WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair welcomed to the meeting the members of the Senate, including the Vice-Principal (Dubai) and the Vice-Principal (Malaysia), and those colleagues who were in attendance.

Noted
That the Student Union 2015-16 sabbatical officers would complete their terms of office at 31 May 2016. The Senate thanked the sabbatical officers for their work for the University and its students and, in particular, the President and the Vice-President (Community) for their contributions to the work of the Senate.
That there had been a call for expressions of interest from academic staff wanting to join the elected membership of the Senate from 1 August 2016. Elections would be held where the number of expressions of interest received from a School exceeded the number of vacancies in the elected membership for that School. Members of the Senate were invited to encourage colleagues to consider submitting an expression of interest. It was also intended that the Senate Nominating Working Group would shortly present recommendations in respect of vacancies in the membership of the Senate committees and that, if possible, recommendations would be presented for approval at the next meeting of the Senate.

Noted

M16/035 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING [Paper SEN/16/033]

Received

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2016.

Approved

The Senate approved the minutes as a correct record.

M16/036 MATTERS ARISING

Noted

There were no matters arising from the minutes that were not already on the agenda as circulated.

M16/037 REPORT FROM THE CHAIR [Paper SEN/16/034]

Received

A report from the Principal and Chair of the Senate.

Noted

The Chair invited the Senate to note a number of ongoing developments within the UK higher education sector as well as achievements and distinctions within the University community.

The Chair drew the attention of the Senate to the publication by the Scottish Funding Council of the final funding allocations for university outcome agreements in the 2016-17 academic year. It was noted that the University's final allocation was somewhat better than the indicative allocation announced in February 2016 as the Scottish Funding Council had reinstated support for the final tranche of the additional places scheme for widening access and college articulation. The costs associated with the reinstatement of this support would be managed over the 2016-17 and 2017-18 financial years and it was therefore possible that this could have implications for future outcome agreement allocations. It was noted that the University's allocation had increased by around 1% from 2015-16 but that, as the cost base across the sector was increasing by around 6%, the University and the sector as a whole would continue to face significant financial pressures.

The Chair noted that in March 2016 the Scottish Government’s Commission on Widening Access had published its final report and that this included a number of recommendations to achieve equality of opportunity in terms of access to Scottish universities. It was noted that the University had in recent years significantly enhanced its focus on increasing the number and proportion of Scottish students from backgrounds under-represented in higher educations, but that the findings of the review could result in the University being challenged to do more and to take a more strategic approach to widening access.

The Chair drew the attention of the Senate to the growing number of English universities offering degree apprenticeship programmes. It was noted that such programmes provided these universities with a new revenue stream as well as a vehicle by which they could develop new and stronger relationships with employers and fulfil objectives relating to widening access.

The Chair noted the likelihood that the UK government would in the near future publish a White Paper on higher education and that this would include proposals to introduce a Teaching Excellence Framework. The Chair encouraged members of the Senate to read a recent article for the Higher Education Academy by Professor Frank Coton, Vice Principal (Academic and Educational Innovation) at the University of Glasgow. The article highlighted the need for the
involvement of the Scottish higher education sector in technical consultations on the development of the Teaching Excellence Framework and the dangers that it might face if Scottish universities did nothing.

Finally, the Chair noted that over the course of April and early May a number of open meetings had been held under the heading of “Thinking About Our Future”. The meetings had provided an opportunity for staff from across the University to come together to reflect on the changing external environment, review the University’s progress, and discuss the choices ahead. To build on the discussions at these meetings there would be an additional meeting of the Senate in June 2016 and this would be followed by a number of focussed workshops to develop specific recommendations for consideration in October 2016.

M16/038  ENHANCEMENT-LED INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW: FOLLOW-UP REPORT [Paper SEN/16/035]

Received  The draft follow-up report to the 2015 Enhancement-Led Institutional Review.

Noted  That the report described progress made by the University towards addressing areas for development which had been identified through the 2015 Enhancement-Led Institutional Review. The report would be considered in detail by the Learning and Teaching Board and the Quality and Standards Committee before being presented to the Court which would be invited to approve the report for submission to the Quality Assurance Agency.

M16/039  FOUNDATION PROGRAMME (MALAYSIA): ADMISSION OF STUDENTS WITH PROVISIONAL GRADES [Paper SEN/16/036]

Received  A report on the admission in 2015 of students to the Foundation Programme (Malaysia) on the basis of provisional IGCSE grades and the decision of the University Executive to approve the continuation of this arrangement in 2016.

Noted  That the University Executive, on the basis of a successful pilot of this arrangement in 2015, had agreed that the University should continue in 2016 to admit students to the Foundation Programme (Malaysia) on the basis of provisional IGCSE grades. The University Executive had further agreed that the number of students admitted on the basis of provisional grades should be capped at 10% of the total intake.

Agreed  The Senate agreed that the programme team should monitor the number and performance of students admitted on the basis of provisional grades in 2016 and present a report on this to the relevant Senate committee.

