

UNIVERSITY SENATE

Minutes of the meeting held on 6th March 2020

Present: Mr M Apiliga, Professor A Britton, Professor I Cameron, Dr D Chalmers, Dr S Dolan, Professor C Donaldson, Dr M Ferguson, Professor P Gillies (Chair), Ms J Hulme, Professor J Lennon, Professor G Loffler, Dr D Lukic (by phone), Prof J McCallum, Dr B McConville, Professor M Mannion, Mrs W Mazzucco, Dr C Miller, Professor A Morgan (by phone), Ms K Mumme, Professor A Nelson, Dr A Pierotti, Mr B Smith, Professor S Smith, Dr K Thomson, Dr M Tong, Professor V Webster and Professor B Wood.

Apologies: Dr T Boutaleb, Mr N Clark, Ms E Fulton, Dr C Khamisha, Dr S Lodge, Mr T McAlear, Dr K McPherson, Professor J Miller, and Professor B Steves.

Mr M Anderson, Mrs S Mitchell and Mr R Ruthven

In Attendance: Ms F Campbell, Director of People
Mc C Hulsen, Director of Strategy and Planning,
Mr S Lopez, Academic Registrar
Ms J Main, Director of Student Life

Mrs D Donnet, Clerk to Senate

Observers: Mrs L Clark (Governance), Mr D Gallagher (Lay Governor), Mr A Haseeb (Lay Governor), Miss L Johnson (Executive Support), Mr I Kerr (Lay Governor), Ms M Lustman (Lay Governor), Ms N Mahal (Lay Governor), Ms B Stevenson (Students' Association) and Ms A Volkert (SHLS)

Chairs Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed Ms Kathinka Mumme, the International Student member, to her first Senate meeting. Mr Moses Apiliga, attending on behalf of the Student President, was also welcomed. A welcome was extended to all observers, especially those attending for the first time, and to Professor Morgan and Dr Lukic, joining by telephone, from GCU London.

PART A (FOR CONSIDERATION)

Minutes

19.088 Approved: The unconfirmed draft minutes of the meeting of Senate held 6th December 2019. **(Doc S19/33/1)**

Matters Arising Briefing Note

19.089 Approved The Matters Arising Briefing Note. **(Doc S19/34/1)**

Principal & Vice Chancellor and Executive Board Report

- 19.090 Noted
- i. 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. **(Doc S19/35/1)**
 - ii. In response to a question in relation to the ongoing industrial action by UCU staff, and the position of students and HE sector staff on casual contracts in particular, the Chair advised that UCEA had very recently contacted Vice Chancellors informing that work was underway to reopen negotiations. The University recognised staff's right to strike and contingency plans were in place to ensure that students were not disadvantaged. In relation to the position of casual staff, it was highlighted that the University had low levels of casual staff as a lot of work had already been done in this area and further work would continue.

Senate Composition

19.091 Considered A proposal for revisions to Senate composition to ensure compliance with the Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2016. **(Doc S19/36/1)**

19.092 Reported By the Chair, that the proposals for the revised Senate composition had been prepared following consultation with staff, the Students' Association, trade unions, Deans and Senate members, and had been endorsed by Executive Board.

The proposed composition had a total of 44 members:-
18 Ex officio members
20 Elected Academic Staff Members
6 Elected Student Members

A key change from the current composition was the increase in elected academic staff and elected student members to ensure that at least 51% of membership was elected, and that at least 10% of overall membership was students. The removal of co-opted members, meant that the Professional and Support Staff Governor and the representative from City of Glasgow College would no longer be Senate members, and co-opted student members would be included within the elected student members.

Additionally, following further consideration, Senate was asked to consider the inclusion of the Director of Learning and Teaching as an ex-officio member. This reflected the importance of learning and teaching within Senate's terms of reference and regular business, and it would echo the position of the Director of the Graduate School in relation to research.

19.093 Discussed

- i. One elected academic staff member expressed opposition to the proposal to include the Director of Learning and Teaching as an ex-officio member, indicating that it would be more appropriate to reinstate the Professional and Support Staff Governor as a Senate member. They expressed concern that Professional and Support staff would not have a voice at Senate despite many of the decisions made by Senate, having an impact on them. In discussion, it was clarified that the Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2016 was clear that Senate was an academic body and no provision had been made for the inclusion of other staff groups. Further, no clear, functional justification for the inclusion of professional and support staff had been made.

As many of Senate's Non-Voting Advisors were Professional and Support staff, it was considered that there was sufficient opportunity for the impact of any of Senate decisions to be considered in discussion. The current Professional and

Support Staff Governor expressed his support for the removal of the position from the Senate composition, and indicated that he was reassured that there were sufficient safeguards in place to represent the interest of this staff constituency.

