

UNIVERSITY SENATE

Minutes of the meeting held on 19th October 2020

Present: Dr B Ahmed, Dr K Bannigan, Dr T Boutaleb, Ms H Burt, Ms S Docherty, Professor C Donaldson, Dr M Ferguson, Miss E Fulton, Dr K Fryer, Professor P Gillies (Chair), Dr L Grey, Ms J Hulme, Mr N Kayani, Dr C Khamisha, Mr T Kilpatrick, Professor J Lennon, Professor G Loffler, Professor J McCallum, Dr K McPherson, Professor M Mannion, Mrs W Mazucco, Dr C Miller, Professor J Miller, Professor A Nelson, Mr A Nesbit, 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 and Professor V Webster.

Apologies: Mr M Anderson, Mr J England, Prof. M E Farrag, Mr S Latta, Mr T McAlear and Dr V Ness.

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
Mr R Ruthven, Director of Library Services
Professor A Robertson, Director of Academic Development & Student Learning

Mrs D Donnet, Clerk to Senate

In Attendance Apologies Mr M. Anderson, Director of Research and Innovation

Observers: Ms O Biosca (Yunus Centre), Ms J Burns (Executive Support), Mrs L Clark (Governance), Mr D Gallagher (Lay Governor), Ms A Freund-Pickavance (Lay Governor), Ms A Priest (Lay Governor), Ms C Reid (PS), Mr A Sweeny (Lay Governor) and Ms E Thomson (SHLS).

Chairs Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of Senate in academic session 2020/21.

It was highlighted this was the first meeting being held with the newly approved composition which constituted a majority of elected members. As such the Chair welcomed new members to their first meeting of Senate.

PART A (FOR CONSIDERATION)

Minutes

20.001 Considered The unconfirmed draft minutes of the meetings of Senate held on:

i. 8th June 2020

(Doc S19/72/1)

ii. 6th July 2020 (Extraordinary meeting)

(Doc S19/77/1)

20.002 Resolved That, subject to a minor change to record Professor Robertson as attending “by invitation” at both meetings, minutes of the meetings held on 8th June 2020 and 6th July 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

20.003 Considered The matters arising briefing report and any matters arising on the minutes not otherwise provided for on the agenda.
(Doc S20/1/1)

20.004 Resolved That the report be noted and no additional matters were raised.

Principal & Vice Chancellor Executive Board Report

20.005 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 S20/2/1)

20.006 Reported i. The Principal reported that the Scottish Government guidance to Universities had remained unchanged in that it supported the continuation of a blended learning approach with a mix of online and face-to-face teaching where it was necessary and safe and appropriate to do so. The Chair noted that GCU was taking a cautious approach, with a very small number of students (around 10%) with on-campus classes.

The University was mindful of outbreaks of Covid-19 within student halls and noted that Caledonian Court had only a relatively small number of cases. The Chair commended the support provided by the Students’ Association and Student Services to students who were self-isolating in Caledonian Court. She noted that positive reports had been received from students remarking on the care and attention provided and that the healthy food provided in particular was appreciated.

In response to a question, the Chair advised that the University should expect to continue with online delivery for some months to come. Planning was underway to support students to return home for Christmas, with a safe return in January. Communications would be issued to staff as early as possible should there be any change to Trimester B delivery or scheduling.

In discussion it was noted that whilst some students were anxious about coming onto campus because of their own personal circumstances, other students were missing friendship and support from peers when in class. Difficulties in separating university/study time from their home lives was an issue for some, and work was underway to create safe spaces on campus for students to study, particularly for those who were in difficult circumstances at home.

A Senate member who was also a trade union representative expressed appreciation on behalf of the campus trade unions of the work undertaken by the Chief Operating Officer and the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee, and the overall cautious approach taken by the University. The work of the Director of Estates and the Estates team in relation to the work undertaken on campus was

also commended. The Principal acknowledged the partnership approach taken by the trade unions and the University in supporting a safe return to campus.

