



SENATUS ACADEMICUS

UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE SENATUS ACADEMICUS

held online on Wednesday 9 February 2022 at 2pm

OPEN SESSION

This session is open to all members of staff. Approximately 320 members of staff attended.

1. Convener's Communications

The Convener noted the following points

- Professor David Argyle, the Head of the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, is acting as interim Head of the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine in the absence of Professor Moira Whyte due to sudden severe illness.
- Two new appointments to the Senior Team were announced before Christmas: Professor Kim Graham will be joining the University from Cardiff in the role of Provost, Professor Christina Boswell has been appointed Vice Principal for Research and Enterprise. More recently Professor Iain Gordon has been appointed Vice-Principal and Head of the College of Science and Engineering and (note added in proof since the meeting) Professor Sarah Prescott will join from University College Dublin as Vice-Principal and Head of the College of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences.
- The process to appoint a new University Secretary will begin soon, with the intention of having the role filled by the summer.
- An all staff message will be circulated shortly, addressing issues of staff morale, workload, fatigue, uncertainties caused by the pandemic and current and longer term attractiveness of the UK higher education sector, and issues of freedom of expression.
- A new piece of legislation, the National Security and Investment Act, requires universities to register any acquisition of an entity by a foreign collaborator, particularly in relation to areas of concern for national security. The University will assess its responsibilities under this new legislation.
- Legislation (the Foreign Agents Registration Act) is being considered which would introduce a new requirement for university staff who are overseas nationals working in the UK to join a register. The sector has significant concerns this may introduce onerous bureaucracy without significantly improving national security, and there are ongoing discussions in which the University is represented.
- The University has come through two extraordinary years and demonstrated great resilience, maintaining our excellence in teaching and research, and the Convener thanked all staff for their efforts.

In response to questions, the Convener further noted:

- An all staff email will be circulated shortly, commenting on the University position in relation to upcoming industrial action.
- In relation to recruitment of international students, the University is keen to diversify the regions from which international students are recruited, and to

improve accessibility for international students from less privileged backgrounds, particularly through scholarships.

- UK association with the Horizon 2020 scheme is still under discussion, and the University and its international partners, along with other Russell Group universities, are actively supporting association as the best outcome.

2. Strategic Presentation and Discussion The Edinburgh Graduate Vision

Attendees received the following presentations.

Introduction

- Colm Harmon, Vice Principal (Students)

Establishing foundations

- Amanda Percy, Programme and Portfolio Manager Curriculum Transformation Programme

Building engagement

- Jon Turner, Director Institute for Academic Development

Insights from our Workstreams and Groups

- Professor Conchúr Ó Brádaigh, Head of School Engineering, Chair Future Skills Workstream
- Professor Tim Drysdale, School of Engineering, Digital Education Workstream

Specific focus on student engagement

- Ellen MacRae, Edinburgh University Students' Association President
- Tara Gold, Edinburgh University Students' Association VP Education

Looking ahead and concluding comments

- Colm Harmon, Vice Principal (Students)

A recording of the presentation and subsequent discussion is available on request from SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk Further information on the Curriculum Transformation project can be found on the [Curriculum Transformation Hub](#).

Key points made during the presentation:

- Work on the 'Edinburgh Graduate Vision' is being undertaken within the Curriculum Transformation (CT) project. This project has been live for 12 months, and builds on discussions and experience within the University, and experiences of curriculum review in universities internationally. The project is fully committed to engaging internally and externally. The 'Edinburgh Graduate Vision' will inform the CT project and is intended as a basis for further dialogue.
- Feedback from students suggests that they feel they are getting training from the best people in their chosen discipline, but that they are less confident in the support they get to navigate the University, and to manage their path through higher education and into what comes next.
- Feedback from students challenges us to consider, in the broadest terms, the possibilities of the four-year Scottish undergraduate degree, the infrastructure of postgraduate taught programmes, and the introduction of micro credentials, short courses and standalone courses. There is a sense that the nature of the university learner is changing. This may create opportunities to introduce greater flexibility, and to encourage students to embrace challenge and creativity in their learning.
- Work in 2021 has focused on considering what values, attributes, skills and competencies we would expect and hope our future students and graduates will achieve. Work in 2022 will focus on how these aspirations will shape the

curriculum in terms of design and structure, but also in relation to approaches to teaching and learning, as well as the systems, processes and infrastructure that support the curriculum.

