

UNIVERSITY SENATE

Minutes of the meeting held on 9th June 2021

Present: Professor P Gillies (Chair), Dr B Ahmed, Dr T Boutaleb, Ms J Burt, Professor M E Farrag, Dr M Ferguson, R Gowans, Dr L Grey, Ms J Hulme, Dr C Khamisha, Mr S Latta, Prof J Lennon, Professor G Loffler, Mr T McAlear, Dr K McPherson, Professor M Mannion, Mrs W Mazzucco, Professor J Miller, Professor A Nelson, Dr V Ness, Ms T Nyariki, Dr A O'Hagan, Professor O Pahl, Dr A Pierotti, Mr A Rahoo, Dr J Riley, Ms R Russell, Miss L Shearer, Professor A Simmers, Mr B Smith, Professor B Steves, Dr K Thomson, and Professor V Webster

Apologies: Dr K Bannigan, Ms J Burt, Professor C Donaldson, Mr J England, Mr T Kilpatrick, Professor J McCallum, Dr C Miller, Mr A Nesbit, Dr O Uthmani and Mr Vincent Waters

In Attendance: 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
Professor A Robertson, Director of Academic Development & Student Learning

Mrs D Donnet, Clerk to Senate
Mrs L Clark, Department of Governance
Mrs L McGinley, Department of Governance

Observers: Mrs E Anderson (Executive Support), Mr C Fitch (Governor), Mrs E Fry (Executive Support), Mrs L Johnson (Executive Support), Mr U U Kalu (Research Student), Mr A Lui (People Services), Mrs M Lustman (Governor), Dr D Rankin (Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions), Mr R Woodward (Chair of Court)

Chairs Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone to the fifth meeting of Senate in academic session 2020/21, and in particular welcomed Adil Rahoo to his first meeting as Student President, Professor Andrea Nelson to her first as PVC Research and Professor Anita Simmers, her first as Acting Dean, School of Health and Life Sciences.

Following a request, Item C.04 Academic Calendar on Part C (for information only) of the Agenda was elevated for discussion.

PART A (FOR CONSIDERATION)

Minutes

- 20.124 Approved The minutes of the meeting of Senate held on 24th February 2021 and the extraordinary meeting held on 31st March 2021.
(Doc S20/57/1 and Doc S20/60/1)

Matters Arising

- 20.125 Noted The matters arising briefing report and any matters arising on the minutes not otherwise provided for on the agenda.
(Doc S20/77/1)

Principal & Vice Chancellor & Executive Board Report

- 20.126 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 S20/61/1)
- 20.127 Discussed
- i. The Principal informed Senate that she had spoken with Mr Jamie Hepburn, the recently appointed Minister for Higher Education and Further Education, Youth Employment and Training.
 - ii. Senate expressed congratulations to the GCU Foundation which had won a CASE (Council for Advancement and support of Education) Circle of Excellence Grand Gold Award for the MINT (Mentoring, Internships, Networking and Talks) Programme. The University had received the highest award possible from almost 3000 entries from 530 institutions.

Response to Covid-19

- 20.128 Noted
- i. An update from the Chief Operating Officer on the University's Response to the Covid-19 pandemic, who reported that guidance from the Scottish Government was awaited but there was a clear aspiration to provide a positive student experience. The student testing facility on campus would be closing shortly and would be replaced with the provision of self-testing kits for staff and students. The public symptomatic testing centre would be closing in mid-august, and the Arc would consequently be available for University use for the new academic year. An announcement was expected shortly regarding the vaccination of overseas students, and the University had forwarded information to home students about the vaccination registration programme for those aged 18-29.
 - ii. The Chief Operating Officer indicated that that some members of staff had concerns about returning to campus, however the collaborative working between the University and the Trade Unions via the Health Safety and Wellbeing Committee had ensured a safe environment for both staff and students. For staff who had already returned to campus, there had been ongoing dialogue between individual staff members and senior managers in order to understand and address concerns, and this had been very well received by staff. In discussion it was suggested that informal reorientation for staff, with the ability to come onto campus prior to starting work would help allay any concerns, and it was agreed to explore this, together with the provision of an external social space. Arrangements to support the return to campus for London staff would also be made.

- iii. The pilot to enable students arriving from overseas to quarantine in university accommodation rather than in government appointed hotels, had not produced the results expected, and there were no plans by the government to roll this out.

