

UNIVERSITY SENATE

Minutes of the meeting held on 9th December 2016

PRESENT: Dr T Boutaleb, Prof. Britton, Mrs J Broadhurst, Prof. T Buggy, Prof I Cameron, Dr D Chalmers, Prof. C Donaldson, Dr M Ferguson, Dr H Gallagher, Mr M Gallagher, Prof. P Gillies(Chair), Dr A Grant, Dr J Gregersen-Hermans, Prof. T Hilton, Ms J Hulme, Mrs K Roden (vice for Mrs C Hulsen), Prof. L Kilbride, Mr A Killick, Mr T Kilpatrick, Mr S Lopez, Dr D Lukic, Ms J Main, Mr B McConville, M McNab (vice for Ms J McGillivray), Prof. S McMeekin, Mr A Middleton, Dr C Miller, Prof. J Miller, Mr V McKay, Dr A Nimmo, Dr S Ogden, Dr A Pierotti, Mr B Pillans, Miss L Ramage, Ms D Rankin, Mr R Ruthven, Prof A Simmers, Prof. B Steves, Mr I Stewart, Ms K van Dongen, Miss J Waite, Prof. V Webster, Prof. R Whittaker.

APOLOGIES: Dr L Cuthbertson, Dr S McChlery, Ms J McGillivray, Prof. A Morgan

OBSERVERS: Mrs L Clark (Governance), Mr K Fleming (PG), Dr E Reather (Exec Support), Mr K Campbell (SA) Mr K Ward (SA), Mrs L McGinley (Governance), Mrs K Forbes (Careers), Mr J Rendall (Yunus Centre), Ms F Campbell (People Services), Mr D Carse (SA), Dr S Shanmugam (SHLS)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs D Donnet, Secretary to Senate,
Mr A Lui (People Services)
Prof. N Andrew (Academic Quality and Development)

OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed colleagues. Concern was raised by a Senator that there were three to follow papers on the agenda, and it was requested that if papers were not available 7 days in advance of the meeting they should be deferred to the next meeting as late papers limited staff representatives' opportunity to consult with colleagues. Senate was advised that every effort was made to ensure papers were circulated 7 days in advance of the meeting, but that there were occasions where late papers were unavoidable and it was not possible to defer business critical papers to the next meeting. It was noted that the proximity of Senate's standing committees' meetings to Senate meetings could impact on the availability of papers and that this would be taken into account when scheduling meetings.

The Secretary to Senate advised that Item C6, the Highlights from the University Court meeting held on 24th November 2016, were now available on SharePoint. As this report was not available in advance of the meeting, Senators were invited to submit any questions or comments on the report by email to the Principal or Clerk to Senate.

PART A (FOR CONSIDERATION)

Minutes

- 16.69 Considered: The unconfirmed draft minute of the meeting of Senate held on 7th October 2016. **(Doc S16/21/1)**
- 16.70 Resolved: That the minutes be approved as an accurate record subject to a correction to the list of those in attendance.

Matters Arising

- 16.71 Noted: Matters Arising Briefing Note **(Doc S16/22/1)**.
- 16.72 Reported: Arising on 16.13 Academic Policy Committee Annual Report.
By the DVC (Academic) that in relation to timetabling, the successes and challenges of Trimester A had been reviewed and all was on track for students to have their Trimester B personalised timetables before the Christmas break.

Principal & Vice Chancellor and Executive Board Report

- 16.73 Considered: A report from the Principal & Vice-Chancellor and Executive Board to update members on substantive items considered by the Executive Board since the last meeting of Senate. **(Doc S16/23/1)**
- 16.74 Reported: By the Principal in relation to GCY NY, that very positive discussions had been held with Fordham University, which had previously objected to the licence application, on a potential partnership. Discussions were soon to take place with another university regarding the one remaining objection and it was expected to have this resolved by early in the new year.
- In response to a question regarding recent negative press around the use of the GCU NY Campus, the Principal informed Senate that the campus was regularly let to reputable organisations, and this was a useful income source.
- 16.75 The Principal elaborated on the information contained in her report regarding the Enterprise and Skills Review, which could involve, amongst other things, the abolition of the Scottish Funding Council. She informed Senate that Universities Scotland were lobbying strongly to ensure that the autonomy of universities was preserved, and an assurance to this effect had been given to the University by the Cabinet Secretary for Education. Senators expressed their concern at the potential for universities to lose their charitable status. Senate will be kept informed of progress.
- 16.76 Agreed: To note the report.

