

**MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE SENATUS ACADEMICUS** held in the Lecture Theatre B, James Clerk Maxwell Building, the King's Buildings on 1 June 2016

**Present:** Professor C Jeffery (Chair); Professors S Bayne, J Bradshaw, Ian Clarke, K Forbes, D Gray, B Fisher, P Foster, C French, N Gentz, T Harrison, C Jones, L McAra, A Maciocia, F Mackay, F Moreira, D Reay, J Rees, G Reid, S Rhind, D Robertson, T Scaltsas, M Schwannauer, J Silvertown, J Stewart, R Valsan, C Sangwin, L Yellowlees, S Wild; Drs C Chandler, E Grant, C Harlow, D Livingstone, C Nash, G Paattiyil, S Riley, R Rossi, IM Viola, P Walsh; Ms Highton, Mr G McLachlan

**In attendance:** Ms G Aitken, Dr D Alexakis, Mr R Bartlett, Ms L Buchanan, Dr A Bunni, Dr A Carter, Mr E Clarkson, Ms M Corey, Dr R Crawford-Smith, Mr S Donnelly, Mr S Dunbar, Mr E Serafin Esquivel, Mr M Farsarakis, Mr S Filalithis, Ms S Fleming, Ms M Friis, Dr D Gasevic, Dr R Galloway, Ms A Gibbons, Ms A Ginda, Mr C Gallacher, Ms J Houston, Ms A Hunter, Ms T Ironside, Dr E Jackson, Mr M Jennings, Ms L Johnston-Smith, Ms C Keltie, Dr M Knottenbelt, Dr G McCabe, Mr A McKay, Dr P Murison, Dr F O'Hanlon, Ms AM O'Mullane (notes), Mr G Overton, Ms J Paterson, D A Pawsey, Ms S Pearson, Dr C Phillips, Ms H Ritchie, Dr N Rowa-Dewar, Ms D Ruddy, Dr G Santori, Dr M Seery, Dr C Sinclair, Ms J Spiller, Ms L Johnston-Smith, Mr M Taylor, Mr N Thomas, Ms P Ward, Mr T Ward, Mr C Yanez

The moment of reflection was delivered by Professor Lesley McAra, Assistant Principal Community Relations, who spoke about the meaning of the word smooring or smaladh in Gaelic, which is the craftwork of sustaining a fire. Smooring can be used as an elegant analogy for the role of Senate members, who sustain the academic community and nurture the academic flame within the University.

Non-Senate members who were in attendance for the presentation and discussion section of the meeting were welcomed.

The Presentation and Discussion section of the meeting has been audio recorded and filmed. The audio recording is available on request from Academic Services. Presentations and the film will be available on the Teaching Matters webpage:

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/staff/teaching-matters>.

## **PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION THEME: Digital Education**

The focus of the presentation and discussion was Digital Education and its aim was to take stock of what the University has achieved in the areas of online distance learning and MOOCs in recent years and look ahead to developments in two areas of growth: distance PhDs and Edinburgh CityScope. This discussion was considered to be particularly timely as the technological landscape within higher education continues to shift. The presentation also offered an opportunity to introduce two new Assistant Principals with responsibility for this area: Professor Sian Bayne, Assistant Principal, Digital Education, and Ms Melissa Highton, Assistant Principal, Online Learning.

### **1. Introduction: Current state of play for digital Education**

Ms Melissa Highton, Assistant Principal Online Learning, spoke about the strides taken by the University's to hold an international leadership position for digital education. The University is an attractive place to work for those interested in technology enhanced learning. The University has 67 online programmes and 2600 students studying at Masters level. More than 2 million learners have taken part in University of Edinburgh Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). Ms Highton noted that the University must have the right

infrastructure in place in order to sustain or grow the University's level of activity in this sphere. Some of the steps being taken to ensure the right infrastructure is in place include: consolidating and simplifying the number of Virtual Learning Environments, investing in learning support in the library including the digital collections, the introduction of a new media asset management system, MediaHopper, and ensuring that learning technologists have the requisite professional development to ensure they have the most up to date expertise.

## **2. Progress with Massive Open Online Courses**

Ms Highton also presented on the University's progress with (MOOCs). The demand from colleagues to make MOOCs continues to be high as it is perceived to be an area in which to experiment. The University operates on three MOOCs platforms, with 1.4 million active learners; 118,000 learners have asked for a certificate of completion. Ms Highton identified that the University delivers four different models of MOOCs: behaviour change MOOCs, MOOCs connected to a major geopolitical event, MOOCs developed to widen access to education, and MOOCs that connect the University with the city of Edinburgh. Looking to the future, the University will need to develop a deeper understanding of the value of these modes of delivery.