- ii. Senate was informed that the SFC review of FE/HE had incurred further delays and it was anticipated that it would not take place until after the elections in May.

Response to Covid-19

20.007 Reported Further to the update provided by the Principal, the Chief Operating Officer gave a verbal update on the University's approach to supporting a safe return to campus, and acknowledged that there was a diversity of opinion about returning to campus. It was confirmed that there was no plan at present to increase the number of students on campus, and that work was underway to minimise the risk of a spike in cases when students return to campus in January following the Christmas break.

The comparatively small number of positive cases in Caledonian Court had been carefully managed. There were daily meetings to monitor cases, and public health officials had an open invitation to attend these. Two formal meetings had been held with public health, which was happy with the University's approach and had made no recommendations for action.

To date, student breaches of the Covid regulations had been minor in nature and had been responded to by taking a supportive and advisory approach, with regular reinforcement of the need to adhere to the regulations and guidelines, and that this methodology had appeared to be successful.

The COO also commended the support for self isolating students provided by student support colleagues, the security team and the Students' Association, and advised that the University had received very positive feedback from students and parents.

There were twice weekly meetings between the Government and Universities Scotland, and as indicated by the Principal, work was underway to support students returning home for Christmas, and therefore minimising the risk to vulnerable family members.

20.008 Noted The verbal update, and the Principal reiterated the thanks expressed earlier to all involved in supporting the safe return to campus.

Evaluation Strategy for Going Digital: Progress Update

20.009 Considered A progress update report on the evaluation of the GCU Going Digital Framework. **(Doc S20/18/1)**

20.010 Reported By the Director of Academic Development & Student Learning that the paper took account of the feedback provided by Senate at its July meeting, including an early "temperature check" survey to be undertaken mid semester. Monitoring the implementation of the 'Going Digital' framework would allow an evaluation of its efficacy and provide evidence that would inform future decision making. It was anticipated that a comprehensive evaluation would not only identify, best practice, challenges and solutions but will also take account of sector developments in considering the possible implications of any findings. Evaluation was an integral part of the Going Digital Framework, with regular informal briefings on progress through weekly AcSED (Academic Student Experience Delivery Group) meetings led by the DVC (Learning Teaching and Student

Experience) and the Digital Learning Implementation Group (DLIG). Thereafter there would be regular reports to Executive Board, Academic Policy and Practice Committee and Senate as appropriate.

- 20.011 Discussed
- i In response to a question, Senate was informed that there were also plans to evaluate the use of Collaborate ultra in order to get a clear understanding of any issues. It was also clarified that the “temperature check” would not replace “pause for feedback” that would take place around a similar time as the latter was module specific.
 - ii It was noted that guidance on lecture capture had been prepared in conjunction with the trade unions and that this was currently being reviewed by the lawyers and was expected to be finalised soon.
 - iii The inclusion of the evaluation of placements and other differentiated student experiences was welcomed, and it was noted that colleagues in Academic Development would work with key stakeholders in order to ensure appropriate feedback was obtained.
 - iv In response to a question about the incorporation of equality issues in each of the strands, it was clarified that accessibility and inclusion were critical elements and an Equality Impact Assessment would be undertaken.
- 20.012 Resolved
- To welcome the work that had been done in updating the Evaluation Strategy for Going Digital and to note the report.

Annual Report on Institution-Led Review of Quality & Governing Body Statement of Assurance 2019/20

- 20.013 Noted
- i The annual report on institution-led review of quality and governing body statement of assurance for 2019/20.
(Doc S20/3/1)
- 20.014
- ii The DVC (LTSE) reported that due to Covid, it had been necessary to make changes to programme reviews and ELISRs. The ELIR had been rescheduled to 16th November and addendum to the reflective analysis prepared.