Universities Scotland Report on Brexit

16.77 Considered: A report by Universities Scotland outlining key issues in relation to Brexit **(Doc S16/30/1)**.

This report was circulated following a request from Senators at the last meeting for a discussion on Brexit. The report welcomed the positive messages given by the Scottish Government regarding the contribution of EU nationals and expressed that Scottish Universities deeply value the community of EU staff and students and the contribution they make to Scottish Higher education.

16.78 Discussed: The International Student Representative advised that EU students were concerned about starting their studies at Scottish Universities and then being faced with unexpected costs. There were also concerns about participation in Erasmus Plus and requested that the British Council be asked to ensure that Britain would still be able to participate in this. Finally, she advised of concerns that the impact of Brexit was having on the health and wellbeing of overseas students, and asked that steps be taken to support students.

The Principal advised that Universities Scotland were aware of the financial impact of Brexit on students and it was looking at creating a hardship fund. It was hoped that a statement on this would be available in the near future. She also advised that a new chair of the British Council in Scotland had been appointed and that she would raise the issue of continued participation in Erasmus Plus with him.

The DVC (Academic) advised Senate that the University had employed a Mental Health Adviser who would be happy to work with the Students' Association to ensure that students were appropriately supported.

It was noted that Universities Scotland was putting forward the collective voice of Scottish HEIs as all were facing the same issues.

16.79 Resolved: To note the position and the actions outlines above.

Analysis of Equal Pay Audit Data

16.80 Received: At the last meeting, Senate was informed that further analysis of the equal pay audit data would be undertaken and reported to this meeting. This analysis was undertaken by Professor Jon Godwin, Professor in Statistics at the Institute for Society and Social Justice Research.

The following statement was read out to Senate:-

“What the data suggests is that there is a clear correlation between pay

and age amongst Lecturers and Senior Lecturers but not within the Professoriate or academic managers. Senators may recall that based on April 2015 data, there was a pay gap of 8.2% due to more males than females in the higher grades indicating an element of vertical gender segregation. However, when one adjusts for age, notwithstanding that there are different age distributions within each element of the groups that make up the academic job family, there is no strong evidence for a gender bias in pay, such differences as can be seen arise mainly from the play of chance. Jon is subjecting the data to further nonparametric testing and we will include this analysis in the next equal pay report in April 2017.

GCU's academic promotion record has been one of the key measures to address this vertical segregation with female professors making up 25% in 2012 and now 36% in 2016. This compares to the sector average for female professors which according to the recently published ECU Equality in Higher Education: Statistical Report 2016, is at 23%. Following our recent Athena Swan Bronze success, the Action Plan also contains a number of commitments that we have agreed to work on in the coming years – from recruitment to flexible working, from balanced workloads to balanced Boards/ Committees – all building on the positive foundations that have been laid.”

16.81 Resolved: Senate welcomed the position and it was agreed to circulate the statement to all Senators.

Teaching Excellence Framework

16.82 Considered: A report on the Teaching Excellence Framework. **(Doc S16/29/1)**

16.83 Reported: By the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) that the metrics that Universities would be assessed on for the Year Two TEF had been released by HEFCE. The metrics covered three aspects of student satisfaction: one on non-continuation and two on employment. If GCU participated in TEF Year Two it was expected that we would receive a bronze rating. This rating would be valid for three years.

This result was at odds with the University receiving the highest possible rating in the recent ELIR. Further, further it was highlighted that key metrics that the University would perform well in, for example in a discipline specific TEF, were not yet included in the TEF

The University's metrics and likely Bronze rating had been considered by Executive Board, which had agreed to recommend to Senate that the University does not participate in year two of the TEF. It was important however, that the position be monitored and that the University review its position should there be any change in the TEF or the University's metrics.