Tackling Racism Working Group: Tackling Racism at GCU – Recommendations and Action Plan

20.129	Received	Senate received the Tackling Racism at GCU Recommendations and Action Plan (Doc S20/74/1) that outlined the steps taken by the University to tackle racism, and detailed the findings, work to date and recommendations of the Tackling Racism at GCU Working Group. Dr Tuleen Boutaleb, the Chair of the Working Group reported that Executive Board had developed an action plan based on the recommendations, with each action being owned by a member of the Executive.
20.130	Discussed	Senate discussed issues relating to the decolonisation of the curriculum and cultural shift and how the latter could be measured and evaluated. The need for both qualitative and quantitative data was noted, as was the need to involve the University’s research centres. The position of students on placement or work experience was highlighted, and it was acknowledged that this element of the student experience was not reflected in the literature around racism in HE and Dr Boutaleb advised that this would be considered by the Working Group. The experience of those who were white, but not white Scottish or British, and as such had also experienced discriminatory behaviour was noted, and Senate was informed that the use of the term BAME was being reviewed to ensure a fully inclusive approach.
20.131	Resolved	Senate welcomed the work that had been undertaken to date and noted the action plan

Tackling Racism Working Group: Ethnicity in the student population 2020-21

20.132	Received	A report on Ethnicity in the student population: Applications, entrants, retention and outcomes (Doc S20/38/1). One of the recommendations for tackling racism agreed by the University was to Ensure BAME student and staff data was part of regular, mainstream University reports, and the report provided the current overview of GCU data for home and RUK undergraduate students, with comparisons provided to Scottish sector data where available.
20.133	Discussed	The DVC Strategy outlined that within the BAME classification, there was a variation between different ethnicities in relation to successful applications, retention, attainment and graduate outcomes. It was acknowledged that the data, in relation to black students in particular, was concerning however, the data would be considered by Schools to determine appropriate courses of action to help eliminate the attainment gap. Whilst not yet available, this analysis of student data would be extended to post graduate students and in relation to gender also. International students were not included in the data.
20.134	Resolved	To note the report.

IHRA Definition20-21

20.135	Received	International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s (IHRA) definition of antisemitism (Doc S20/76/1)
20.136	Reported	By the Principal that the University had received a request to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s (IHRA) definition of anti-

Semitism. While it was considered that the University's existing policies were sufficiently robust to prevent anti-Semitism, and to deal with it were it to arise, all HEIs were being asked to address the request, and many had already signed the declaration, particularly in England. Scottish HEIs had either recognised already or were giving the matter active consideration. Given the direction of travel in the sector and in wider society, consideration of the request was therefore required by the University.

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| 20.137 | Discussed | It was noted that, while the definition itself was unproblematic, concerns had been raised in the sector about an example accompanying the definition. These concerns were also shared by the UCU, however there was support within the UCU for adopting the declaration subject to a caveat of the type outlined in the discussion paper and as had been undertaken elsewhere in the sector. Following further discussion the caveat adopted by the University of Sunderland was thought to be appropriate, although some members suggested making explicit the distinction between Judaism and the State of Israel. |
| 20.138 | Resolved | Senate agreed that a recommendation be submitted to Court that the definition be recognised with an accompanying caveat. |

HESA Performance Indicators 2021

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| 20.139 | Received | HESA Performance Indicators 2021
(Doc S20/62/1) |
| 20.140 | Reported | Senate noted a report highlighting the University's strong performance in the 2021 HESA Performance Indicators, especially within the context of the Scottish sector. Key highlights included:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2019-20 GCU had a proportion of 96.3% young first degree entrants from a state school or College, well ahead of both our benchmark (91.2%) and the Scottish sector average (86.8%); • Strong performance in the projected degree completion PI has been maintained and at 80.6%; • GCU had the highest projected degree completion in terms of Scottish modern universities, ahead of many universities and the Scottish sector as a whole (79.7%); • The PI for 'Neither award nor transfer' was 8.3%, with GCU performing ahead of the Scottish sector (10.2%) and achieving the lowest drop-out rate in terms of Scottish modern universities; and • GCU had the lowest percentage of non-continuation after first year of study across all entrants compared to the Scottish modern universities. |

Standing Committee and School Board Summary Reports

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| 20.141 | Noted | Senate received summary reports highlighting key items discussed at the following Senate Standing Committees and School Boards: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. <u>Academic Policy and Practice Committee held on 18th March and 5th May 2021 (Doc S20/63/1 and Doc S20/78/1)</u> <p>The DVC (Academic) highlighted key issues from both these meetings and in particular that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a draft Concise Guide to Academic Quality for Programme Leaders had been developed to act as an operational guide to the quality aspects of the Programme Leader role and following feedback this would be brought back to APPC and subsequently Senate; and |
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- the temporarily suspended Assessment Regulations Sub-Committee would be reinstated to consider digital learning and academic misconduct, and that Senate would be kept informed
- ii. University Research Committee held on 24th March and 2nd May 2021 (Doc S20/64/1 and Doc S20/79/1)
- The PVC Research highlighted a report on the REF would be submitted in the next session and that work was ongoing in relation to Research Ethics and Integrity. It was noted that the CEDARS survey for staff researchers would be open until the end of the week.
- iii. International Committee held on 12th April 2021 (Doc S20/65/1)
- The DVC Strategy informed that key matters discussed were activities pertaining to strategic outward mobility and International Enrolment Trends 2019-20.
- iv. The School of Computing Engineering and the Built Environment held on 23rd February 2021 (Doc S20/66/1)
- The Dean of SCEBE highlighted that the Board had approved the academic and business case for a masters in Applied Data Science in Engineering and this was a new and exciting area for the University.
- v. The School of Health and Life Sciences held on 23rd February and 14th April (Docs S20/66/1 and S20/67/1)
- The Acting Dean of SHLS highlighted key items and thanked Professor Nelson for her leadership in the School during her tenure as Dean.