- Extensive consultation within the University has been undertaken, through the online CT Hub, dedicated events for staff and students, through the Teaching Network, Colleges and Specialist Services, and the Teaching and Learning Conference. The project is now at a point where consultation and communications must broaden to engage as many members of the University community as possible. Staff interested in joining the Curriculum Transformation Forum or in exploring secondment opportunities were encouraged to contact Jon Turner, the Director of the Institute for Academic Development, at j.d.turner@ed.ac.uk
- Consultation on the Edinburgh student vision is ongoing and will run through to late April 2022. This will feed into work on curriculum design principles and architecture.
- Work on 'Future Skills' is ongoing, and is considering discipline related skills, transferable skills, employability and entrepreneurial skills. This workstream will produce a final report in the next month or two.
- Work on 'Digital Education' is ongoing, and is addressing issues of transparency and data governance, the desire to break down divisions between 'on campus' and 'online' students, the environmental impact of online and offline resources and infrastructure, and ensuring online platforms align with University values and aspirations. A key insight is that digital education is not just about delivery mechanisms, and digital education must be built into curriculum design and development.
- The Student Engagement Strategy Group within the CT project have highlighted the importance of student-staff co-creation of the curriculum and of the CT project. Such collaboration and co-creation is vital to students' sense of belonging and engagement, and as such impacts on the student experience and in particular has the potential to positively impact on equality, diversity and inclusion.
- The first cohort of students following the revised curriculum will enter the University in September 2025. This would require the changes to be communicated to external stakeholders by January 2024, and therefore a substantial part of the project must be undertaken and completed in 2023. It is recognised that this will require significant resource.

The following points were raised during the discussion:

- The Edinburgh Futures Institute provides valuable examples of the kind of thinking that should inform the CT project.
- Examples of the kind of change that may emerge from the project include major / minor degree models, and further possible models will be developed for discussion. The early years of undergraduate programmes, and the final year of undergraduate programmes, may provide particular opportunities for innovation.
- While it is recognised that students may have some 'change fatigue,' the Student Support review is in its final stages and this is intended to improve how students interact with the University and, it is hoped, will support students in engaging with and benefiting from curriculum change. Furthermore, an intended outcome of the CT project is to simplify and clarify students' experiences of University systems and processes.
- The introduction of University-level courses for all students was raised in early iterations of the project and this remains a possibility but no decision has been

made. But more generally it was noted that changes to current Degree Programme Tables cannot be ruled out.

- In relation to how the CT project relates to and is building on existing curriculum review mechanisms and outcomes, consultation with Schools has provided opportunities to feed in their current plans for curriculum development. The project is capturing examples of practises and approaches that have worked across the University, and is engaging with Schools who have recently gone through curriculum reviews locally. The CT project is an opportunity to identify institutional barriers to change and innovation, and an opportunity to begin with 'blue sky' thinking rather than optimisation of current provision as a first step.
- As well as a student vision, there is a need for a 'teacher vision' and a review of the skills and resources teachers will need to deliver a revised curriculum.
- The student vision is intended to encompass postgraduate as well as undergraduate students.
- The need to continue to meet the requirements of external Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies is recognised.
- Members of the CT programme would be very happy to visit Schools to discuss the project.

The Convener thanked the presenters and attendees for a very engaged discussion.

FORMAL MEETING OF SENATE

This section of the meeting is open to Senate members only.

