



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

SENATUS ACADEMICUS

UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE SENATUS

ACADEMICUS held in Shirley Hall, Chancellor's Building, Little France

Wednesday 29 May 2019

Present: The Principal, Professors Anjos, Baxstrom, E Cameron, Critchley, Duncan, Fisher, French, C Jeffery, Gordon, L Grant, Jarvie, MacRae, Murray, Schmid, B Stanley, Warwick, Weir, A Aydin-Aitchison, D Cavanagh, C Caqueneau, G Duursma, J Goodrich, L Hamilton, J Hoy, L Kendall, L Kirstein, W Kwon, P Larkman, Q Li, S MacPherson, S Morley, F Narumi-Munro, P Norris, N Ogryzeko, C Phillips, S Rolle, T Rundell, P Smith, P Taylor, N Treanor, U Tufail-Hanif

Associate Members: D Mukherji, R Nixon

In Attendance: I Ackermann, G Aitken, N Akta, P Bailey, S Bird, C Blackwood, J Brown, E Buxton, K Castle, L Cattell, T Chaurin, M Cox, M Daw, J-C Denis, R Donnelly, G Douglas, L Dunbar, C Emmerson, B Esk, S Fredrick, A Gotzkes, P Hadoke, D Haines, J Haldane, I Hart, L Henry, S Horrocks, L Howat, M Hoeve, J Hume, R Hunt, F Iezzi, J Johnston, S Kean, L Kelly, R Kerr, S Knapp, K Kokowska, H Lambert, C Lennie, G Lerpiniere, R Lindsay, A-M Maciejuk, O Maciver, C Mackay, P McGregor, C McShane, T Madden, H Szoor-McElhinney, J Nisbet, F Parry, E Paterson, P Patras, S Pennings, A Lawley-Powell, S Purves, S Raeside, L Reilly, C Sanderson, J Sayers, R Scott, L Segal, A Shanks, T Sheppard, L Smith, M Smith, R Stenhouse, L Stokes, T Stratford, J Tamplin, G Thompson, L Thompson, H Tracey, G Trousdale, A Tyndall, R Walker, P Ward, H Wallace, K Williams, J Younger

PRESIDENT'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Principal noted that this was Senior Vice-Principal Professor Charlie Jeffery's final meeting of Senate. He thanked Professor Jeffery for his significant contribution to the work of Senate and the University as a whole over a number of years, and wished him well in his future role as Vice-Chancellor of the University of York.

Attendees noted that whilst two members of the Principal's Senior Team – Professor Jeffery and Professor Norman – were moving on, the University would be welcoming Professor Colm Harmon from the University of Sydney to the role of Vice-Principal Students in October 2019. Professor Harmon would take on the learning and teaching-related aspects of Professor Jeffery's current role. Discussions were ongoing about who would take responsibility for the equality and diversity and sustainability aspects of Professor Jeffery's and Professor Norman's roles in the future, but the University remained committed to providing strong leadership in these areas.

The Principal also thanked the outgoing Edinburgh University Students' Association Sabbatical Officers, and welcomed the new post-holders who were present at the meeting. Ms Theresa Sheppard, outgoing Clerk to Senate, was thanked for her contribution to the work of Senate.

The Principal also highlighted the following in his communications:

- University Strategic Plan – attendees were advised that that University was at an advanced stage of a redrafting process. The revised Strategic Plan was based on values and high-level priorities, and it was hoped that it would be a fresh and informative document.
- Brexit – the Principal informed attendees that he would be attending a Scottish Government forum on this issue the following day. It was noted that the University was actively planning for all scenarios.
- Augar Review – the report of this review into the funding of post-18 education in England would be published imminently. Once published, the University would assess the implications for Scottish institutions of the report. The University was again modelling and scenario-planning for all eventualities.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

Widening Participation

The purpose of the session was to consider the University's [Widening Participation Strategy](#), and ways in which colleagues from across the institution were implementing this.

Presentation

Introduction and Overview

Professor Charlie Jeffery, Senior Vice-Principal, and Ms Laura Cattell, Head of Widening Participation

Professor Jeffery stated that the University has a moral responsibility to widen participation: while innate ability is evenly distributed across demographic groups, different demographic groups are not evenly represented within the University's student population. Secondary school attendance continues to play a key role in determining whether or not a student enters higher education. For those entering higher education, non-continuation rates are higher for students from Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD20) postcodes, and for those over the age of 21 on entry.

The Scottish Government set ambitious widening participation targets for the University, and the University is now performing well against these: it has met its SIMD20 target 3 years early as a result of a number of initiatives including building on existing outreach, introducing a part-time Access course to the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS), adopting innovative approaches to working in communities, and reviewing articulation and other access routes.

Ms Cattell noted that the development of the new Widening Participation Strategy had been a collective endeavour involving colleagues from across the University. The Strategy was launched in October 2018 and adopted a whole student lifecycle approach by considering:

- Aspiration and Early Engagement
- Support to Get In
- Support to Succeed and
- Support to Progress

A University-wide approach would also be required if the Strategy was to be properly embedded. Priorities going forward would include:

- Ensuring that widening participation considerations were included in the remits for the University's Student Support and Thematic Reviews
- Working with colleagues to ensure that a seamless support system exists across the student journey
- Enhancing and making more accessible to Schools data about students who have entered through widening participation routes
- Working with the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) to develop online toolkits and examples of best practice to support the implementation of the Strategy.