16.84 Discussed: Not participating in year two was supported by Senate. It was noted that there was a small number of Scottish HEIs that may perform well in year

two, and it was expected that they would chose to participate, so it was unlikely that there would be a Scottish sector boycott of Year Two TEF.

- 16.85 Resolved:
- a) To note the expected rating of Bronze for the Year Two TEF.
 - b) Support the Executive Board recommendation that the University should not participate in Year two TEF given current metrics.
 - c) Endorse the University maintaining a watching brief, reserving the right to join TEF at institutional or subject level at a future point.

Update on the Quality Enhancement and Assurance Handbook

- 16.86 Considered: An update on the Quality Enhancement and Assurance Handbook (QEAH): Section 6.2. **(Doc S16/33/1)**.
- 16.87 Reported: By the Head of Academic Quality that following consideration at the last meeting of Senate when it had been agreed to approve the updated Quality Enhancement and Assurance Handbook subject to further discussions regarding Section 6.2 Programme Review, that further consultation with Schools had taken place and an amended Section 6.2 had been prepared and previously sent to Senators for their comment and input. The finalised Section 6.2 was now submitted to Senate for approval.
- 16.88 Resolved: To approve the updated Section 6.2 of the Quality Enhancement and Assurance Handbook.

Academic Pillars Working Groups on Module Contact Hours and Credit Rating of Modules.

- 16.89 Considered: A report from the Academic Pillars Working Groups on Module Contact Hours and Credit Rating of Modules. **(Doc S16/34/1)**
- 16.90 Reported: By the Head of Academic Quality, that two Academic Pillars working groups had been set up to consider
- a) Credit rating of modules; potential for standardisation and including a review of current practice; and
 - b) Number and spread of module contact hours over a four year undergraduate programme from the standpoint of the wider student experience.
- 16.91 The Working Groups had reported to the Academic Policy and Practice Committee which had agreed, *inter alia*,
- a) In relation to the Credit Rating of Modules, that 20 Credits for undergraduate and 15 credits for postgraduate be the standard model and that moves to ensure this model is adopted across

- the university be introduced incrementally; and that there be a review of the current use of 10 credit modules; and
- b) In relation to Module Contact Hours, that there be a standard definition of contact, and that at undergraduate level, module contact hours should be standardised and the level of study taken into account, including where the “first” year is at level 2 or 3 for direct entry students.

16.92 Discussed: It was raised that there were several PG courses that included 20 credit modules. There was concern that the rationale behind standardising PG modules to 15 credits was not clear and a change to 15 credits would increase workload and assessment. Further, there had been no risk assessment undertaken.

In response it was acknowledged that there may be instances where a 15 credit PG module was not appropriate and there was scope to allow for this. It was considered however at PG level, that a 15 credit module supported a broader learning experience. It was not anticipated that moving to 15 credits would increase workload or assessment overall, and 15 credits was also the most common level across the sector and this was important for RPL. Additionally it was not expected that any changes would happen immediately but on an incremental basis at module re-evaluation.

16.93 It was noted that there was an error in the presentation of the Contact Hours data and that in the case of long thin modules, the contact hours would differ from short fat modules, and this would be reflect in revised guidelines. It was also acknowledged that not all students had their first year of University study in first year, and the guidelines would ensure flexibility to support such students.

16.94 Resolved:

Credit Rating of Modules:-

- a) There be communication to all schools regarding GCU standard module credit and the notional student effort associated with that credit.
- b) Half modules are not normally to be included in programme design. Previous work had identified significant assessment loading and recommended half modules be an exception.
- c) That the 20 Credit for undergraduate 15 Credit for postgraduate be the standard model and that moves to ensure this model is adopted across the university be introduced incrementally.
- d) There will be a review of current use of 10 credit modules across University.
- e) There is further review of assessment loading guidance previously approved by Senate.
- f) The list of acceptable module credit ratings is not used in the regulatory text.
- g) That SCQF terminology is used throughout the regulatory text.