Present: ANDREANGELI Arianna, ANDREW Ruth, ANDREWS Richard, ARGYLE David, BAILEY Matthew, BARANY Michael, BARLETTANI Diego, BENJAMIN Shereen, BENNETT Stuart, BLYTHE Richard, BOND Helen, BOWD Stephen, BRANIGAN Holly, BRENNAN Mary, BRUCE Tom, CABRELLI David, CAIRNS John, CALVERT Jane, CAQUINEAU Celine, CAVANAGH David, CHAN Un Ieng, CHUE HONG Neil, COHEN Shalhavit Simcha, CONNOR Andrew, CONVERY Alan, COOMBES Sam, COOPER Sarah, CRANG Jeremy, CRUZ Juan, CUNNINGHAM-BURLEY Sarah, DANBOLT Jo, DESLER Anne, DIMARTINO Simone, EFERAKORHO Jite, EUSA VP Activities, EUSA VP Education, EUSA VP Welfare, EVANS Mark, FERNANDEZ-GOTZ Manuel, FISHER Bob, FRENCH Chris, FRIEDRICH Daniel, GILFILLAN Stuart, GORDON Iain, GRANT Liz, GRANT Liz, GRAY Gillian, GREWAL Nisha, HALLIDAY Karen, HARDY Judy, HARMON Colm, HARRISON Tina, HAY David, HAYCOCK-STUART Elaine, HECK Margarete, HENDERSON Sarah, HOLT Sophie, HOPGOOD James, HOY Jenny, HUDSON Andrew, HUNTER Emma, IBIKUNLE Gbenga, JACOBS Emily, Jane HILLSTON, JENKINS Kirsten, KENNY Meryl, KINNEAR George, KIRSTEIN Linda, LIKONDE Samantha, LLORENTE PRADA Jaime, LOS Bettelou, MACCALLUM Sam, MACIOCIA Antony, MACKAY Fiona, MACPHERSON Sarah E, MACRAE Ellen, MARSLAND Rebecca, MATTHEWS Keith, MAVIN Emma, MCCORMICK Alistair, MCMAHON Malcolm, MCQUEEN Heather, MEIKSIN Avery, MENZIES John, MIELL Dorothy, MITCHARD Edward, MORAN Carmel, MORAN Nikki, MORLEY Steven, MORROW Susan, MURRAY Jonny, NAVARRO Pau, NICOL Kathryn, NICOL Robbie, NORRIS Paul, NOWAR Silmee, OMAH Ifeanyi, OOSTERHOFF Richard, OOSTERHOFF Richard, PANTOULA Katerina, Peter MATHIESON, PULHAM Colin, REYNOLDS Rebecca, REYNOLDS-WRIGHT John, RICE Ken, RILEY Simon, ROBBINS Jeremy, ROLLE Sabine, SCHWANNAUER Matthias, SCHWARZ Tobias, SEMPLE Robert, SHIELDS Kirsteen, SHIPSTON Mike, SMITH Sarah, SORACE Antonella, STORRIER Rachel, STRATFORD Tim, TAYLOR Emily, TAYLOR Paul, TERRAS Melissa, TERRY Jonathan, THOMAS Jonathan, THOMAS Robert, TRODD Tamara, TUFAIL-HANIF Uzma, TURNER Adam, TURNER Jon, TUZI Nadia, UPTON Jeremy, WAHI-SINGH Pia, WALSH Patrick, WARRINGTON Stephen, WEIR Christopher, WOHRLE Marie-Louise, YILDIRIM Alper

In attendance: NICOL Kathryn, ALLAN Lewis, MACGREGOR Sue

Apologies: ALIOTTA Marialuisa, BALTARETU Iona, CAMERON Ewen, CHAPMAN Karen, COLLINS Kevin, DAVIES Mia Nicole, DAWSON Karen, DU PLESSIS Paul, DUNLOP James, ELLIS Heather, EUSA VP Community, EWING Suzanne, HIGHTON Melissa, HOLLOWAY Aisha, JIWAJI Zueb, KENWAY Richard, LAMONT-BLACK Simone, MARTIN Catherine, MCARA Lesley, MCCONNELL Alistair, MCLACHLAN Gavin, MORAN Nikki, MORRIS Andrew, NAYDANI Cynthia, PATON Diana, PHILLIPS Claire, POWELL Wayne, ROBERTSON David, SECKL Jonathan, SIMM Geoff, TURNER Neil, WAD Shrikant, WHYTE Moira