It was noted that the Professional and Support Staff Governor would be able to attend Senate, as an invitation to attend Senate as an observer was extended to Court Governors as well as all staff.

- ii. There was strong support for the inclusion for the role of Director of Learning and Teaching to be included as an ex officio member, with Senators indicating that this role would bring strong, strategic oversight to Senate's discussions and decision making.

- 19.094 Resolved
- a) to agree the revised Senate Composition as included at Appendix 1 of the report, subject to the inclusion of the Director of Learning and Teaching as an ex officio member rather than a non-voting advisor;
 - b) to note that the agreed revised Senate Composition will be submitted to Court on 23rd April 2020 for approval;
 - c) to note that updated Senate Standing Orders reflecting the revised composition will be submitted to Senate in June for approval; and
 - d) to note that elections for additional elected academic staff members will take place in May 2020. Arrangements for the election of Heads of Departments would be included in the revised Standing Orders.

ELIR Update

- 19.095 Received An update from the DVC (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience) on the ELIR. **(Doc S19/51/1)**
- 19.096 Reported By the DVC (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience) that the planning visit by the ELIR Panel on 6th February had gone well, and the Panel had expressed its appreciation at the collegiate engagement with students and staff. The Panel would be back on campus for the review the week beginning 23rd March and initial feedback would be given on the 27th April, with the draft report a week to ten days later. The final report would be received the week beginning 13th July.
- 19.097 Agreed To note the update and the Chair expressed appreciation for the hard work undertaken by staff and students involved in the ELIR.

Mitigating Circumstances Policy Update

- 19.098 Considered A report updating on the Review of the Mitigating Circumstances Policy. **(Doc S19/47/1)**
- 19.099 Reported By the Academic Registrar, that further discussions on the review of the Mitigating Circumstances Policy (Mits) had taken place since the last meeting of Senate. These discussions had identified a number of general principles that for the basis of a revised approach to Mits. This included
- a) An overarching statement that students would be considered 'fit to sit/submit' but could self-declare if not fit, either beforehand or up to two working days after the submission/examination date. Effectively, the 2 working days post-

assessment would be the retro-mits window, allowing for a period of self-reflection.

- b) No need for students to provide evidence or articulate impact, as Mits would be automatically accepted.
- c) If a student self-declared as unfit and had submitted or undertaken an assessment, it would not be marked and no feedback would be given, thereby preventing any perceived competitive advantage towards the next attempt.
- d) Attempts would be retained (on one occasion). Thereafter the countdown continued to maximum number of attempts. This would place a greater responsibility on students to manage available opportunities effectively.
- e) Specify a maximum length of time to complete all the assessments associated with a module i.e. 2 years. Norm is up to 3 attempts at UG Level, with the potential for a 4th attempt on submission of Mitigating Circumstances and 2 attempts at PG level with the potential for a 3rd attempt on submission of Mitigating Circumstances, again within 2 years.
- f) If the student had exhausted all assessment attempts within the 2-year period and had still not passed all the assessments in a module, they would normally be discontinued from the Programme at the first available assessment board
- g) It was recognised that there may be occasional, exceptional circumstances where a student had not been able to self-declare within the 2 working day window and these cases would be considered on a case by case basis, with escalation as necessary to ensure consistency of decision making.

- 19.100 Discussed
- i. Student Senators, expressed concern at the removal of the requirement to submit an impact statement as this was a potential route for the University to become aware of students who may need wellbeing support. Whilst this was acknowledged, Senate was informed that many students indicated via tick box on the form that they did not wish a wellbeing referral, although the University always contacted students whose Mits form presented as a cause for concern. Further, Personal Tutors had a key role in supporting students. However, Senate considered that including an option for students to provide an impact statement, and having a tick-box for students to consent for a wellbeing referral should be included in the revised Mits policy.
 - ii. The fit to sit approach was welcomed, but it was considered that a two-day period to self-declare unfit, may not be long enough to allow a student who was unwell to appropriately self-reflect on their ability to undertake the assessment, therefore this needed further consideration.
 - iii. Senate welcomed the move away from having to submit medical or other evidence as often this was hard to obtain and had prevented students in genuine extenuating circumstances from submitting an application.
 - iv. Concern was raised around students who had declared themselves unfit to sit at one assessment period who were then subsequently unfit to sit at the next assessment period and the DVC (L,T&SE) advised that there would be provision to consider exceptional cases.
 - v. It was noted that the University of the West of Scotland had a Mits policy that followed the same general principles as the ones being considered and it was suggested that discussions with UWS be held to learn from their experience.

- vi. The need to ensure that all students and staff were aware of the Mits process and when it should be used was highlighted, as there was some evidence that students were being told incorrectly to use Mits for extensions. Also better awareness of the policy would ensure that students were self-declaring at the appropriate time, and not submitting Mits after assessment boards.

