Heriot-Watt University

THE SENATE

In the Chair: Professor Richard A Williams

Present Also:
Professor Gillian Hogg
Professor John Sawkins
Professor Laura Galloway
Professor James Ritchie
Professor Stephen McLaughlin
Dr Peter Morris
Professor Gareth Pender
Professor Fiona Waldron
Professor Angus Macdonald
Professor Phillip John
Ms Hannah Frances
Dr Derek Ball
Dr Alexander Bell
Professor Patrick Corbett
Dr Alan Forster
Professor Ian Galbraith
Dr Shumei Gao
Dr Lilia Georgieva
Dr Fadi Ghaith*
Professor Nick Gilbert
Dr Alan Gow

Dr Mehreen Gul
Mr Amos Haniff
Dr Stephen Houston
Dr Barbara Jamieson
Dr Sara Keith
Professor Omar Laghouache
Dr Jingsheng Ma
Dr Yvonne McLaren-Hankin
Professor Kenneth McKendrick
Dr Gabriela Medero
Professor Greg Michaelson
Dr Robert Mochrie
Mr Dilip Mothiram*
Ms Vanessa Northway
Professor Raffaella Ocone
Professor Isabelle Perez
Dr Olisanwenden Ogwuda*
Mr Bruce Roberts
Dr Danmei Sun
Dr William Wallace

In Attendance:
Professor Gavin Gibson
Mr Paul Travill
Ms Sue Collier
Mr Richard McGookin
Mr Mike Roch

Mr Diarmuid Cowan
Ms Sheona Dorian
Dr Margaret King
Mr Brett Dodgson (Clerk)

Apologies:
Professor Julian Jones
Professor Robert Craik
Professor Ammar Kaka
Professor Duncan Hand
Professor Robert McIntosh
Professor Beatrice Pelloni
Ms Miranda Matoshi
Dr Carrie Annabi
Dr Frederic Bosche
Dr Alan Cuthbertson
Dr Laurent Galbrun

Dr Alan Harper
Dr Helen Hastie
Dr Terry Lansdown
Dr Audrey Paterson
Ms Jane Priest
Dr James Richards
Dr George Stretaris
Professor Nicholas Taylor
Dr Rink Van Dijke
Dr Marion Winters
Ms Ann Marie Dalton

* Indicates member participating remotely

MINUTE REF
M16/050 WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair welcomed to the meeting the members of the Senate and those colleagues who were in attendance.
MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Noted

That the minutes of the meeting held 11 May 2016 had been circulated to members and would be presented for approval at the next meeting of the Senate. Members of the Senate were invited to notify the Clerk of any errors in the record of those members present.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE SENATE

Noted

Those members who would demit membership of the Senate at 31 July 2016:

- Dr Alexander Bell
- Dr Barbara Jamieson
- Professor Phillip John
- Dr Terry Lansdown
- Dr Robert Mochrie
- Mr Bruce Roberts

The Senate thanked the members for their contributions to the work of the Senate. The Senate also thanked Ms Hannah Frances who was attending her final meeting on behalf of the Student Union; the Senate welcomed to the meeting Mr Diarmuid Cowan and Ms Sheona Dorian who had been elected as the next President and Vice-President (Community) of the Student Union.

Noted

That elections for vacancies in the membership of the Senate had been held in May 2016 and that a report of the duly elected members would be circulated.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

Received

A verbal report from the Principal and Chair of the Senate.

Noted

That a report of recent staff and student distinctions would be circulated.

THINKING ABOUT OUR FUTURE: UPDATE REPORT

Considered

A presentation on the Thinking About Our Future open meetings.

Noted

That the University’s external environment was characterised by increasing complexity, uncertainty, and competition. In particular, the University and the wider Scottish higher education sector faced a challenging financial environment and, in this respect, the Senate noted fluctuations in the global economy which had effected key markets, increasing competition for all categories of student, and constraints on grants from the Scottish Funding Council.

Noted

That eight Thinking About Our Future open meetings had been held over May 2016 and that these meetings had been well attended and received positively. The meetings had included a review of the University’s recent performance as well as a commentary from the Principal on issues which the University would face in the future. It was noted that the meetings had provided a starting point for discussions on some of the factors which would shape the University’s next Strategic Plan.

A number of themes had emerged from the discussions at these meetings; one which had emerged at each of the meetings was that the University was a special place which was characterised by its academic specialisms, by its historic connections with industry, and by its unique global position. It was noted that the brand positioning statement adopted by the University in February 2016 had been designed to capture in words the University’s special character.
The Senate noted that the University, given the challenging external environment in which it was operating, would need to build on its special character and use its assets to create an even more compelling academic offer. To do this the University would, over the next six months, need to consider what its taught programme offer should like and how these programmes should be delivered. This would involve two main work streams – a review of opportunities to make greater use of technology-enhanced learning and teaching and a review of the University’s portfolio of taught postgraduate degree programmes.

M16/055 GLOBAL TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED LEARNING AND TEACHING

Considered A presentation on a review, led by the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching), on opportunities to make greater use of technology-enhanced learning and teaching.

Noted That the University had to date not been systematic in its adoption of innovations in learning and teaching technologies. The increasing use in both schools and universities of new learning technologies and technology-enhanced pedagogies meant that the University, despite the high quality of its academic offer, ran the risk of falling behind competitor institutions and of failing to meet the expectations of students who may have been using such technologies from a young age.

The review that had been commissioned would comprise a fundamental evaluation of current practices and potential opportunities with respect to technology-enhanced learning and teaching. It was intended that the findings of the review would inform developments in the ways in which the University delivered its taught programmes and enable it to realise its latent potential, build on its global position, and be world-leading in its use of technology-enhanced learning and teaching. Work to date had included a thematic review of technology-enhanced learning and teaching and the commissioning of a report on potential opportunities to make greater use of technology-enhanced learning and teaching. This work would be followed by research visits to other institutions which had established reputations for innovation and excellence in learning and teaching. It was noted that the findings of the review would be considered by the Learning and Teaching Board which would make a report to both the Senate and to the University Executive. The findings of the review would also inform the development of the University’s Learning and Teaching Strategy and its next Strategic Plan.

M16/056 TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMME PORTFOLIO

Considered A presentation on a review, led by the Deputy Principal (External Relations), of the University’s portfolio of taught postgraduate degree programmes.

Noted That the University had historically underperformed against its targets for the recruitment of taught postgraduate students and, in particular, against its targets for the recruitment of international taught postgraduate students. This position was in contrast to a number of larger, research-intensive UK universities which, despite similar market pressures, had managed to sustain significant growth in their numbers of taught postgraduate students.

The review would comprise two distinct phases. The first phase would focus on the development of new programmes which could be delivered at scale from the 2017-18 academic year. The second phase would consider the University’s portfolio of taught postgraduate degree programmes more broadly and, in particular, opportunities to make greater use of technology-enhanced learning and teaching and ways to ensure that the University offered a distinctive taught postgraduate experience.
M16/057  GROUP EXERCISE

The Chair invited members of the Senate to break into smaller groups for the remainder of the meeting and to consider how the character and distinctive features of a Heriot-Watt University education should be developed to suit the aspirations and needs of a global student base, changes in the University’s academic provision and style that might be needed to make these things happen, and how the University could best equip itself for those changes. Each group was invited to keep a written record of its discussions. It was noted that these would be collated and circulated following the meeting.

M16/058  DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Noted  That provisional dates for meetings in the 2016-17 academic year had been agreed and these would be circulated once they had been confirmed with the Secretary of the University.

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

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