



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

SENATUS ACADEMICUS

UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE SENATUS

ACADEMICUS held in Lecture Theatre 5, Appleton Tower

Wednesday 5 February 2020

Present: Professors T Harrison (in the Chair), T Ahnert, S Anderson, H Branigan, J Cruz, S Cunningham-Burley, J Danbolt, P Dayan, L Forrester, C French, I Gordon, L Grant, K Halliday, J Hardy, M Harris, J Hillston, M Hogg, E Hunter, G Jarvie, L Kendall, A Lascarides, D Leach, A Newman, J Seckl, A Sorace, J Thomas, T Worrall, S Tudhope; A Turk

J Ainslie, M Carson, D Cavanagh, A Constantin, J Crang, C Eleftheriou, H Ellis, D Evensen, E Harper, L Kendall, S Lamont-Black, P Larkman, H McQueen, S Morley, P Navarro, P Norris, O Ogunbayo, S Riley, S Rolle, P Smith, S Smith, M Stefan, N Treanor, N Tuzi, S Warrington

Associate Members: G Binns, D Chakravarthi, S Haynes, O Miller, O Tornyedz, S Vallancey, A Wilson

In Attendance: F Adam, C Alexandru, J Anderson, J Ball, M Ballam, L Barde, J Barnhart, R Baxter, M Beagan, G Bell, L Berridge, C Bevan, H Binnington, G Black, S Boateng, S Boljevic, J Bovenzi, R Brodie, J Brown, SJ Brown, P Buckley, V Buchanan, A Bunni, C Calia, K Castle, L Cattell, C Chadd, C Christison, R Claase, S Clarke, A Clayworth, E Connick, M Cox, D Coxon, D Craske, K Dargo, I Darmon, K Davidson, A Desler, G Dick, C Discolo, S Donneadiou, G Douglas, K Douglas, K Duncan, C Duncanson, K Dundas, E Dzieciol, R Edwards, C Elder, E Fairchild, V Farrar, K Farrow, A Forrest, S Fowlie, C Fox, T French, J Furness, J Gardiner, P Geddes, A Giannopoulos, G Giganti, O Gorie, K Graham, P Graham, S Green, J Grier, M Grieve, C Guymer, J Haldene, A Haley, S Harvey, E Haycock-Smith, N Heatley, S Hendry, S Hill, J Holtan, J Hopgood, L Jack, P Jackson, M Jancisk, J Johnston, S Kean, L Kelly, J Kemp, M Khattar, N Kokciyan, A Laidlaw, S Larios, C Lennie, R Lezomore, C Lightfoot, R Lindsay, D Livingstone, T Lubicz-Nawrocka, S McAllister, G McCabe, A McCormick, J McGregor, S MacGregor, J McMahan, J Maclean, H Mateer, K Mazurkiewicz, H Melville, M Michou, J Miller, S Montgomery, S Mori, T Morrison, M Morton, C Mowat, D Murray, J Murray, B Neilson, E Nelson, K Nicol, K Nicoll Baines, T Noden, J O'Donoghue, K Orsi, P Orzechowski, R Panesar, K Phimister, K Picozzi, L Porter, L Quickfall, R Quirk, S Renton, A Ritchie, L Robertson, E Rodriguez-Dorans, G Richardson, M Ruffert, H Ryall, H Sang, F Scanlon, R Shade, A Shanks, D Shaw, L Sheal, F Shields, L Singleton, P Skehel, T Slaven, A Solomon, D Spence, J Smith, D Sterratt, J Stewart, L Stokes, H Stringer, N Summers, J Tait, S Tait, J Taylor, J Terry, J Thin, J Thor, L Tip, K Torokoff, R Tring, S van den Driesche, R Valentine, L Walford, J Watson, J West, S Widdicombe, D Woolley, K Wright

CONVENER'S COMMUNICATIONS

Assistant Principal Professor Tina Harrison convened the meeting. Professor Harrison passed on the apologies of the Principal, Professor Peter Mathieson, who was unable to attend.

Professor Harrison updated Senate on the topics below, on behalf of Professor Mathieson:

- **Brexit**

The UK has now entered the formal transition period. We recognise that Brexit has created uncertainty for many staff and students, and the University will continue to provide as much support as possible over the coming months, and updated advice will be provided via University websites. The University remains fully committed to internationalisation and diversity.

More information can be found on Staff News: [European ties vital as UK exits EU](#)

- **UNA Europa**

Professor Harrison highlighted this project as one example of our commitment to internationalisation. UNA Europa is an alliance of European universities, and is one of 16 alliance networks that has received funding from the European Commission to create a 'European University'. The University of Edinburgh is one of only three UK higher education institutions who were successful in bidding for membership.

Professor Harrison also noted recent communications sent to staff by the Vice Principal Planning, Resources and Research Policy on the continuing availability of Horizon 2020 funding, and encouraged colleagues to continue to take advantage of these opportunities.

- **Industrial action**

It was noted that UCU have now announced 14 strike days in February and March. The issues underlying the strike are not unique to the University of Edinburgh, and it is important that staff are accepting of colleagues' decisions to strike or not the strike, while also working to minimise the impact on students.