Aspiration and Early Engagement and Support to Get In – View from a School
Professor Iain Gordon – School of Mathematics

Professor Gordon noted that only 4 members of academic staff within the School of Mathematics were Scottish. The School was involved in a range of initiatives that aimed to widen participation, and used 'reach' (range and significance) as a measure of success. School-led activities included:

- Maths Circles
- Work in schools
- Scholarship schemes
- The introduction of a Level 7 mathematics course
- Development of a Graduate Apprenticeship with the School of Informatics
- Work with other Scottish universities to expand reach

Support to Get In and Support to Succeed
Mr Andy Shanks, Director of Student Wellbeing

Mr Shanks advised attendees about the 'Edinburgh Cares' initiative, which supports students who are care-experienced, student carers and students who are estranged from their parents. The University now has in place a whole system approach to supporting these students, and aims to provide accessible, responsive and flexible support. At present, this includes outreach and partnership working; providing support during the application process, during transitions, whilst on-programme, and for careers and employability; and offering help with finance, accommodation, and mental health and wellbeing. Future developments will include:

- Increasing staff awareness of and confidence in dealing with the relevant issues
- Improving communications and accessibility of information
- Working in partnership by contributing to 'Hub for SUCCESS'
- Developing a student carer policy and associated guidance
- Undertaking benchmarking and seeking to apply for a Kitemark
- Ongoing collaboration with staff and students to bring about continuous improvement

Ms Diva Mukherji and Ms Sarah Purves, Edinburgh University Students' Association

Ms Mukherji and Ms Purves presented on the 'Participation Grant', which is co-ordinated by the Students' Association, but is a partnership with a number of other areas. The Grant aims

to break down financial barriers to getting involved in extracurricular activities whilst at University and £25,000 of funding was made available to eligible students in 2018/19. Evaluation of the Grant suggested that it was operating successfully, with many students in receipt of funding noting that it had impacted positively on their University experience. Areas for further development included:

- Ensuring that the processes for awarding funding reflected the fact that some activities are more expensive than others
- Reviewing the eligibility criteria for the Grant, recognising that the current funding model may be too simplistic

Support to Progress

Ms Susan Bird, Careers Consultant and Ms Paula McGregor, 2018 Geography Graduate

Ms Bird advised attendees that many of the University's widening participation students transition very effectively into careers. However, they often face more barriers than those who do not enter University through widening participation routes. The University Careers Services supports widening participation students in a variety of ways including:

- Development and delivery of the 'Insights' programme, which offers students the opportunity to connect with alumni
- Providing support for transitions, including contributing to 'Moving on' and the 'Access Programme'
- Encouraging students to recognise their wider achievement and employability through the 'Edinburgh Award'
- Providing access to on-campus employment opportunities

Ms McGregor noted that she had attended a poorly-performing school and that no-one else in her family had attended university. However, she had secured a place to study Geography at Edinburgh in 2014 and had graduated with a 2:1 in 2018. Ms McGregor was now working for Ecometrica on their Space Programme.

Ms McGregor advised Senate that the Lothian Equal Access Programme for Schools (LEAPS), particularly attendance of a Summer School, had played a key role in her success. Taking advantage of part-time employment opportunities whilst at University had also been beneficial, and the Careers Service had provided excellent guidance on CV building, communication skills, interview technique and completing graduate scheme applications.

Discussion

The following points and questions were raised during the discussion section of the meeting:

- The high value of the work being undertaken by the School of Mathematics, particularly their newly-introduced Level 7 course and pre-arrival, online resources, was recognised.
- It was noted that school pupils often lack aspiration and confidence, not ability.
- There would be benefit in the University giving further consideration to its local staff demographics in addition to its student demographics.
- Attendees were advised that new models were being developed and piloted for LEAPS, including redesigning the summer school.

- It was noted that a University group had recently been established to consider access for asylum seekers and refugee students. More information was available from the [Head of Widening Participation](#).
- The value of thinking beyond Scottish, undergraduate recruitment when considering widening participation was recognised. Attendees agreed that international, rest of the UK and postgraduate recruitment also required attention. Expanding the University's online offer and offering more scholarships were likely to be beneficial in this respect.
- Attendees were advised that there was some funding attached to the implementation of the Widening Participation Strategy. This was currently being used to fund areas of commonality and activity that would benefit the widest groups of people.
- The benefit to those with part-time work or caring responsibilities of offering flexibility in core courses, and particularly in assessment was recognised. The Senior Vice-Principal noted that many of the University's students would value having greater flexibility, and suggested that the University may wish to give this matter further consideration.
- Cost, and lack of availability of funded university places, was viewed as being a major barrier to widening participation.

FORMAL BUSINESS

1. Report of E-Business conducted 7 – 15 May 2019 (S 18/19 3 A)

The report of the e-business conducted between 7 and 15 May 2019 was approved.