Module Contact Hours

- h) That there is a standard University definition of contact based on the contemporary definitions set out in Section 2 of the report.
- i) At undergraduate level module contact hours should be standardised and the level of study taken into account, including where the "first" year is at level 2 or 3 for direct entry students.
- j) The standard contact hours for a first year students should normally be 6 hours on average but no less than 4 hours per 20 credit module per week, reflecting specific disciplines. Where modules run over more than one semester the figure will be adjust accordingly.
- k) That the standard contact hours be adjusted towards increasing independent learning over the four years of an Honours programme reflecting a pedagogical approach that aims to develop deep, independent learners.
- l) That programme approval documentation is required to define cohorts, including where programmes are 1+3 or 2+2.
- m) That there be enough flexibility to allow for greater than the minimum contact where required to ensure students are supported to achieve the programme learning outcomes.

Portfolio Review 2020

16.95 Received:

Documentation as a result of Academic Policy and Practice Committee's consideration of reports on Portfolio Review 2020 from

- a) The School of Health and Life Sciences
- b) The Glasgow School for Business and Society
- c) The School of Engineering and the Built Environment

(Doc S16/31/1)

- 16.96 Considered: School for Health and Life Science Portfolio Review and Implementation 2016. (Doc APC16/12/01)
- 16.97 Reported: By the Dean of the School for Health and Life Sciences that the refresh focussed on three areas. Two of which were considered to be routine housekeeping, and the third of which recommended the withdrawal of the BSC Operating Department Practice from academic year 2018/19.
- This recommendation had been made on the basis that
- There was no research activity or contribution to research activity.
 - That there was no demand for development to an Honours programme
 - That there was no prospect of linkage to the postgraduate portfolio.
 - That this subject area under review within the NHS.
- The University was the only provider in Scotland and it was intended that a further intake would take place in September 2017 to allow time for the NHS and Scottish Government to consider a revised 'Theatre Plan' review of NHS theatre services, and discussions involving the University were scheduled for early January 2017.
- 16.98 Resolved: To approve the withdrawal of BSC Operating Department Practice from academic year 2018/19.
- 16.99 Considered: Glasgow School for Business and Society Portfolio 2020: Withdrawal of Programmes. (Doc APC16/19/01)
- 16.100 Reported: By the Dean of Glasgow School for Business and Society that the programmes proposed for withdrawal had either not recruited or had recruited very low numbers which fell below the minimum threshold of 15 students and as such were unable to deliver the desired student experience. Senate was reminded that the School had previously undergone a rapid expansion in 2014/15 but that a number of the new courses had not recruited as expected. In light of this, it was recommended to withdraw 10 undergraduate courses and 7 postgraduate courses. The proposed withdrawals would reduce the complexity of the portfolio, enhance the academic coherence of the portfolio allied to the School's research strengths, enhance recruitment to postgraduate programmes, refocus on international recruitment to align with the University's Common Good curriculum, and prioritise distinctiveness in the School's portfolio. Following approval of the proposals at Academic Policy and Practice Committee, recruitment to the affected programmes had been suspended and all applicants had been informed.

16.101 Discussed: The Students' Association representative expressed concern at the withdrawal of the programmes within the economics suite. The Students' Association considered that the removal of the economic programmes devalued the degree for current students and withdrew the opportunity for widening access students to study economics as it was felt these students were reluctant to apply to other universities offering economics. Concern was echoed by the Postgraduate Student representative, who acknowledged that the low numbers of students on the economics suite indicated that there were problems with interest in the subject area, but considered this to be an opportunity for the University to transform the economics portfolio in line with the University's Common Good mission. It was also noted that there were no international student scholarships offered in economics, but that this could be a key driver in attracting international students in this subject area.

