

University of Glasgow

University Court – Wednesday 10 October 2018

Communications to Court from the meeting of Senate held on 04 October 2018

Dr Jack Aitken, Director, Senate Office

(All matters are for noting)

1. Emeritus Professor Sir William Kerr Fraser, Former Chancellor and Principal

The Principal informed Council of Senate that Sir William Kerr Fraser, former Chancellor and Principal of the University, had died on 13 September 2018 aged 89.

Sir William studied at the University of Glasgow (M.A., LL.B.), where he was President of the Students' Representative Council from 1951-52. Following a career in the Civil Service, where he ultimately became Permanent Secretary in the Scottish Office, he joined the University of Glasgow in 1988 as Principal and Vice-Chancellor, serving in these posts until 1995. In 1996, he was elected Chancellor of the University. He stood down from this role in 2006. Following its refurbishment as a student services centre, the former Hub Building was named the Fraser Building in his honour. He was awarded an honorary LL.D. by the University in 1982.

Council of Senate was notified that a memorial service would be held on Saturday 24 November at 11.00 am in the University Chapel.

Council of Senate observed a minute's silence as a mark of respect for Sir William Kerr Fraser.

2. Matters Arising

2.1 Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016

Dr Jack Aitken (Director, Senate Office) reminded the Council of Senate that it had previously agreed the terms of the composition of Senate which would bring Senate into alignment with the requirements of the Higher Education Governance Act. The composition of Senate was a matter that required to be expressed in an ordinance of the Privy Council. The 2016 Act would also affect the composition of the University Court and it had been agreed with Court that the draft ordinances for Senate and Court would be submitted simultaneously. It was planned that Draft ordinances would be submitted to the Privy Council Office by December 2018, in expectation that the new ordinances would be approved in time for implementation by the start of Academic Year 2019-20. Dr Aitken also noted that the procedure for the development of ordinances was established by statute and would involve an eight-week period of consultation. However, a draft of the new ordinance would be issued to Senate for comment as soon as it had been prepared.

3. Learning and teaching matters

3.1 Online Distance eLearning – Presentation by Vice-Principal (Academic and Educational Innovation)

Professor Frank Coton provided Council of Senate with an update on the University's Online and Distance Learning (ODL) Project. Professor Coton informed council of Senate that, in

December 2013, the University's Senior Management Group (SMG) agreed to invest £2.3M in an online learning initiative to develop:

- Masters level programmes with high market potential and aligned to the University's strengths;
- Online, on-campus courses to help create a more flexible learning environment on campus;
- Oversight via a University-level governance board.

At the time this investment was made, Professor Coton noted that the University had been lagging behind other universities in the scale of its online provision, and was missing out on opportunities to grow the student population beyond the physical constraints of the campus. The University was also missing out on the chance to develop in-country Transnational Education (TNE) opportunities supported by blended learning, and to connect with high-value professionals through the provision of online Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses.

It was noted that the University now had 16 different online distance learning programmes and a further 10 online and blended learning courses funded by the ODL project. ODL programmes also accounted for around two thirds of all online distance learning enrolments and had seen a 100% increase in student numbers since 2014.

Following the success of the initial ODL investment, Professor Coton reported that SMG had provided £2.5M of additional funding for phase two of the programme. In this phase, the University had entered into a non-exclusive partnership with Wiley Education Services in an effort to increase the scale of its online provision. Wiley would be responsible for providing marketing and recruitment and comprehensive student support for online programmes. The work would also be supported through the establishment of a central Digital Education Team which would assist staff by providing them with the skills to use online learning technologies and by taking content from staff to produce online learning materials and activities.

In total, it was noted that nine programmes would be supported through the Wiley partnership and the initial stages of the partnership would focus on existing programmes which had the potential for scaling up, in addition to some limited development of new programmes. Recruitment for these programmes was forecast to be around 75 new students per year over three intakes in September, January and April. Programmes would also be designed to accommodate students 'slotting' in to courses during the academic year to avoid double teaching. The initial six programmes would be launched in April 2019, with marketing commencing in November 2018.

In addition to the ODL project investment, Professor Coton informed Council of Senate that SMG had made a smaller £40K investment in the development of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). The University's involvement in MOOCs was driven by a desire to be part of the evolving MOOC landscape and to provide high quality, open education to the world. The University also aimed to evaluate the applicability of MOOC technologies and their emerging models for online education. Furthermore, it was hoped that MOOCs could be used to support the University's strategy in terms of online learning both on and off campus.

