

Report from the meeting of Senate held on 18th October 2022

1. Principal and Vice Chancellor's and Executive Board Report

Senate received a report from the Principal and Vice Chancellor and Executive Board to update members on substantive items considered by the Executive Board since the last meeting of Senate.

The Principal extended her personal thanks to all staff across the University for the increased work at the start of term as a result of issues with introduction of the new student information system. It was recognised that staff had worked very hard both to resolve the issues and to support students, and she advised that she would be writing to all staff to thank them.

Senate was updated on the work being undertaken to support students who were involved in the accommodation crisis in Glasgow. The University was working on a number of solutions to address the immediate issue, and on a longer term basis, discussions with Glasgow City Council were underway about the supply of appropriate student accommodation.

2. Safe Return to Campus

The Chief Operating Officer reported that the Ministerial Covid Recovery Group had been wound up as had the Covid Leads' Group. Officially all Covid-19 adjustments had come to an end, and the University would be reviewing what measures the University still had in place and whether it was still preferable to keep these, taking into account the impact they had on wellbeing and the learning and teaching experience. A meeting of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee was being arranged, and a risk assessed measured approach would continue to be taken. Consideration would also be given to the full breadth of the University's activities rather than the primary focus being on undergraduate teaching. Significant lessons had been learned over the last two years, and the University would be in a strong position to respond quickly should there be any need to reintroduce any measures.

3. Research Report 2021/2022

Senate considered the Research Report for 2021/2022. The report provided a summary of the quarterly and annual applications, awards, annual research income and trajectory and REF related activity, including benchmarking against the wider sector, together with summaries of research income and research degree completions. The PVC Research informed Senate that there had been an increase in research grant applications, and research income was up by around 5% over the previous year and was on a trajectory towards Strategy 2030 ambitions. The University has received confidential feedback the REF Units of Assessment as well as Institutional level Environment, and preparations for a REF reflection meeting was under way to consider lessons learned from our submission and process.

4. Supporting Families Policy (Research Students)

Senate received a report that outlined that Executive Board had approved proposals to group together updated policies for Post-Graduate Research Students on maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoption leave into a new Supporting Families Policy (Research Students). This revised policy would provide information on leave (paid and unpaid), and stipend provision for those students who received a GCU studentship. In discussion it was confirmed that the policy also provided guidance on carers leave. Senate noted the report and welcomed the introduction of the combined policy

5. NSS Outcomes 2022

Senate received a report that provided an update on the NSS 2022 results. The paper outlined the performance at institution, sector, School, programme and subject levels as well as outcomes from the additional bank questions and analysis of the programmes having most impact on GCUs overall position. It was noted that the overall satisfaction rate 79%, increased by 1% since 2021, put GCU on a par with the Scottish Sector and ahead of the UK sector by +3pp. It was also noted that the University was on a par with, or above, the Scottish and UK sectors in 7 out of the 9 key NSS categories and was ahead of the Scottish and UK sectors for Learning Resources and ahead of the Scottish sector for Assessment & Feedback, and Student Voice. The University was now placed 10th in Scotland for overall satisfaction, an improvement from 12th last year.

The Director of Strategy, Planning and Business Intelligence informed Senate that this was the final year of the current format of the NSS but as yet, no information on the new format had been released. As data had to be supplied by the end of the month, it was hoped that information would be forthcoming in the very near future.

In discussion concern was expressed that the recent issues with registration may have an impact on overall student satisfaction, it was important to make sure lessons were learned so there could be no repeat. This was acknowledged, and the need to engage with students, stakeholders and staff was highlighted.

Senate welcomed the positive results of the NSS survey and noted the report.

6. Graduate Outcomes 2019/2020

Senate noted the report on Graduate Outcomes for 2019/2020. The paper provided a summary of the 2019/20 graduate cohort outcomes for the Scottish sector by activity, including Standard Occupational Classification, salary bands and graduate reflections. Information at Institutional and School level was included. Overall, 93% of graduates were in employment and/or further study (a 3pp increase over the previous year) and the University was ahead of the Scottish sector by +3pp, and was first equal in Scotland. The percentage of GCU graduates in employment in highly skilled occupations was 79%, and the University retained its position as the Scottish modern University with the highest proportion of graduates in highly skilled occupations.

7. Annual Report on Institution-Led Review of Quality & Governing Body Statement of Assurance 2021/22

Senate noted the Annual Report on Institution-led Review of Quality and the Governing Body Statement of Assurance that form part of the University's reporting arrangements to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). The Governing Body Statement of Assurance was approved by Court at its meeting on 8th September 2022.