Banded Grading

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| 20.142 | Received | Banded Grading Update (DocS20/80/1) |
| 20.143 | Reported | Professor Andrea Nelson, Chair of the Banded Grading Working Group highlighted the work of the Working Group and in particular outlined a proposal to pilot the Banded Grading Framework across four undergraduate levels and types of assessment: MCQ, short-answer exam questions, essay, presentation, dissertation, and practical assessment. |
| 20.144 | Resolved | To note the report and the proposal for the pilot, and that the Director of Academic Development and Student Learning would be taking over as chair of the Banded Grading Working Group. |

Academic Calendar

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| 20.145 | Received | The Academic Calendar for Session 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 (Doc S20/72/1) |
| 20.146 | Discussed | A query was raised about the timing of the September University holiday, which coincided with the beginning of term. The impact that the holiday had on timetabling had been considered before, and there were pros and cons to retaining this as a University holiday. |
| 20.147 | Resolved | As it was too late to consider any changes to the academic calendar for 2021/22 it was agreed to note the Calendar as submitted and to review it for the 2022/23 academic year. |

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

Research Degrees Committee

20.148 Approved The award of 20 PhDs, 1 PhD by previous publication and 1 DBA (**Doc S20/50/1**)

**Secretary's Note: Post meeting the Clerk to Senate was informed that one PhD candidate had been reported in error and accordingly action was taken to ensure that the student did not receive the award. The student's name will be resubmitted to Senate once the amendments have been confirmed by the examining panel and RDC.*

Criminal Convictions Policy

20.149 Considered Criminal Convictions Policy for Applicants and Registered Students (**DocS20/69/1**)

20.150 Reported By the DVC Strategy that the Policy had been updated to reflect policy changes in UCAS, Data Protection requirements and revisions in the Universities own processes. One key change was to remove the criminal convictions question for programmes which do not require enhanced disclosure at point of application and only ask this information of applicants who firmly accept an offer at GCU. This approach has been subject to extensive discussion with our legal advisors and the University's Data Protection Officer.

20.151 Discussed In discussion and in response to a question it was clarified that the position regarding international students had not been changed.

20.152 Resolved To approve the updated Criminal Convictions Policy for Applicants and Registered Students

PART C (FOR INFORMATION)

Honorary Appointments

20.153 Received Notification that the following honorary appointments were awarded by the University Executive Board.

Post	Title	Field of expertise	School
Honorary Professor	Dr Lesley Holdsworth	Physiotherapy	SHLS
<i>*Secretary's Note: Post meeting one further appointment was noted via email circulation:</i>			
Honorary Professor	Professor Nicky Andrews	Nursing	SHLS

Academic Appointments

20.154 Received A paper on academic appointments made since the last meeting of Senate (**Doc S20/70/1**)

Research Bulletin for Trimester B Session 2020-21

20.155 Received An update on Research from the PVC Research (**Doc S20/71/1**)

Summary Report of Court

20.156 Received The Summary Report of the meeting of University Court held on 22nd April 2021.
(Doc S20/73/1)

Date of Next Meeting

20.157 Noted The date of the next regular meeting of Senate was Wednesday 20th October 2021.

AOCB

20.158 Noted An update from the Principal that since the circulation of the papers for the meeting, the Schools had identified the following Heads of Academic Department Members of Senate

GSBS

Mr Ben McConville
Dr Susan Ogden
Ms Jane Burt

SCEBE

Mr Tony Kilpatrik
Professor Gordon Morison
Dr Babakalli Alkali

SHLS

Dr Kerri McPherson
Professor Gunter Loffler
Dr Katrina Bannigan

Chair's Closing Remarks

The Principal thanked all Senate members for their hard work over the last year. In particular, thanks were expressed to the following outgoing members:

- Dr Jackie Riley, Alan Nesbit, Linda Shearer and Rachel Russell (all Head of Department Members)
- Professor Jacqueline McCallum (SHLS Elected academic staff member)
- Brian Smith (elected academic member not in a School)

Thanks were also extended to the Past Student President, Susan Docherty and outgoing Student Members Eilidh Fulton and Kathinka Mumme. Finally, best wishes and thanks were extended to the DVC Learning, Teaching and Student Experience who would be retiring in September. Professor Webster was commended for her contribution to the work of the University over the years, and most recently for her work in relation to the very successful ELIR and development of the 2030 Learning and Teaching Strategy.