3. Welcome to new student members

The student members below were welcomed to their first Ordinary meeting of Senate:

- Nisha Grewel – PGR School Representative (Physics and Astronomy)
- Silmee Nowar – PGT Section Representative
- Marie-Louise Wohrle – PGR Section Representative
- Diego Barlettani - PGT School Representative (Physics and Astronomy)
- Sam Maccallum - PGT School Representative (Biomedical Sciences)
- Shalhaviv Simcha Cohen – PGR School Representative (Health in Social Science)

4. Senate members' feedback on the presentation and discussion topic

Senate members were invited to make any further comments on the presentation and discussion topic. The following points were discussed.

- Costs associated with the Curriculum Transformation (CT) project are approved through the standard University process. The Vice Principal (Students) would be happy to provide a paper to Senate at a later date.
- A query was raised as to how the aims of the CT project build on or are linked to what is unique to Edinburgh: in particular, what evidence on current practices within Schools is being gathered and used to inform the project. This question has been raised and discussed by the CT board. Steven Morley made himself available to be contacted for further information about experiences in Edinburgh Medical School.
- It was recognised that some academic staff may not engage with events such as Senate presentations, and the CT team are keen to engage directly with individual Schools to share information about the project. The 'roadshow' approach that was used for the recent Student Support Project was cited as an example of successful engagement.
- There is anxiety in some areas that the CT project may lead to a cull in disciplines. It was affirmed that the project is not about cutting subject areas; the University's breadth of provision is a key positive feature, and there may be substantial benefits from the project for subject areas with fewer enrolments. The Vice Principal (Students) noted this as a key priority for future communications.
- There was concern about the feasibility of developing, designing and approving significant changes to large numbers of courses and programmes within the timeframe indicated by the project timeline. There was also concern about whether and how the University would provide the level of resource that Schools would require to engage successfully with these changes. The Vice Principal (Students) noted that the need for sufficient resource is recognised and that the project must be successful in giving staff confidence that the required resources will be provided.

SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

5. Senate minutes

5.1. Approval of the minutes:

- Minutes of the Senate meeting held on 12 October 2021
- Minutes of the Senate meeting held on 12 November 2021
- Minutes of E-Senate held from 12 – 26 January 2022

The minutes were approved as presented. Senate extended their gratitude to Kate Nicol for documenting a challenging set of meetings.

5.2. Matters arising

5.2.1. E-Senate process

Two proposals for managing E-Senate going forward were presented to Senate. Senate supported, via a vote, the proposal in Paper S 21/22 2 C, as amended at the meeting on 12 November 2021. The decision will be implemented by Senate Support.

5.2.2. Presentation and Discussion topics - **selection process** (Senate paper [S 21/22 2D](#))

Senate was given advance notice that it will be consulted on this via email prior to the next Ordinary meeting on 25 May 2022.

5.2.3. Senate Standing Orders (Senate paper [S 21/22 2D](#))

A brief update was provided by the Convener. Minor revisions to the Senate Standing Orders were proposed following the last Senate annual internal effectiveness review. This action will be held back to allow time to consider whether more substantial updates would be desirable, to make the Standing Orders more accessible and support Senate business. Any revision will require consultation with and approval by Senate.

5.2.4. Senate Standing Committees (Senate minutes 12 November 2022, item 2)

A brief update was provided by the Convener:

- This concerns the Senate Education Committee, Academic Policy and Regulations Committee and Senate Quality Assurance Committee.
- At the last Senate meeting, Conveners of the Standing Committees committing to working to improve communications between Senate and the Standing Committees.
- As an initial measure, Senate members will be notified by email when committee papers for SEC, APRC and SQAC are published, and can pass any comments to their College committee representatives.
- In addition, Senate committee conveners will briefly present the regular update on forthcoming committee business.
- Further thought is required on bringing together a group to review what future improvements to the structure / function of Senate Standing Committees may be required, and Senate will be updated in due course.