- **Coronavirus**

The University is continuing to liaise with the government and health authorities, and providing support and advice to students and staff. Professor Harrison asked colleagues to be supportive of each other, and students, at this time.

- **Advanced Care Research Centre (ACRC)**

This is a major multidisciplinary collaboration between the University and Legal and General, and will fund research into care in later life. This is the largest industry investment yet to be confirmed as part of the Data-Driven Innovation Initiative.

More information can be found on Staff News: [Collaboration to improve life for ageing population](#)

- **Admissions update**

UCAS data indicates that overall undergraduate applications are up, but that this does not represent growth across all categories. Applications from the UK have decreased, and applications from Europe are at similar levels as the previous cycle, while international applications have risen. It was noted that growth in international applications is dominated by applications from China. PGT applications show a similar profile, with particular increases in applications from East Asia and China.

SENATE PRESENTATION YEAR-ON UPDATE: RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK

Senate invites presenters from previous Senate meetings to return with a brief year-on update.

1. Introduction and Update

Professor Jonathan Seckl, Vice-Principal Planning, Resources and Research Policy

Professor Seckl emphasised both the reputational significance of REF, as well as the complex and challenging nature of the exercise, and thanked staff for their engagement and significant contributions to what is recognised to be a resource intensive process.

2. REF 2021: Process, effort and challenges involved in preparing the REF 2021 submission

Professor David Leach, Dean of Academic Excellence, College of Science and Engineering

Professor Leach introduced the aims and components and assessment criteria contained in the framework, and emphasised that REF is a review of the institution, rather than individuals.

Professor Leach noted some new challenges for REF 2021, resulting from changes to the rules. These include ensuring that all submissions are compliant with open access requirements, and completing an institutional-level environment statement.

The University of Edinburgh expects to submit around 6000 outputs, and 5 joint submissions with research partners. Work is underway to identify staff whose outputs must be submitted and to select the appropriate outputs for each member of staff. In a large institution this is a complex task. Professor Leach noted the potential value of REF in terms of reputation and funding, and therefore the success of the University.

SENATE PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION: STUDENT SUPPORT AND WELLBEING

Introduction:

Gavin Douglas, Deputy Secretary Student Experience

The University is reviewing how it provides student support and promotes student wellbeing, and Mr Douglas emphasised that the aim of the review is primarily to address systems of student support that have not been working well, while recognising that many staff provide excellent student support. Mr Douglas noted evidence from National Student Survey results and feedback from current staff and students that indicate that current systems are not satisfactory, leading to lack of clarity for students and stress for staff.

Mr Douglas provided an overview of a support model that distinguishes complex versus transactional issues, and academic versus non-academic issues, and highlighted the interaction of student mental health and provision of student support. He then invited the speakers to give their presentations on current work to address these issues.

1. Review of personal tutoring and student support

Rosalyn Claase (Design Lead) and Professor Emma Hunter (Professor of Global and African History)

Ms Claase and Professor Hunter outlined the work done so far on this project, including substantial research on the current state of student support at the University, and research into alternative models at other higher education institutions. The review team have engaged in extensive consultations with staff and students, and with a Design Board including representatives from across the University.

Following this research and consultation process, the team have developed an 'Evolved Model' of student support. This has now been approved by the Senate Education Committee and Service Excellence Project Student Administration and Support Board, and the next stage is for a finalised investment case to be presented to the Senior Leadership Team and University Executive.

If approved, changes in student support are planned to come into effect in September 2021, but preparation and planning for implementation will continue throughout 2020/21, and some changes will be phased in during 2020/21.

The Evolved Model has four key 'pillars' of student support:

1. Academic Cohort Leadership
2. Student Experience Teams (within each School)
3. Teaching Teams
4. Integrated peer support networks

These 'pillars' are supported by University-wide support services such as the Disability Service, Counselling Service, Careers Service, Institute for Academic Development, Residence Life and Student Wellbeing Services.

The project team are meeting with Schools and Deaneries to plan for changes and work on how best to communicate changes to students and staff.

2. Student Mental Health Strategy

Andy Shanks, Director of Student Wellbeing

Mr Shanks outlined the changing context for supporting student mental health in universities. Increasing numbers of students are declaring mental health concerns before arriving at university or while at university, and resources (including the Student Counselling Service, Student Disability Service, Chaplaincy and Residence Life) are largely at capacity. In response, the University is increasing funding and developing new or enhanced resources. However, Mr Shanks noted that the University cannot and is not attempting to replicate statutory National Health Service services.

The new Student Wellbeing Centre will open in March 2020. This will provide students with accessible and flexible support, but services will continue to be offered at King's Buildings and Easter Bush campuses. The GP practice currently located in the Wellbeing building will remain.

Mr Shanks outlined funding being made available under the Student Experience Action Plan to scale up support services, including additional Counselling and Disability Services staff and a Wellbeing Practitioner post.