19.101 Resolved To endorse the direction being taken in the review of Mits, subject to the points raised at 19.100 above. It was requested that the revised policy should provide clarity on the use of extensions, Mits and longer term support for students with ongoing issues and the inclusion of case studies and flow charts would help clarify the process for students.

Strategy 2030 Update

19.102 Considered An update on the development of Strategy 2030. **(Doc S19/51/1)**

19.103 Reported By the Director of Strategy and Planning that following extensive consultation, feedback received from staff and students had contributed to the refinement of Strategy 2030. The Strategy would be underpinned by two enabling strategies: research and teaching and learning, and these would be submitted to Senate in due course.

19.104 Resolved To endorse the draft strategy, ahead of submission to Court in April 2020 for approval ahead of its launch in May 2020.

Banded Marking

19.105 Considered A report providing an update on the work undertaken by the Banded Marking Task and Finish Group. **(Doc APPC19/361)**

19.106 Reported By the Dean of the School of Health and Life Sciences (Chair of the Banded Marking Task and Finish Group), that following discussion at Senate on 1st March 2019, a Banded Marking Task and Finish Group had been established to explore banded marking and specifically to identify barriers to the introduction of banded marking. The work had been divided into three separate work-groups, and both staff and students had been consulted. Both staff and students were generally supportive of a move to banded marking but there were a number of outstanding issues to be explored further, and Senate's feedback on this was welcomed.

19.107 Discussed i. A clear, functional justification for the move to banded marking was requested to ensure that the time and effort involved would bring benefits to the assessment process, and it was noted that a cost benefit analysis would have to be part of a separate work stream.

- ii. It was raised that both staff and students could overly focus on percentage marking, and the introduction of banded marking could alleviate this, and more focus would be on feedback. There would still be scope for differentiation within the bands, that would enable students to get a sense of their positioning within the band

19.108 Resolved To

- a) endorse the direction of work being taken by the Banded Marking Task and Finish Group; and
- b) agree that a cost benefit analysis on the introduction of banded marking be undertaken by the Group.

REF Update

19.109	Considered	An update on progress with preparations for REF2021. (Doc S19/37/1)
19.110	Reported	The PVC Research highlighted that 35% of eligible staff expected to be entered into the REF, which was a 40% increase on REF 2014. Each Unit of Assessment would be subject to audit and the University would be undertaking a mock audit. He expressed appreciation for all staff involved in supporting the REF submission.
19.111	Resolved	To note the update and reiterate thanks to the PVC Research and all staff involved.

Complaints Annual Report 2018/19

19.112	Received	An overview of the complaints received by the University is Session 2018/19. (Doc S19/48/1)
19.113	Reported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. By the Clerk to Senate, that the number of complaints received in 2018/19 was broadly in line with previous years, with 148 Stage 1 (frontline) complaints received and 12 stage 2, complaint investigations undertaken. No complaints were referred to the SPSO by the complainant. ii. A revised model complaints handling procedure (CHP) had recently been announced by the SPSO and Universities had until April 2021 to comply. One welcome, significant change to the current CHP was the introduction of a “resolved” outcome to stage 2 complaint investigations. Work was underway to update the University’s CHP and this would be reported back to Senate in due course.
19.114	Discussed	In response to a question, Senate was reminded that the University’s Guidance for Students had recently been updated to ensure that students were mindful of the tone and language used in complaints. It was noted that the updated model CHP was more prescriptive in relation to staff who were the subject of a complaint.
19.115	Resolved	<p>To note</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the report and that it would be submitted to Curt and the SPSO; and b) that data from the report would be published on the complaints page of the University website in line with SPSO requirements.

SDC Annual Report 2018/19

19.116	Considered	A report on student misconduct offences considered under the terms of the Code of Student Conduct during Session 2018/19. (Doc S19/49/1)
19.117	Reported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. By the Chair of the Senate Disciplinary Committee (SDC) that overall there had been 31 alleged breaches of the Code of Student Conduct, of which 15 had been referred to SDC for consideration. The introduction in 2017/18 of a letter of guidance for minor examination infringements had been very effective, and eight cases had been dealt with in this manner rather than by referral to SDC. ii. There had been an increase in the number of complex and sensitive cases considered under the Code, and it was hoped that initiatives such as the Erase the Grey campaign had encouraged students to report inappropriate conduct.
19.118	Resolved	To note the report and to express thanks to the Senate Disciplinary Committee team.