## **3. Developments in Distance PhDs**

Professor Jeremy Bradshaw, Assistant Principal Researcher Development, updated the Senate on the recommendations to support the delivery of distance PhDs from the Flexible PhD Task Group, convened by Professor Jeff Haywood. The Task Group reported to Researcher Experience Committee on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2016; the report is available in the Committee meeting papers. The Task Group made recommendations around the following areas: regulations and procedures, enhancements to the student record system, staff training requirements, marketing materials, and access to hardcopy library materials. The recommendations were also considered by the Distance Education Task Group who commented that any gaps in online training for PhD students should be filled and technology based solutions to support meetings and the academic community should be developed. A small group is being brought together to present recommendations to Fees Strategy Group regarding the fee level for Distance PhDs.

## **4. Edinburgh CityScope**

Professor Jonathan Silvertown, Chair in Technology Enhanced Science Education, spoke about Edinburgh CityScope, a cross-university project that is building the digital infrastructure to turn Edinburgh and its environs into a pervasive, interactive learning environment – a global city of learning. The project is looking both at ways to aggregate geolocational open data about Edinburgh, and at making it available to both experienced and novice developers. The intention is to create a hub for the mountain of open research data owned by the University and a central point for app developers to access and create apps, which will visualise the raw data and open up the city to us in new ways that are not even envisaged at the moment. One use of the application is the Curious Edinburgh project, an app developed by EdINA, which provides a geolocational tour of Edinburgh connected to the history of science, technology and medicine. The app is dynamic and new locations can be added via a WordPress blog.

## 5. Running a successful online distance learning programme

Dr Liz Grant, Assistant Principal Global Health, discussed how online distance learning programmes deliver the mission of the University; by nurturing communities of practice across the globe, the University is making the world a better place. ODL students at the University engage in programmes that encourage inter-disciplinary and career-long training. Students on the Masters in Global Challenges have the advantage of an Edinburgh University education at home. They value the bespoke learning and bespoke application of learning, opportunities for discursive learning and peer leading, group work on fit-for-purpose platforms and the support for turning learning into action.

## 6. Future visions for digital education at Edinburgh

Professor Sian Bayne, Assistant Principal Digital Education, outlined possible futures for digital education. These could include:

- shifting modes of delivery, e.g., open education, flipped classrooms or hybrid teaching
- “code cultures”, e.g., computational forms of education, artificial intelligence in education and learning analytics
- Spaces and devices, e.g., bring your own devices and smart learning spaces
- Mobilities, e.g., wearables, augmented realities and geosocial learning such as the work being undertaken by CityScope

Futures are increasingly being defined and imagined by technology corporations, who have a vested interest, i.e. the product the corporation wants to sell. Recently there has been an academic response to such visions of the future in the form of critiques; universities are beginning to conceptualise possible futures for digital education, such as purpose learning envisaged by Stanford University (<http://www.stanford2025.com/purpose-learning/>). Professor Bayne has the ambition of undertaking such a conceptualising process at the University of Edinburgh, channelling our world-leading position in digital education to generate “big ideas”.

**Discussion:** The discussion section of the meeting sought input from Senate members into future visions for a digital education at the University of Edinburgh, recognising the rapidly changing environment and building on the substantial amount of change already achieved.

Key themes from the discussion included:

- **Meeting the needs of life-long learners:** Many students who already have a Masters qualification are not interested in embarking on another qualification of this type but are interested in life-long learning that is transformative. The University should consider how to deliver credit-bearing courses on a standalone basis, in “chunks”, from which students could build bespoke programmes of learning for their own purposes.
- **Student engagement:** There are many lessons that on-campus provision can learn from online programmes in relation to student engagement and active learning. Online learners often feel more closely supported; one theory for this is that teachers have to think creatively about having a digital presence and are willing to experiment and use different digital channels such as Google Hangouts and Twitter to maximise engagement. An innovation at Curtin University in Australia was highlighted where

technology and blended learning mean that on-campus learners can engage with distance learners in real time.