Mr Shanks also highlighted work being done by the University to address gender-based violence. This includes establishing a Sexual Violence and Harassment support team, funding research into gender-based violence in university communities, and introducing a 'Report and Support' online reporting platform. University of Edinburgh are also working with other universities in Edinburgh to fund a post with Edinburgh Rape Crisis.

The University is also continuing to work on addressing gender-based violence on campus with the group Consent Collective. All staff can now sign up for membership, and Mr Shanks encouraged all staff to take advantage of this: further information can be found on the [Consent Collective website](#).

Discussion

Queries were raised about the number of Counselling Services sessions offered to each student, with the concern that some students have reported to staff or representatives that they had not received enough sessions. Mr Shanks reported that five sessions was the normal offering, and that research showed that most students needed less than five sessions to experience an improvement. However, students with more complex or serious needs are offered up to 10 sessions, or more if they were assessed to require further support. Mr Shanks noted that no students who attend counselling are simply 'cut off' after five sessions, and emphasised the professional support and assessments provided by the service, and high levels of reported student satisfaction with the service. Mr Shanks invited any reports of student dissatisfaction to be forwarded to him or Ronnie Millar, Director of the Student Counselling Service.

In relation to academic mentorship and teaching teams under the Evolved Model, it was noted that this will be School-specific, and Schools will need to consider what is most appropriate for their academic discipline and programme structures, as well as what is sustainable for that School.

A query was raised about whether a review of curriculum and programmes was also required, to consider what impact complex and demanding programmes have on student support and wellbeing. It was noted that a curriculum review is planned in the near future.

Longitudinal academic support was raised, particularly for students on professional programmes. It was recognised that professional programmes may have particular requirements and it was emphasised that Schools will be expected to consider what academic / teaching team support is appropriate for their disciplines.

In relation to the role, and skills, of current Student Support team staff, it was noted that key aims of the changes are to ensure student support staff have the skills and support required to enable them to carry out these roles, and it was recognised that staff are already carrying out key student support activities, but that staff are not always as well supported, and the work is not as well-recognised, as it should be.

It was confirmed that the Evolved Model envisions 80 students per Academic cohort lead. It has not yet been decided whether non-university staff, such as clinicians, will take on this role. Ratios of Student Support Officers to students, and whether these teams will be per-School or per-Subject Area, has not yet been defined.

SENATE PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION: ENHANCEMENT-LED INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW

Presented by Professor Tina Harrison, Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance

Sarah Smith, Vice-Principal Strategic Change & Governance and University Secretary, took the chair for this item.

Professor Harrison outlined the format and purpose of ELIR, and noted that the next University of Edinburgh ELIR will take place in semester 1, 2020/21.

Work is currently underway on the Reflective Analysis – this is a substantial report prepared by the University in advance of the review. Professor Harrison expressed appreciation for the input of staff and students to date, and noted that a final draft will be made available to staff and students in March, and will be presented to Senate and Court by June 2020.

	A planning meeting with the ELIR review team will take place on 1 October 2020, and the full review visit will take place on 16 November 2020. University staff and students who are required to be involved in the meetings will be contacted and briefed in advance.
	FORMAL BUSINESS
1.	<p>New members: Shruti Anand, CAHSS PG School Representative Dhruti Chakravarthi, CAHSS UG School Representative</p> <p>Senate welcomed and noted these new members.</p>
2.	<p>Senate members' feedback on presentation and discussion topics</p> <p>Senate members noted that the language in the review of Student Support appeared to be focused on students on Taught Programmes. It was reported that there are current plans to develop a Doctoral College to enhance support for postgraduate research students.</p> <p>It was agreed that ELIR and REF should be recognised as having equal significance in terms of the University's reputation. While some of the language around REF can be competitive, it was also noted that the process itself is highly collaborative, and the University will be making a number of joint submissions with other institutions.</p> <p>A query was raised about whether the student record system (EUCLID) will be replaced or upgraded as part of the review of student support. It was reported that although there is a recognition that a replacement will be required at some point, there are no current plans or timescale for this, and staff should assume that the new student support system will be using the current student record system.</p> <p>A comment was made that the presentation and discussions had tended to focus on problems to be solved, and therefore are we also taking opportunities to celebrate successes and good practice? Professor Harrison noted that there is a good practice sharing event taking place on Thursday 6 February 2020.</p>
3.	<p>Report of Electronic Business conducted 14 – 22 January 2020 (S 19/20 2 A)</p> <p>The report was approved.</p>
4.	<p>Senate Election arrangements 2020 (S 19/20 2 B)</p> <p>Senate approved the appointments of the Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officer. Senate also approved the dates for opening and closing nominations, and the dates of election.</p>
5.	<p>Externally-facilitated review of Senate and its committees: University response (S 19/20 2 C)</p> <p>Senate noted the response, and no questions were raised at the meeting.</p>
	COMMUNICATIONS
6.	<p>Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) (S 19/20 2 D)</p> <p>Senate noted the update.</p>

7.	Report from the Research Policy Group (S 19/20 2 E) Senate noted the report.
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