NSS Overview

- 20.015 Considered
- An Overview of National Student Survey 2020 Results outlining a high-level summary of the University’s performance at institution, sector, School, programme and subject level, and an overview of activity that supported the improved position and ongoing developments to enhance the student experience in the coming year.
(Doc APPC20/09/1)
- 20.016 Reported
- DVC (LTSE) reported that there had been an improvement in overall results.
- The Director of Strategy and Planning outlined key results including:
- The University’s response rate was 67%, compared to 73% last year.
 - GCU achieved an overall satisfaction score of 85%, a +4% improvement on last year, placing GCU on a par with the Scottish sector rate and exceeding the UK by +2%.
 - Overall satisfaction improved in all Schools: GSBS 92% (+4%); SHLS 85% (+2%); SCEBE 82% (+10%).

- GCU scores across all themes improved, most significantly for Overall Satisfaction, Organisation and Management, Student Voice (all +4%) and Assessment and Feedback (+3%).
- GCU ranked 2nd in Scotland for Q.10 Feedback on my work has been timely and Q.22 I have had the right opportunities to work with other students as part of my course.
- A total of 29 programmes (out of 63 publishable programmes) achieved 90% or more overall satisfaction. A total of 13 programmes performed below 80% for overall satisfaction (9 in SCEBE, 2 in SHLS and 2 in GSBS), compared to 21 in 2019.
- At subject level, the University performed very strongly in a number of areas with a total of 19 subjects achieving 90% or more overall satisfaction, compared to 13 subjects in 2019. Of these, eight subjects are positioned 1st in Scotland for overall satisfaction, compared to six in 2019.
- In 2020 there were 44 ‘unpublished’ programmes. Whilst these programmes do not count towards the School overall outcomes, they contribute to the overall GCU published NSS results. Overall satisfaction of this group of programmes was 75%, which has caused a negative impact on our overall results.
- As in previous years, we received marginally more positive than negative ‘open comments’ in the 2020 NSS, with 1126 positive and 1021 negative comments received. Open comments have been shared with Schools to support their local level reviews of performance in the NSS.

A number of factors were considered to have contributed towards the improved performance including

- A strong, consistent University strategic focus on enhancing the student experience and in understanding issues experienced by students and staff.
- Consistent collaborative planning focused on targeted actions for aspects of programmes that are underperforming rather than just providing broad brush generic plans that are carried over from year to year.
- Local accountability and responsibility at all levels, and the introduction of academic department planning as part of the University’s strategic planning process.
- Academic leadership in schools and departments.
- The close and effective partnership between the University and the Students’ Association to ensure all action plans are created in partnership and reflect student feedback.
- Quick identification of any issues and their resolution as they occurred.

20.017	Discussed	i	It was noted that much of the fieldwork had been undertaken before the move to online learning, and that the ONS had advised that the 2020/21 NSS would go ahead with minimum change.
		ii	The need to maintain student engagement and building learning communities was a key priority and the Student President was commended for the work she and the Students’ Association had undertaken in conjunction with academic staff to support this.
20.018	Resolved		To note the report.

Research Integrity Annual Statement and Report

- 20.019 Considered The Research Integrity Annual Statement and Report.
(Doc REC19/20/2)
- 20.020 Reported By the PVC (Research) that the Research Integrity Annual Statement and Report was part of the University's commitment to the UK Concordat to support Research Integrity. The report provided a summary of activities that had been undertaken to support and strengthen the understanding and application of research integrity issues, and also provided reassurance of transparent, robust and fair processes in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct.
- 20.021 Resolved To endorse the report.