8. Graduate Outcomes 2018/19

Senate noted a report that provided information on the recently published Graduate Outcomes, which surveyed graduates approximately 15 months after completing their studies. Overall, 90% of GCU graduates were in employment and/or further study, placing the University second equal in Scotland. Eighty percent of GCU graduates who were in employment were in highly skilled occupations, and this was the highest proportion compared to other Scottish moderns, and 2% above the Scottish sector average. Graduate salaries were broadly on a par with other Scottish modern universities. The University slightly exceeded the Scottish sector for all three questions on graduate reflections, and in particular was first in Scotland for graduates agreeing that their current activity was meaningful.

9. Standing Committee and School Board Summary Reports

Senate noted reports from the following standing committees and School Boards:-

- Academic Policy and Practice Committee (APPC) held on 14th September 2022
- University Research Committee held on 31st August 2022
- International Committee held on 15th September 2022
- The Glasgow School for Business and Society held on 7th September 2022
- School of Computing, Engineering & Built Environment held on 5th October 2022

10. Research Degrees Committee

Senate approved the award of 17 PhDs, 1 PhD by previous publication and 2 Prof. Ds.

11. Merged Assessment Regulations (Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate)

Senate considered a paper that presented the merged and updated Assessment Regulations for Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate study. No significant changes had been made to the regulations, but they included necessary updates to reflect changes in terminology and the replacement of the Mitigating Circumstances Policy with the new Fit to Sit Policy. The merged Assessment Regulations had been approved by APPC at its meeting on the 14th September 2022. A minor change to Section 7 had subsequently been made to include explicit reference to reasonable adjustments to the maximum period of study, in line with the Equality Act 2010. Senate approved the Merged Assessment Regulations (Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate)

12. Regulations for the Conduct of Exams

Senate approved the revised Regulations for the Conduct of Examinations, which had been updated to include a reference to online assessments, in line with the University's Digital Assessment Policy approved by Senate at its last meeting. The updated version also included a number of editorial changes and procedural clarifications.

13. Amendments to the Code of Student Conduct to include specific reference to Digital Assessments

In light of Senate's recent approval of the updated GCU Digital Assessment Policy, it had been requested that specific reference to academic misconduct in digital assessments was referred to in the Code of Student Conduct to inform both staff and students on how misconduct in a digital assessment would be handled. Accordingly, Senate approved the inclusion of an additional section on digital assessment in the Code of Student Conduct.

14. Admissions Policies

Senate approved amendments and updates to the following admissions related policies:-

- Admissions Policy
- Criminal Convictions Policy
- Contextualised Admissions Policy

The updates represented standard annual refreshes for the 3 policies presented, with the main changes were highlighted throughout the policy documents. The updates related to changes to current practice and compliance with statutory requirements.

15. Outline Principles for the approval of a GCU Programme for Delivery in Foreign Language

At its previous meeting, Senate had approved a policy amendment that permitted partnerships involving teaching and assessment in a language other than English in a very specific

circumstances, and subject to the condition that learning resources were back translated into English so that the University is assured of the integrity of the content. Subsequent to this, the Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, had developed a set of core principles and guidelines to cover arrangements to assure academic standards and the student learning experience. Senate approved the supplementary core principles and guidelines in support of the revised policy statement allowing for the delivery in a language other than English.

16. Senate Composition and Membership and Appointment of the Vice Chair

Senate received the composition and updated membership for 2022/23. In line with Senate Standing Orders, Senate approved the appointment of the Deputy Vice Chancellor as Vice Chair of Senate, noting that the role was currently held by Professor James Miller and following his departure from the University later in the month, Professor Mike Mannion would be Acting DVC from 24th October 2022.

Professor Pamela Gillies – Emeritus Professorship

The Chair having left the meeting, the Vice Chair, Professor James Miller, assumed the Chair. Senate endorsed the decision by Executive Board to appoint Professor Pamela Gillies as an Emeritus Professor in the School of Health and Life Sciences, when she steps down as Principal at the end of the calendar year.

15. Other Matters Approved/Noted/Received for Information.

- Senate's previous electronic approval of the Fit to Sit Policy and Interim arrangements for the Chair of Senate Disciplinary Committee
- Senate Programme of Work 2022/23
- Honorary Appointments.
- Recent academic staff appointments.
- Senate Standing Committees Composition, Membership and Terms of Reference 2022/23
- Senate Disciplinary Committee Membership for Session 2022/23
- The summary report from the meeting of University Court held on 16th June and 8th September 2022

The next scheduled meeting of Senate will be held on 14th December 2022