2. External Review of Senate and its Committees (S 18/19 3 B)

Professor Charlie Jeffery advised members that the University was required periodically to conduct an externally-facilitated review of Senate, and that the paper provided a report of the review conducted in 2018/19. Key points emerging from the review related to:

- The future role of Senate and its committees
- The relationship between the academic governance structures of Senate and its committees and the Executive and Court governance structures
- The role of Senate in the University's research activity
- Governance of broader student experience matters

The report included 16 recommendations for consultation, and discussion of these would inform the University's formal response to the external review.

The following points were raised by Senate members:

- Senate has a vital role to play as the University's supreme academic body, and steps therefore need to be taken to ensure that it operates as effectively as it can.
- The role of the senate is currently being debated in many institutions. It was hoped that Edinburgh's decision to move from a Senate of around 800 members to a body of 300 members in response to the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act (2016) would improve Senate's operation.
- An increase in the proportion of elected members of Senate may mean that members are more motivated to ensure that it is an effective and influential body.
- Senate should have a role in research activity in a research-intensive University.

- Engagement with Senate may be greater if more key issues were debated and decisions taken. A clearer agenda-setting and decision-making cycle may also be beneficial in this respect.
- The importance of the non-professorial voice on Senate was highlighted.
- There may be benefit in strengthening the dialogue between Senate and its standing committees, and in having prescribed mechanisms for feeding matters up to Senate.

3. Review of the Structure of Senate Committees (S 18/19 3 C)

Professor Charlie Jeffery advised members that the paper summarised the recommendations of a Task Group established in January 2019 to review the Senate Committee structures. The key issues considered by the Group were:

- the location of governance of postgraduate research and early career research matters
- reporting lines for research matters
- the membership and nomenclature of the committees
- the governance of the broader student experience beyond learning and teaching-related matters.

Key recommendations were:

- to dissolve Research Experience Committee (REC) and to transfer REC's responsibilities for postgraduate research student matters to Learning and Teaching Committee (or 'Education Committee'), and its responsibilities for early career researchers to Research Policy Group (RPG).
- to rename Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) 'Education Committee', and to extend its remit and membership to include strategic postgraduate research matters in addition to learning, teaching, assessment and student support for taught students.
- to defer decisions around the long-term governance of the broader student experience for a year, recognising that a sub-committee of the University Executive is currently fulfilling this role by overseeing the development and implementation of the Student Experience Action Plan.
- to make minor changes to the Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC), including changing its name to 'Academic Policy and Regulations Committee'.
- to make no substantive changes to Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)
- to give RPG dual reporting lines into both Senate and the University Executive.

Members were advised that the next step for the Task Group would be to agree revised terms of reference and memberships for the three Senate committees, and to bring these back to the October 2019 meeting of Senate for approval.

Members raised the following points in response to the paper:

- The proposed reporting routes for RPG were supported, with the view being expressed that they would give greater visibility and direction.
- Some concerns were raised about the remit of the proposed Education Committee, it being recognised that there are significant differences between taught and research students. The Senior Vice-Principal acknowledged that there were a variety of views

on this issue. However, the weight of opinion was that REC was not currently operating effectively and that an alternative approach was therefore required. It was noted that Education Committee's role would be to consider issues which were common to both taught and research students, and that the amount of taught content in PGR programmes was increasing.

- The potential value of recognising Quality Assurance Committee's role in enhancement by renaming it 'Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee' was discussed.

The recommendations for change to the structure and memberships of the Senate committees were approved.

4. Annual Report of the Senate Committees (S 18/19 3 D)

Members noted the report, recognising that more detailed planning would be undertaken over the summer once the remits and memberships for the three Senate committees had been finalised.

5. Conferment of the Title of Emeritus Professor (S 18/19 3 E)

Senate agreed to confer the title of Professor Emeritus upon Professors Hastie, Williams and Withers and to adopt their Special Minutes.

COMMUNICATIONS

6. Draft Ordinances – Composition of the Senatus Academicus; General Council (S 18/19 3 F)

Members were content with the wording of the draft Ordinances.

7. Careers and Employability: Year-On Update (S 18/19 3 G)

Senate welcomed the report, noting that year-on updates on the presentation and discussions sections of Senate would become a standard item on the agenda to allow progress to be measured.

8. Communications from the University Court (S 18/19 3 H)

The communications from the University Court were noted.

9. Report from Central Academic Promotions Committee (S 18/19 3 I)

The recommendations of the Central Academic Promotions Committee were noted. Members were pleased to note that 3 Personal Chairs of Education had been awarded.

CLOSED BUSINESS

10. Report from the Honorary Degrees Committee (S 18/19 3 J)

Senate approved the recommendations for the award of Honorary Degrees in summer and winter 2020.

RESERVED BUSINESS

11. Conferment of Degrees for Two Cohorts of Undergraduate Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (MVM) Students (S 18/19 3 K)

Senate agreed to admit the graduands listed in the paper to their degrees. It was noted that the paper potentially raised wider issues about the timing of graduation ceremonies and the long delays currently faced by some students, particularly postgraduate students.