As part of its engagement with MOOCs, Professor Coton reported that the University had joined the FutureLearn MOOC consortium along with a number of leading UK universities and that, in April 2014, Glasgow introduced its first two MOOCs. The University now had a portfolio of around 14 active MOOCs with another seven currently under development. Since April 2014, more than 300,000 learners had studied on University of Glasgow MOOCs, and these courses now contributed to almost every aspect of academic life including student

recruitment, research and impact, undergraduate teaching, CPD, and public outreach and understanding.

Following Professor Coton's presentation, it was asked whether Wiley would subcontract any of their support for online programmes to other companies. Professor Coton confirmed that Wiley would be providing all of the support themselves and would not be using any subcontracted companies. Members of the Council of Senate queried the nature of support that Wiley would provide to students on online programmes. Professor Coton noted that Wiley would provide students with technical support and that all students would have a named contact. Wiley would also work with staff at the University to ensure that students were adequately supported throughout their studies. It was queried whether the University would consider offering its online courses to students in China. Professor Coton responded that censorship in China posed significant operational challenges for the provision of online courses in the country. He also noted that the University was attempting to diversify student recruitment and the range of countries that it offered courses to in an effort to reduce the institution's exposure to risk. In response to a question regarding predicted growth in the number of students undertaking online courses offered by the University, Professor Coton reported that, within five years, it was hoped that around 1500 – 2000 students would be enrolled onto online courses at Glasgow and that at least 10 programmes would have enrolment numbers of between 140 and 145 students.

3.2 Enhancement Led Institutional Review (ELIR) 2018-19 – update on progress to date

Professor Coton provided Council of Senate with a summary of the University's progress in preparation for the 2018-19 ELIR. Professor Coton informed Council of Senate that ELIR exercises were carried out by the Quality Assurance Agency (Scotland), acting as agents for the Scottish Funding Council and that the review would encompass all credit-bearing provision offered by the University, including research as well as taught degree programmes, distance learning and collaborative provision.

The outcomes of the 2018-19 ELIR would be a threshold judgement on whether the University's arrangements for assuring academic standards and quality were effective, in addition to a series of commendations and recommendations. The commendations and recommendations would be enhancement focussed and would reflect upon what the University was doing to improve the student learning experience.

The main stages of ELIR were the submission of a Reflective Analysis (self-evaluation document) to the QAA, a one-day Planning Visit to the University, and a five-day Review Visit. The outcomes would begin to be issued one week after the five-day visit. The University would then be required to provide a response to the outcomes of the review.

It was noted that The ELIR Steering Committee, which included representation from across the University, was working on the Reflective Analysis document for submission to the QAA. Preparations were progressing, with inputs being collated from across the University in collaboration with the Colleges. The Steering Committee was overseeing the drafting of the document, and the main responsibilities for drafting would soon pass to a core editing group drawn from the membership of the Steering Committee.

Whilst progress was being made, it was acknowledged that the timing of submission to the QAA and the schedule of meetings for University committees were not well aligned. In order to complete the drafting of the Reflective Analysis within QAA's timescales, the ELIR Steering Committee would need to work on the Reflective Analysis until the point of submission, precluding the opportunity for gathering comments and final approval from all committees before submission to the QAA. Therefore, Council of Senate was asked to formally devolve responsibility for final approval of the Reflective Analysis to the University's Education Policy and Strategy Committee (EdPSC).

Council of Senate agreed to formally devolve responsibility for final approval of the Reflective Analysis to EdPSC.

4. Research Planning and Strategy Committee (RPSC)

4.1 REF2021: Interim Code of Practice for the Selection of Outputs

Dr Tanita Casci (Head of Research Policy) provided Council of Senate with an overview of the proposed Interim Code of Practice for the Selection of Outputs, which had been developed by RPSC in preparation for the 2021 Research Excellence Framework (REF2021). Dr Casci informed Council of Senate that each institution making a submission to REF2021 was required to develop a Code of Practice setting out how the institution would:

- Fairly and transparently identify staff with significant responsibility for research;
- Determine who was an independent researcher;
- Ascertain how outputs would be selected for submission, including how staff could declare individual circumstances which may have constrained their ability to produce outputs or to work productively throughout the assessment period.

Guidance on determining the status of independent researchers, and on the arrangements for individual staff circumstances, would be published by Research England (on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies) in January 2019. In the meantime, the proposed Interim Code of Practice had been developed to set out and support arrangements for the scoring of outputs as part of the University's REF2021 preparations.

