in light of the recently approved updated composition.

13. Other Matters Noted

- Senate Forward Look.
- Honorary Appointments.
- Recent academic staff appointments.
- The confirmed minutes of APPC held on 29th January 2020.
- The confirmed minutes of the Research Committees held on 5th February and 1st April 2020.
- The confirmed minute of the meetings of the International Committee held on 17th November 2019.
- The confirmed minutes from the School of Health and Life Sciences School Board held on 14th February 2020.
- The confirmed minutes from the School of Computing, Engineering and Built Environment School Board held on 19th February 2020.
- The Confirmed minutes from the Glasgow School for Business and Society of 16th October 2019, 18th December 2019 and 19th February 2020.
- Senate and Standing Committee Calendar of Meetings for 2019/20.
- The Academic Calendar for 2020/21.
- The summary report from the meeting of University Court held on 23rd April 2020.
- Research Bulletin for Tri B.

Date of the next scheduled meeting of Senate is Friday 16th October 2020