In response, it was stressed that economics modules would still be taught on other programmes, and that the University was still fully committed to the Women in Scotland's Economy Research Centre (WiSE). However, the very low numbers currently studying on the economics suite, where no programme intake had 15 students, there was only 1 international student and no RUK students, indicated that these were not viable programmes and could not provide students with an appropriate student experience. It was acknowledged that there should have been better communication with the affected undergraduate students however, and it was noted that the Dean had arranged a series of meetings in the new year with all students currently on the affected programmes to discuss the development of individual study plans to ensure that there was a personalised approach to enable these students to complete their studies.

16.102 A question was asked in relation to the accuracy of the data that had been used to justify the withdrawal of the economics suite and it was suggested that current application data showed that there were around 200 applicants for 20 places. It was agreed to explore this further.

16.103 The representative from City of Glasgow College expressed concern at the proposed withdrawal of the BA/BA (Hons) International Retail Management 2 + 2 as this was considered a key pathway that would impact a number of students hoping to articulate to the University, and that the College had not been involved at an early stage in discussions around its withdrawal.

It was highlighted this programme was not an integrated programme and that there were other programmes with a retail specialism that

students could articulate too, and the University would be happy to meet with the College to discuss this issue further.

- 16.104 GSBS representatives highlighted that the proposals had been carried by one vote at the School Board and requested that economics colleagues be given additional time to develop a 2 + 2 pathway. In response it was acknowledged that the decision to close a programme was challenging for staff and students, however the quality of the learning experience had to be paramount, and it was not considered that there was sufficient demand for this.
- 16.105 It was further highlighted that an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) on the proposals had not been prepared. Whilst this was an oversight, it was considered appropriate to defer a decision on the proposals to allow for the preparation of an EIA.
- 16.106 Resolved:
- a) To defer consideration of the GSBS withdrawal of programmes to undertake further discussion and consultation and to enable an Equality Impact Assessment to be undertaken.
 - b) To review the application data for the economics suite for 2017/18.
 - c) To discuss the withdrawal of the BA/BA (Hons) International Retail Management with City of Glasgow College.
 - d) That an early special meeting of Senate be arranged to continue consideration of the Glasgow School for Business and Society Portfolio 2020: Withdrawal of Programmes.
- 16.107 Considered: SEBE Framework for a CCIS Undergraduate Portfolio For 2020.
(Doc APC16/26/1)
- 16.108 Reported: By the Dean of the School of Engineering and Built Environment that the proposals related to 3 undergraduate programmes within the Department of Computer Communications and Interactive Systems (CCIS) and would better enable the department to achieve the University's 2020 goals.
- The BA (Hons) Interior Design was wholly delivered by City of Glasgow College and there was no expertise within CCIS or SEBE that could contribute to the programme. It was therefore anomalous within the portfolio and its withdrawal was recommended. In addition the programme had returned very poor student satisfaction, limited demand and poor graduate employment. The University had worked closely with the City of Glasgow College to ensure existing students were supported and there were other programmes that students could apply to.

The other two proposals related to a redesign of the Digital Design Suite and the BSc/BSc (Hons) Computer Games (Art and Animation) pathway.

All proposals had been unanimously approved at the SEBE School Board.

- 16.109 Resolved:
- a) To withdraw the BA (Hons) Interior Design
 - b) To phase out of activity at levels 1 and 2 of the Digital Design Suite and redirect relevant critical enabling academic mass hitherto associated with the Digital Design Suite to create enhanced offerings at levels 3 and 4, together with new advanced provision at level M.
 - c) To revise levels 1 and 2 of the Computer Games suite to: better integrate the BSc/BSc (Hons) Computer Games (Art and Animation) pathway; strengthen Art and Animation accreditation prospects; emphasise its strong digital perspective; restrict recruitment to ensure balanced student numbers across games programmes.

Research Strategy Refresh

16.110 Considered: A draft of the refreshed University Research Strategy. **(Doc S16/24/1)**

16.111 Reported: By the Acting VP Research that a refresh of the University Research Strategy which was approved in September 2014 was required due to developing internal and external environments and the need to begin to look beyond 2020. The key elements of the refresh were

- Dissolution of the Institutes.
- The use of the Sustainability Development Goals to frame the Strategy.
- Introduction of broad research areas of Inclusive Societies, Healthy Lives and Sustainable Environments, below which would sit 6 research themes
- The proposal to move to a 'centres model' and (re)start the centres renewal and approval process.
- Better linkages of the Goals, Objectives and KPIs as well as links to other supporting strategies.