The Interim Code of Practice would bring together existing policies and processes that had previously been approved by SMG for the management of the institutional submission to REF2021. Dr Casci also informed Council of Senate that the Interim Code of Practice included details of how outputs would be scored and by whom; the committees and groups responsible for output scoring; and how data on output scores would be handled. This Interim Code of Practice would also help to ensure that the approach to REF2021 preparations and output scoring was applied consistently across the institution and that decisions regarding the form and content of the REF2021 submission were made with a view to maximising strategic advantage for the University.

Council of Senate approved the Interim Code of Practice for the Selection of Outputs for REF2021.

5. Convener's Business

5.1 Brexit

The Principal reported that the University had taken steps to alleviate the potential impact of a no deal Brexit on non-UK EU staff and students. In particular, he noted that Human Resources had issued guidance and provided support for staff who may be affected by a no deal Brexit and that he would write to affected colleagues individually. He also noted that the Scottish Government had guaranteed funding for all non-UK EU students currently studying at Scottish universities for the remainder of their degrees.

5.2 USS Pensions dispute

The Principal informed Council of Senate that the Joint Expert Panel (JEP) tasked with reviewing the Universities Superannuation Scheme's (USS) 2017 valuation, processes and assumptions, had recently published their first report. The JEP recommended four areas where adjustments to the valuation should be considered:

1. A re-evaluation of the employers' attitude to risk, which would result in a re-evaluation of the reliance on the sponsor covenant.
2. Adopting a greater consistency of approach between the 2014 and 2017 valuations, which would affect the scale and timing of deficit recovery contributions.
3. Ensuring fairness and equality between generations of scheme members by smoothing future service contributions.
4. Ensuring the valuation used the most recently available information, taking account recent market improvements, new investment considerations and the latest data on mortality.

The JEP had concluded that full implementation of these adjustments could mean total required contributions of 29.2% to fund current benefits, compared with the current rate of 26% (18% of salary paid by employers, 8% by employees), and the USS's proposed rate of 36.6%, based on its most recent valuation. The Principal also reported that the University and College Union (UCU) and Universities UK (UUK) were in the process of consulting their members on the JEP's recommendations.

5.3 Student recruitment

The Principal reported that undergraduate student numbers for 2018-19 had yet to be confirmed but were expected to be broadly similar to last year with a small rise in the number of international students and a slight fall in the number of students from the rest of the UK. The University expected to meet its target for the recruitment of students from the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 20% (SIMD20) most disadvantaged areas, and was close to reaching its SIMD40 recruitment target. The Principal informed Council of Senate that he would report back at a later meeting once the postgraduate numbers had been confirmed.

5.4 Glasgow School of Art fire

The Principal informed Council of Senate that the University had been in regular dialogue with the Glasgow School of Art (GSA) since the fire in June 2018. The Principal had also met with Professor Tom Inns (Director of GSA) and Dr Muriel Gray (Chair of the Board of Governors at GSA) to offer the University's support to affected staff and students. The Clerk of Senate reported that teaching in three out of five Schools within GSA had been relatively unaffected by the fire but that teaching in the remaining Schools was taking place in temporary accommodation. It was hoped that the Bourdon Building would be reopened to staff and students by the end of October 2018.

6. Clerk of Senate's Business

6.1 University of Glasgow report into historical slavery

The Clerk of Senate informed Council of Senate that the University had recently published a comprehensive report into the institution's historical links with racial slavery. The report acknowledged that, while the University had played a key role in the abolitionist movement, it had also received significant financial support from individuals whose wealth derived from slavery in the 18th and 19th centuries. The report, co-authored by Professor Simon Newman (School of Humanities) and Dr Stephen Mullen (School of Humanities), followed a year-long investigation into bequests, support and other means by which the University might have benefited from slavery-related wealth. Following publication of the report, the University had agreed a proactive programme of reparative justice which included the creation of a centre for the study of slavery and a memorial or tribute at the University in the name of the enslaved. The University was also working with the University of the West Indies (UWI) and

hoped to sign a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen academic collaboration between the two institutions.

Council of Senate enquired about the level of funding that the University would be allocating for the programme of reparative justice. The Clerk of Senate noted that she would report back on the numbers at a future meeting and would keep Council of Senate apprised of any developments.

6.2 Honorary Degrees 2019

Council of Senate received the oral report from the Honorary Degrees Committee concerning recommendations for the conferment of honorary Degrees in 2019. The Clerk of Senate would provide a report to Court at its meeting on 10 October 2018.