6. Senate Assessor Election Regulations

To approve

The following points were discussed:

- Court members do not act as a representative of a particular constituency, but speak from their perspective and experience. Therefore, it may be desirable to reserve one role for a professorial staff member of Senate and one for a non-professorial staff member of Senate.
- Whether ex officio members of Senate should be eligible to stand for election, or whether this should be restricted to elected academic staff members. It was noted that this option had not been explored in the paper. Senate resolved via a vote to put this question to a vote.
- The Chair acknowledged concerns about his improvisatory approach to chairing, in this instance taking a vote on whether to consider a duly proposed and seconded amendment.
- Senate Assessors' term of office on Senate may end during their term of office on Court. However, the Senate Election Regulations allow for this, and in this circumstance, the Senate Assessor continues to be a member of Senate as an ex officio member.
- In the regulations as proposed, student representative members of Senate would not be eligible to stand or vote.
- Postgraduate Research students who are employed as Tutors and Demonstrators and who are members of Senate in that capacity would be eligible to stand or vote, as members of staff.

Senate approved via a vote the following amendments to the regulations:

1. reserve one Senate Assessor position for a member of non-professorial academic staff, and one for professorial academic staff, and;
2. amend the election regulations to state that only elected academic staff are eligible to stand for election as a Senate Assessor on Court.

Senate approved the regulations with the above amendments. The amended regulations will be published as soon as possible.

7. Senate Academic Staff Member Elections 2021/22

To approve and for information

Senate approved the paper.

8. Senate Standing Committees – upcoming business

To note and comment

No comments were received during the meeting. (Note: the meeting had overrun the allotted time).

Some comments were received by email following the meeting. The Senate Standing Committee Conveners responded by email and a summary is provided below. Conveners will note these queries and responses to their committees at their next meeting.

Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC)

- A Data Task Group is currently considering retention and progression monitoring data, including data on EDI and awarding gaps, and will report to SQAC in due course.
- SQAC annually review reports on the student discipline and complaints processes. Issues arising are raised with Senate if Senate action is required.

- Student feedback on teaching, learning and the wider student experience is now managed under the [Student Voice Policy](#).

Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)

- Review of the Extensions and Special Circumstances Service (ESC) is ongoing and is interlinked with the work of the Assessment and Feedback Working Group. This work will not be concluded in time for the beginning of the 2022/23 academic year.
- APRC will receive a paper at their March meeting addressing possible interim measures that might be taken, ahead of 2022/23, to alleviate the impact of high numbers of extensions on the marking and moderation process.
- APRC has not to date formally considered any policy adjustments in response to the ongoing industrial action, but will consider any possible future concessions to academic regulations as required.

Senate Education Committee (SEC)

- Optional Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey questions are recommended by the Deputy Secretary Students working in consultation with the Students' Association Sabbatical Officers, and discussed by SEC members with their relevant stakeholder groups. The proposed topic this year is 'Welfare', reflecting the ongoing work taking place on student support. Inclusion of questions on this topic would enable monitoring of responses before, during and after the implementation of the new student support model.
- SEC are in the process of considering proposals for additions to the activity recognised under the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR), and there will be further discussion on this at the SEC meeting in March 2022.
- The Vice Principal (Students) will continue to update Senate on developments in relation to the Curriculum Transformation (CT) programme of work, including through the 'open session' format as at the 9 February 2022 meeting. All proposed changes will be tracked through the appropriate governance channels, including University Executive and Court, with matters of academic consideration being the focus of all three of the delegated Senate Standing Committees with feedback from and to Senate. Court will also consult with Senate as required. Timelines for the CT programme were discussed at the Senate open session on 9 February 2022.

9. Resolutions

To comment

No comments were received.

ITEMS FOR FORMAL APPROVAL OR NOTING

10. Research Strategy Group update

To note

The paper was noted