The Strategy would also meet the strategic agenda of the major research funders and the themes would be more inclusive of the University's strengths.

Whilst there had already been consultation during the development of the refreshed Strategy, further consultation would take place with academic staff, PhD students and research Units in advance of finalising the Strategy for submission to Court at its meeting on 23rd February 2016 for approval.

16.112 Discussed: It was noted that educational research was not included in the draft

Strategy. It was acknowledged that his was an important a cross cutting theme and the restructuring of GCULead would provide an opportunity to consider how to support this across the University via a hub and spokes model.

- 16.113 In response to a question as to how the KPI of a 50% increase in annual research income would be achieved, the Acting VP Research advised Senate that it was important to view research funding as a pipeline with a portfolio of research grants starting with small grants but that these could be developed in to medium and larger grants over time. In recent years the focus had moved away from smaller and medium sized grants.
- 16.114 It was noted that the refreshed Strategy had a strong focus on researcher development including students, staff and supervisors and this was welcomed, and this supported the need to incorporate educational research in to the revised strategy.
- 16.115 The revised Strategy proposed the establishment of four University Research Centres. The number of Research Centres had to be sustainable but it was acknowledged that research was dynamic and processes were in place for the introduction of additional centres should this be considered necessary.
- 16.116 The Postgraduate Student Representative welcomed the refresh and in particular the focus on PGR students. The financial pressure on international students was noted, and in response to a question about studentships, Senate was advised that this was currently under review.
- 16.117 Resolved:
- a) To endorse the draft Refreshed Research Strategy.
 - b) To note that further consultations would be held in the new year, thereafter a final draft Research Strategy taking account of the points raised above and emerging from the additional consultation would be submitted to Court on 24th February 2017 for approval.

Senate Disciplinary Committee Vice-Chair

- 16.118 Approved: Following completion of the process agreed at the June meeting for the appointment of the Senate Disciplinary Committee Chair and Vice-Chair, a recommendation from the Principal that Mr Michael Bromby be appointed Vice Chair of Senate Disciplinary Committee for a period of 3 years. **(Doc S16/32/1)**

The Principal thanked everyone who expressed an interest in the role of Chair and Vice-Chair, and in particular thanked the previous Chair, Mrs Moira MacMillan, for her valuable contribution to the work of the Senate Disciplinary Committee over the last 5 years.

Chair's Action

16.119 Noted: That the following was approved via Chair's Action since the last meeting of Senate:

Higher Degrees Committee

Approval of 3 PhDs from the Higher Degrees Committee.
(Doc S16/25/1 and Doc S16/26/1)

Academic Appointments

16.120 Received: A paper on academic appointments made since the last meeting of Senate. **(Doc S16/27/1)**

Academic Policy and Practice Committee

16.121 Received: The confirmed minute of the meeting of the Academic Policy and Practice Committee held on 14th September 2016. **(Doc APC16/11/1)**

University Research Committee

16.122 Received: The confirmed minute of the meeting of the University Research Committee held on 31st August 2016. **(Doc REC16/12/1)**

International Committee

16.123 Received: The confirmed minute of the meetings of the International Committee held on 22nd September 2016. **(Doc IC 16/20/1)**

School Board/Boards of Senate Minutes

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

School of Engineering and the Built Environment held on 27th April 2016
(Doc EBESB15/01/56)

University Court

16.125 Received: The highlights of the meeting of University Court held on 24th November 2016. **(Doc S16/35/1)**

Notification of AcceleRATE Conferments

16.126 Received: A paper informing of GCU Staff achieving Professional Recognition of Teaching and Supporting Student Learning (UKPSF 2011) from 2015 –

2016. (Doc S16/28/1)

Date of Next Meeting

16.127 Received:

Notification that the next scheduled meeting of University Senate will be held on Friday 24th February 2017 at 09:30 Hrs in CEE06/07.