Senate Programme of Work 2020/21

- 20.022 Noted The Senate Programme of Work for Session 2020/21.
(Doc S20/6/1)

Standing Committee and School Board Summary Reports

- 20.023 Considered In line with the requirements of Senate's newly approved Standing Orders for session 2020/21 onwards, Senate received reports from the following standing committees:

- 20.024 Noted i Academic Policy and Practice Committee held on 16th September 2020.
(Doc S20/4/1)

Senate was advised that key items discussed included

- Operational adaptations to the Attendance & Engagement procedures for 2020-21 featuring the inclusion of GCU Learn data to supplement on campus card swipe data to take account of the current blended learning delivery model.
- The approval of a Banded Grading short life working Group, chaired by Professor Andrea Nelson, to develop the GCU catalogue of rubrics in relation to banded grading. Professor Nelson reported that the group had met three times and good progress was being made.
- Further revisions to the Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Procedure
- Graduate Outcomes 2017/18

- ii University Research Committee held on 2nd September 2020.
(Doc S20/5/1)

Senate was advised that key items discussed included

- The establishment of a University wide knowledge exchange group;
- An update on preparations for the Research Excellence Framework 2021, including guidance on revisions to REF 2021 to take account of the effects of COVID-19.

Senate expressed thanks to Professor Bill Hughes who had recently stepped down as Chair of the Research Ethics and Integrity Subcommittee.

Graduate Outcomes 2017/18

- 20.025 Noted i A report on the results of the Graduate Outcomes Survey 2017-18.

(Doc APPC20/7/1) which provided a high level summary of the 2017/18 Graduate Cohort Outcomes report for the Scottish sector by activity; Standard Occupational Classification; salary bands and graduate reflections. Graduate Outcomes replaced the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE), surveying graduates who completed a higher education course in the UK after August 2017. The report highlighted that GCU had 91% of graduates in employment and/or further study, above the Scottish rate of 89%, and a total of 77% of GCU graduates who were in employment were in the highly skilled occupations.

- ii The paper had been discussed at APPC on 16th October 2020 and actions arising from it would take forward by ETSE

Progression and Award Boards

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| 20.026 | Approved | Minor Procedural Amendments to the ‘Terms of Reference and Standard Operations of Progression and Award Boards and Associated Groups’ to ensure that all Pre-Boards and PABs/associated groups could operate in a paperless manner.
(Doc APPC20/6/1) |
| 20.027 | Noted | That whilst some boards had operated on a paperless basis in the past, the amendments would support this for the whole process. Virtual boards had proved to be better attended than traditionally was the case when boards were held in person, and had also worked well with TNE partners. |

Changes to Mitigating Circumstances Policy 2020-21

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| 20.028 | Received | A report, detailing proposed amendments to the Mitigating Circumstances Policy for 2020/21z. (Doc S20/7/1) |
| 20.029 | Approved | The following amendments to the Mitigating Circumstances Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The requirement to provide evidence be suspended for 2020/21 Trimester A, to be reviewed in January 2021 with respect to Trimester B, and again in May with respect to Trimester C; • In place of evidence, students are to be asked to provide a declaration that their circumstances meet the criteria of being ‘exceptional, serious, acute and unforeseen’; and • Only situations where a student had been directly impacted by COVID-19 (ill health, unforeseen caring responsibilities etc.) would be considered as a legitimate ground for MITS; and • The MITS web pages would be reviewed and updated, ensuring clarity in guidance in terms of what would and would not be considered legitimate, including examples. Details of other support mechanisms would be highlighted, particularly in relation to any long term condition that may have had an impact throughout their studies. |
| 20.030 | Noted | In discussion, it was confirmed that students whose placements had been curtailed due to Covid 19 would not be required to submit Mits, and this would be dealt with at programme level. |

Corporate Parenting Strategy

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| 20.031 | Approved | Amendments to the Corporate Parenting Strategy and Action Plan (Doc S20/17/1) . The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, named the University, alongside all post-16 further and higher education providers, as Corporate Parents to looked after children and care-experienced young people in |
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Scotland. Under the Act, GCU is required to fulfil six named duties. In order to do this, the Corporate Parenting Strategy has an Action Plan, which has been updated with the University's current and evolving provision as well as any associated actions.