- **MOOCs:** there are many different reasons that MOOC developers get involved. Some are interested in the “play” aspect of creating a MOOC and working without traditional structures and having the ability to experiment. Some are interested in the public engagement aspect, as it allows knowledge creators to disseminate their knowledge quickly to wide audiences where it can have an impact. There are no available conversion statistics for MOOC participants as the way the provision has been established means that there are not always clear articulations or connections with our “for-credit” provision. Students who respond to admissions surveys may not attribute participation in a MOOC as a reason for applying for the programme; they may already have the intention of applying prior to undertaking the MOOC.
- **Constraints for innovation:** Time and workload will be constraints for innovation as it will need to occur alongside delivery of traditional modes and research. It was noted that in order for this to be successful, this innovation must fit into the workload allocation model. The standardisation of the academic year goes against the requirements of delivering appropriately timed provision for mid-career professionals.
- **Costing vs. value:** Questions were posed on the value placed on the University’s online learning provision which is different to the cost attached to it. A related question that needs to be addressed is who we are trying to reach with our provision and why. The impact of pricing on the accessibility for learners and the matter of bursaries was raised. It was agreed that this was an appropriate time to get the price right for distance PhDs. It was confirmed from the experiences of delivering online Masters that delivery was costly and that the overhead costs were complex to break down. However, there can be benefits for on-campus provision and this can spread the costs involved. It was noted that costs may be different when delivering distance learning PhDs.
- **The rationale for engaging in digital education:** While the University is being disrupted by technology, there are a number of different factors at play that mean that the University should engage in digital education and remain sector leaders. These factors include: a highly competitive environment, other markets have shown that corporations that are slow to respond to new technologies can lead to their eventual demise.
- **Technology - Slavery vs. Master paradigms:** it was noted that dominant narratives are moving away from the paradigms that technology is our master or our slave to a more middle ground position where sometimes responses to technology are required and sometimes technology responds to our needs.

Assistant Principals, Professor Bayne and Ms Highton will continue discussions across the University on how to address these issues.

## **FORMAL BUSINESS**

### **1. Notes of Electronic Business 10 – 18 May 2016**

No comments were received in relation to E-Senate business. All items were therefore approved or noted as required.

### **2. Annual Report of the Senate Committees**

Senate noted the major items of committee business from 2015/16 and approved the ambitions of the Senate Committees for the next academic year and beyond.

### **3. Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016 – Key Implications for Senatus Academicus**

Senate noted the key provisions of the Act and agreed to establish a group to advise on how best to implement the requirements set out by the Act in relation to Senate's own operation.

### **4. Court Communications**

The Senatus noted the report from the University Court on its meeting of 25 April 2016, including the election of the Senate Assessors to University Court. Senate noted a comment for communication to University Court as part of the resolution process in relation to Draft Resolution No. 9/2016 (Undergraduate Degree Programme Regulation 26) and Draft Resolution No.10/2016 (Postgraduate Degree Programme Regulation 29) which will provide a clearer definition of leave of absence.

The amended regulations would read as follows:

"Leave of absence is required for compulsory and optional activities related to the programme of study that are not undertaken on campus in Edinburgh. Students must have the formal approval of the College for any leave of absence to study away from Edinburgh that is 30 calendar days' duration or longer. Study location changes of less than 30 calendar days must be agreed with the Supervisor or Personal Tutor. Where the activity is a compulsory part of the programme of study and is organised by the School or College, permission may be given by the College for a cohort of students without individual applications being made. Colleges and Schools must maintain records of all leaves of absence. This regulation does not apply to students on a recognised distance learning programme."

Senate members were invited to comment on the draft resolutions in Appendix 1 in writing by Friday 3 June at noon to [SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk](mailto:SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk). [Secretary's note: no comments were received]

### **5. Chairs – Resolutions**

Court presented to Senatus draft Resolutions in accordance with procedures for the creation of new chairs, renaming of existing chairs and the process for personal chairs. The Senatus, having considered the draft Resolutions below, offered no observations.