HESA Performance Indicators 2020

19.119	Received	An overview of HESA Performance Indicators 2020 relating to widening participation and non-continuation, set within the context of the Scottish HE sector. (Doc S19/52/1)
19.120	Reported	<p>The Director of Strategy and Planning outlined the key highlights within the report:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2017/18, 96.7% of young, first degree GCU students were from a state school or college, ahead of the benchmark of 90% and sector average of 87.4%; • GUC's projected degree completion had increased by 1.4% to 80.7%, against the Strategy 2020 target of 80% and ahead of all other Scottish, modern universities, and the sector as a whole (79.8%); • The drop-out rate was 7.8%, the lowest of all Scottish, modern HEIs. • Non-continuation after first year of study had improved by 0.2% to 8.3%, against a Strategy 2020 target of 7%. <p>It was further highlighted that these figures had to be seen in the context of the University's widening participation profile and this would be reflected in the University's feedback to the SFC.</p>
19.121	Resolved	<p>Senate</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) noted the report and the University's strong performance; and b) expressed thanks to all staff involved in helping the University achieve the very positive results.

PART B (FOR FORMAL APPROVAL)

School of Computing Engineering and Built Environment: Programme Withdrawal

19.122	Considered	A report by the Vice Dean, School of Computing, Engineering and Built Environment, outlining the rationale and consideration process for the withdrawal of seven programmes as part of the School's portfolio refresh. (Doc APPC19/37/01)
19.123	Approved	<p>The withdrawal of the following Programmes:-</p> <p>BSc Health & Safety Management (PT) BSc (Hons) Health, Safety & Environmental Management (PT) MEng Mechanical & Power Plant Systems BEng (Hons) Mechanical & Power Plant Systems (FT and PT) MEng Electrical, Electronic & Energy Engineering BEng (Hons) Electrical, Electronic & Energy Engineering (FT and PT) BSc (Hons) IT Management for Business (FT)</p>
19.124	Noted	<p>The suspension of recruitment to the following programmes, whilst a review of the provision in these areas was considered:-</p> <p>BSc (Hons) Fire Risk Engineering BSc (Hons) Real Estate BSc (Hons) Building Services Engineering (Level 1) MSc Building Services Engineering</p>

19.125 Approved The award of 13 PhDs, 1 Prof D and 1 DBA.
(Doc S19/43/1)

Academic Appeals Committee Membership 2019/20

19.126 Approved The Updated membership of the Academic Appeals Committee 2019/20.
(Doc S19/39/1)

Senate and Standing Committee Calendar of Meetings 2020/21

19.127 Approved The proposed calendar of meetings for Senate and Standing Committees for Session 2020/21, subject to consideration being given to rescheduling Senate in March 2021 as the proposed date clashed with student office bearer elections.
(Doc S19/50/1)

International Committee Terms of Reference, Composition and Membership 2019/20

19.128 Approved The Updated Committee Terms of Reference, Composition and Membership 2019/20 of the International Committee 2019/20. **(Doc S19/40/1)**

Chair's Action

19.129 Approved The following Chair's Actions s taken since the last meeting of Senate:

- a) Terms of Reference and Standard Operation of Progression and Award Boards and Associated Activities **(Doc S19/41/1)**; and
- b) Research degree award of one PhD **(Doc S19/42/1)**.

PART C (FOR INFORMATION)

Research Bulletin for trimester A 2019/20

19.130 Received The Research Bulletin updating on research related activities for Trimester A.
(Doc S19/44/1)

Academic Appointments

19.131 Received A paper on academic appointments made since the last meeting of Senate.
(Doc S19/45/1)

Academic Policy and Practice Committee

19.132 Received The confirmed minute of the meeting of the Academic Policy and Practice Committee held on 6th November 2019.
(Doc APPC19/28/01)

University Research Committee

19.233 Received The confirmed minute of the meeting of the University Research Committee held on 13th November 2019.
(Doc REC19/06/01)

School Board/Boards of Senate Minutes

19.134 Received The confirmed minutes from the under noted meetings of Boards of Senate:

School of Health and Life Sciences held on

- i. 11th October 2019 **(Doc SHLS/SB/19/014/01)**
- ii. 11th December 2019 **(Doc SHLS/SB/19/026/01)**

School of Computing Engineering and Built Environment

- iii. 18th September 2019 **(Doc SCEBE/SB/18/01/43)**
- iv. 23rd October 2019 **(Doc SCEBE/SB/19/01/09)**
- v. 11th December 2019 **(Doc SCEBE/SB/19/01/025)**

Honorary Appointments

19.135 Noted The following honorary appointments awarded by the University Executive Board:

Post	Title	Field of expertise	School
Honorary Fellow	Dr Saket Priyadarshi	Drug Addiction Research	SHLS
Honorary Professor	Frances Dodd	Department of Management and HRM	GSBS

University Court

19.136 Received The summary report from the meeting of the University Court held on 20th February 2020. **(Doc S19/46/01)**

Date of Next meeting

The next scheduled meeting of University Senate will be held on Friday 5th June 2019 at 09:30 Hrs in The Lantern.