20.032 Noted That the updated document would be published online and reported on, in due course, in compliance with the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

Research Degrees Committee

20.033 Approved The award of 12 PhDs, 3 PhDs by previous publication, 3 Prof Ds and 1 DBA.
(Doc S20/16/1)

SDC Membership 2020-21

20.034 Approved The updated membership of the Senate Disciplinary Committee to include new student officers.
(Doc S20/8/1)

Chair's Action

20.035 Noted Approval of the following by Chair's Actions since the last meeting of Senate:

i. SDC Membership

The appointment of Professor Bruce Wood (SCEBE) as an academic staff member on the Senate Disciplinary Committee for the period 1st August 2020 to 31st July 2023.

(Doc S20/9/1)

ii. Academic Calendar Year Change

The amendment to the Academic Calendar for Session 2020/21 to include an extended period of pre-teaching induction commencing 21st September 2020.

(Doc S20/10/1)

Revised Senate Schedule of Meetings 2020/21

20.036 Approved Proposed revisions to the Schedule of Senate meetings 2020/21 to accommodate the anticipated continuation of "No Meeting Fridays" as follows: -

Friday 4th December moved to Wednesday 2nd December 2020

Friday 26th February moved to Wednesday 24th February 2021

Friday 4th June moved to Wednesday 9th June 2021

Meetings would continue to be held from 9.30am to 11.30am and would be held virtually until further notice. **(Doc S20/19/1)**

Honorary Appointments

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

Post	Title	Field of expertise	School
Visiting Professor	Prof. Denis Fischbacher-Smith	Risk Management	GSBS
Honorary Fellow	Dr Pamela Jenkins	Psychology	SHLS
Emeritus Professor	Professor Bill Hughes	Equality and Human Rights	GSBS
Honorary Professor	Dr Brian Kennon	Diabetes/ Podiatry	SHLS
Honorary Fellow	Dr Mark Cooper	Nursing/ Advanced Nurse Practice	SHLS
Honorary Professor	Dr Sicco Bus	Diabetes/ Podiatry	SHLS
Honorary Professor (extension)	Mr John McDougall	Operations Management/ International Business	GSBS
Honorary Professor (extension)	Dr David Bamaung	Human Resources Management	GSBS

Academic Appointments

20.038 Received A paper on academic appointments made since the last meeting of Senate.
(Doc S20/11/1)

Senate Membership 2020/21

20.039 Received The membership of Senate for 2020/21 updated to included newly elected Head of Department and Student Association members.
(Doc S19/71/2)

Academic Policy and Practice Committee

20.040 Received The confirmed minutes of the meeting of the Academic Policy and Practice Committee held on 6th May 2020.
(Doc APC19/61/1)

University Research Committee

20.041 Received The confirmed minute of the meeting of the University Research Committee held on 13th May 2020.
(Doc REC19/33/1)

International Committee

20.042 Received The confirmed minute of the meeting of the International Committee held on 13th January 2020.
(Doc IC19/21)

University Court

- 20.043 Received The summary report from the meeting of the University Court held on:
- i. 25th June 2020 (Doc S20/12/1)
 - ii. 9th September 2020 (Doc S20/13/1)

Research Bulletin for Trimester C 2019-20

- 20.044 Received An update on Research from the PVC Research.
(Doc S20/14/1)

Guide to Student Representation

- 20.045 Received The Guide to Student Representation at GCU.
(Doc S20/15/1)

APPC Composition and Terms of Reference 2020/21

- 20.046 Received The Composition and Membership and Terms of Reference of APPC for Session 2020/21 including minor revisions to the composition and terms of reference for clarification and update of roles.
(Doc APPC20/3/1)

URC Composition and Terms of Reference 2020/21

- 20.047 Received The Composition and Membership and Terms of Reference of the University Research Committee for Session 2020/21 including a minor revision to the composition to take account of how the PGR student representative will be nominated by the Student's Association.
(Doc REC20/3/1)