Draft Resolution No. 14/2016: Foundation of an AXA Chair of Medical Bioinformatics and Epidemiology

Draft Resolution No. 15/2016: Foundation of a Chair of Applied Marine Biology

Draft Resolution No. 16/2016: Foundation of a Chair of Natural Hazards Science

Draft Resolution No. 17/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Experimental Nuclear Astrophysics

Draft Resolution No. 18/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Software Safety and Security

Draft Resolution No. 19/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Medieval Scottish History

Draft Resolution No. 20/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of German and Theatre

Draft Resolution No. 21/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Coastal and Maritime Hydromechanics

Draft Resolution No. 22/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Experimental Evolution

Draft Resolution No. 23/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Atmospheric Sciences

Draft Resolution No. 24/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Reproductive Medicine and Science

Draft Resolution No. 25/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Algorithms, Games, Logic and Complexity

Draft Resolution No. 26/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Visual Learning

Draft Resolution No. 27/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Computational Cell Biology

Draft Resolution No. 28/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Observational Cosmology

Draft Resolution No. 29/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Interior Design

Draft Resolution No. 30/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Biology of Reprogramming

Draft Resolution No. 31/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Quantum Computing

Draft Resolution No. 32/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Soft Materials and Surfaces

Draft Resolution No. 33/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Survey Astronomy

Draft Resolution No. 34/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Post-Soviet and Comparative Politics

Draft Resolution No. 35/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Twentieth-Century U.S. History

Draft Resolution No. 36/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Behavioural Neuroendocrinology

Draft Resolution No. 37/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Earth Surface Processes

Draft Resolution No. 38/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Contemporary Art Practice and Theory

Draft Resolution No. 39/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Islamic Studies and Persian

Draft Resolution No. 40/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of History of Philosophy

Draft Resolution No. 41/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Primary Care Respiratory Medicine

Draft Resolution No. 42/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Profiling Childhood Visual Impairment

Draft Resolution No. 43/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Molecular Thermodynamics

Draft Resolution No. 44/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Physical Education

Draft Resolution No. 45/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Evolutionary Genomics

Draft Resolution No. 46/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Quantitative Genetics

Draft Resolution No. 47/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Medical Statistics and Clinical Trials

Draft Resolution No. 48/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Neurology

Draft Resolution No. 49/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Human Genetics

Draft Resolution No. 50/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Economics

Draft Resolution No. 51/2016: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Latin Literature and Roman History

Draft Resolution No. 52/2016: Alteration of the title of the Chair of Clinical Psychology

## **6. Collaborative undergraduate degree programme with Zhejiang University–academic governance arrangements**

Senate noted and endorsed the proposed academic governance arrangements for the collaborative undergraduate degree programme in Integrative Biomedical Sciences with Zhejiang University, noting the input offered by Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee and Quality Assurance Committee into the process.

## **7. Student Systems update on major systems projects**

Senate noted progress with three projects which are being implemented to help Schools enhance learning and teaching, the student experience, and support administrative efficiency and effectiveness: the Assessment & Progression Tools Project; the roll-out of the EvaSys course evaluation tool and process; and the development of Student Data Dashboards.

## **8. Central Academic Promotions Committee Report**

Senate noted the report of Central Academic Promotion Committee's meeting on 16 May 2016 and the out-of-cycle creation of two Personal Chairs. Senate also noted that Dr H Pinnock had been included under the Deanery of Clinical Sciences in error: this should be the Deanery of Molecular, Genetic and Population Health Sciences. Senate welcomed the new Senate members.

## **9. Update on the White Paper 'Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice'**

Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services, provided a verbal update on the UK Government White Paper and Technical Consultation on the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and the Governance Bill that have been published. The establishment of UK Research and Innovation had been confirmed, as well as the establishment of the Office for Students (OFS) as the regulator for all Higher Education providers in England. The introduction of the TEF to assess the quality of teaching had also been confirmed.

There would be three TEF ratings:

1. Meets expectations
2. Excellent
3. Outstanding

In year one (2017/18), all providers with any form of successful QA award would receive a rating of 'meets expectations'. Institutions would need to apply to qualify for the two higher bands in subsequent years. The process would be metrics-based.

Key points for the University of Edinburgh were:

- Devolved institutions would be able to enter into year one of the TEF.
- Edinburgh performs highly in some of the metrics to be included in the TEF, but not across the board. High performance in one area would not offset poor performance in another, and results will be averaged over a three year period.
- Universities Scotland Learning and Teaching Committee was discussing ways in which Scotland might engage with the TEF. It was hoped that it might be possible

to define an alternative Scottish route to TEF accreditation based on Scotland's existing Quality framework.

#### **10. Honorary Degrees**

Senate approved the recommendations for the award of Honorary Degrees.

#### **11. Any Other Business**

The Senate Clerk, Anne Marie O'Mullane, was thanked for her Services to Senate over the last number of years.