M16/040  REGULATION 46 (ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING): AMENDMENTS [Paper SEN/16/037]

Considered  Regulation 46 (Accreditation of Prior Learning) including proposed amendments.

Noted  That the Ordinances and Regulations Committee had in April 2016 endorsed amendments to Regulation 46 (Accreditation of Prior Learning) and agreed that the Regulation as amended should be presented to the Senate for approval. The most significant change was the use of the term “Recognition of Prior Learning” in place of “Accreditation of Prior Learning” to reflect changes in the terminology used by the Quality Assurance Agency and the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.

Approved  The Senate approved Regulation 46 as amended and agreed that references to “Accreditation of Prior Learning” in other regulations should be amended to make them consistent with Regulation 46.

Considered A report on the midpoint review of the effectiveness of the Senate and the Senate committees.

Noted That the review had concluded that, overall, the academic governance of the University could be judged to be reasonably effective. To enable the University to build on existing strengths and address identified weaknesses the review board had made a number of recommendations which the Senate was invited to consider: the adoption of a number of general principles to enhance academic governance; modifications in relation to the composition of the Senate and the structure of the committees reporting to the Senate; and procedural changes to support the effective operation of the Senate.

The Chair invited the Senate to express its views on what would be the characteristics of an effective Senate and what this would feel like, including in the tone of its meetings. The Senate considered the general principles to enhance academic governance and welcomed the opportunity for fuller discussion on strategy. In considering the findings of the review, the Senate considered its effectiveness as a decision making body, and features which could inhibit that effectiveness – such as the difficulty in finding an appropriate balance between routine business and substantive discussion on matters of academic principle; challenges in ensuring the Senate was representative of staff and students based outside the UK; and the lack of induction for new Senate members.

It was noted that further work would be needed to review the role of the Deans of the University and that this work would continue in parallel with the development of the proposals arising from the review of the effectiveness of the Senate and the Senate committees.

Approved The Senate approved the adoption of the proposed general principles to enhance academic governance.

Agreed The Senate agreed that:

1. the proposed procedural changes should be introduced for the start of the 2016-17 academic year or as early as possible in the 2016-17 academic year; it was agreed that the review board should present to the Senate full recommendations for consideration where the approval of the Senate was needed and that, in respect of changes where the approval of the Senate was not needed, these should be introduced by the review board on behalf of the Senate;

2. the review board should develop for the Senate a Statement of Primary Responsibilities and a Statement of Delegated Authorities and that these should be presented for the consideration of the Senate at its first meeting of the 2016-17 academic year;

3. the review board should continue to develop proposals with respect to the composition of the Senate and the structure of the committees reporting to the Senate and test these against the general principles to enhance academic governance and the University's academic processes and business needs; it was agreed that the review board should present to the Senate full recommendations for consideration over the course of the 2016-17 academic year;

4. the review board should issue to members of the Senate and the Senate committees a further invitation to join the review board and should co-opt one of the Heads of Schools.
Approved at the meeting 5 October 2016

M16/042  SENATE BUSINESS COMMITTEE [Paper SEN/16/040]
Received  The minutes of the meeting held 5 May 2016.
Noted  That the Committee, on behalf of the Senate and on the recommendations of the relevant Boards of Examiners, had approved the conferral of degrees and other awards in respect of students who had completed an approved programme of study and had satisfied the conditions for the award.

M16/043  UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE [Paper SEN/16/041]
Received  The minutes of the meeting held 9 March 2016.
Noted  Arising from minute 16/13, that the Chair, on behalf of the Committee, had approved the appointment of external examiners for specified undergraduate programmes.

M16/044  POSTGRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE [Paper SEN/16/042]
Received  The minutes of the meeting held 12 April 2016.
Noted  Arising from minute 16/29, that the Chair, on behalf of the Committee, had approved the appointment of examiners for specified research students.

Arising from minutes 16/31 and 16/32, that the Chair, on behalf of the Committee, had approved the appointment of supervisors for specified research students.

Arising from minute 16/33, that the Chair, on behalf of the Committee, had approved the appointment of external examiners for specified taught postgraduate programmes.

M16/045  INFORMATION SERVICES COMMITTEE [Paper SEN/16/043]
Received  The minutes of the meeting held 3 March 2016.
Noted  The report of business conducted by the Committee.

M16/046  ORDINANCES AND REGULATIONS COMMITTEE [Paper SEN/16/045]
Received  The minutes of the meeting held 20 April 2016.
Noted  Arising from minute 16/21, that the Committee had endorsed amendments to Regulation 46 (Accreditation of Prior Learning) and agreed that the Regulation as amended should be presented to the Senate for approval [see minute 16/040 above].

M16/047  LEARNING AND TEACHING BOARD [Paper SEN/16/046]
Received  The minutes of the meeting held 6 April 2016.
Noted  The report of business conducted by the Board.
M16/048 RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE BOARD [Paper SEN/16/047]

Received
The minutes of the meeting held 15 March 2016.

Noted
The report of business conducted by the Board.

M16/049 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Noted
That the next meeting of the Senate would be held 1 June 2016.

Signed by Chair ..........................................................

Date  ..............................................................................