In the Chair: Professor Richard A Williams

Present Also:  
Professor Mushtak Al-Atabi *  
Dr Tessa Berg  
Dr Lyonell Boulton  
Dr Jim Cameron  
Professor Malcolm Chrisp  
Professor Patrick Corbett  
Mr Diarmuid Cowan  
Mr Shai Davidov  
Dr Christopher Dodd  
Dr Alan Forster  
Professor Ian Galbraith  
Dr Lilia Georgieva  
Dr Fadi Ghaith *  
Dr Alan Gow  
Dr Amos Haniff  
Professor Gillian Hogg  
Dr Stephen Houston  
Dr David Jenkins  
Professor Julian Jones  
Professor Ammar Kaka *  
Dr Sara Keith  
Dr Peter Kew  
Dr George Streftaris

In Attendance:  
Ms Ann Marie Dalton-Pillay  
Ms Kathy McCabe  
Mr Paul Travill  
Mr John McDermott (Clerk)

* Indicates member participating remotely

Apologies:  
Professor Scott Arthur  
Dr Frédéric Bosché  
Mr Jay Clifford  
Ms Sue Collier  
Dr Rink Van Dijke  
Dr Catherine Donnelly  
Dr Shumei Gao  
Ms Lucy Graham  
Dr Aude Le Guennec  
Professor Stuart Macgregor  
Professor Heather McGregor  
Mr Richard McGockin  
Professor Steve McLaughlin  
Dr Gabriela Medero  
Dr Kevin Muldoon  
Dr Gina Netto  
Dr Audrey Paterson  
Dr Sandhya Patidar  
Ms Jane Priest  
Mr Gerry Reilly  
Professor Verena Rieser  
Professor James Ritchie  
Dr Mohamed Sherif  
Professor Vicki Stone  
Dr Danmei Sun

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair welcomed all participants to the meeting of the new Session.

The Senate noted that subsequent to the previous meeting, Dr Alan Cuthbertson had left the University, and thus the Senate. The Senate expressed gratitude for the contribution made by Dr Cuthbertson to the Senate and the University as a whole. It was noted that the vacancy would be filled as appropriate at the next round of elections (as per Ordinance C1).
MIN MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2017.

The Senate approved the minutes as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

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

The Secretary of the University reminded Senators that they were welcome to notify the clerk in advance of meetings any matters that they wished to raise for discussion. The Senate noted that ‘all member’ emails were discouraged.


A report from the Chair of the Senate, which provided a view of key issues and news for the University and the wider HE sector.

The Chair thanked and congratulated all colleagues involved in the recent graduation ceremonies held in Edinburgh, Dubai and Malaysia, and elsewhere in the world. It was recognised that an enormous amount of work and staff engagement goes into the graduation processes, which ran especially well this November.

The Chair especially drew the attention of Senators to the recent developments in the good signs that are emerging around migration both in terms of the Brexit dialogues and the Migration Advisory Committee (item 16 in the report).

In relation to Scottish Government policy, it was noted that the Scottish Universities had produced a response to the Committee of Widening Access (item 1). It was noted that the funding route to achieving the overall ambition of the Scottish Government in widening access was not yet clear. However the first Annual Report from the Commissioner for Fair Access, Sir Peter Scott, had now been published, and it was welcomed that the good practices at Heriot-Watt had been referred to in the report (the only university to be mentioned). It was noted that the report contained clear academic matters relevant to the University, and it was commended to Senators to read. The report can be viewed at https://beta.gov.scot/publications/laying-foundations-fair-access-annual-report-2017-commissioner-fair-access/.

The Chair highlighted that amongst the recent accolades received by the University had been at the Times High Education Awards 2017. Heriot-Watt was the only university in the finals under two research categories. Congratulations were extended to Prof Rory Duncan and his team for winning the STEM Research Project of the Year. A special achievement had been made by a research student and staff team from MACS, which reached the final of the Amazon Alexa Challenge in Las Vegas. The team, “What’s Up Bot”, took third place in this global competition. The Minister of Higher Education had visited the University specifically to meet the team. It was noted that this had been the latest success in a great year for AI and the Year of Robotics. There had been over 100 people working together in our Year of Robotics, contributing to a hugely successful outreach and research raising campaign. Congratulations were offered to all who had been involved. The Chair reported that 2018 would be the ‘Year of the Sea’. This would provide a platform to shine a light on all the activities of the University related to the seas: marine science; freight transport; subsea autonomous vehicles; water; fishing; energy; our links with Norway; shipping; among many others.

The Chair reminded the Senate of the core strategic activities for 2017/8, as summarised on the frontpiece of the written report: to deliver an effective integrated international university (which was an item later on the agenda); to deliver cost savings and ensure effectiveness; to generate new income; and to deliver a new Strategic Plan for the University to 2025. These themes were expanded upon and discussed.
Delivery of £14M cost savings
The Vice-Principal reminded the Senate of the background to the requirement for planned expenditure to be reduced by £14m by 2018-19. It was noted that the steps taken so far had resulted in reductions in planned pay and non-pay expenditure of £11.2m. The savings in planned salary expenditure had been attained through a combination of some planned new posts not being proceeded with, some vacancies not being filled, and some colleagues leaving the University through the enhanced Voluntary Redundancy scheme.

The Vice-Principal informed the Senate of the manner in which the remaining required savings of £2.8m had been distributed among the Schools and the Professional Services. It was reported that the School of EGIS had the largest remaining ‘gap’ in funding. All of the savings plans, as well as plans for growth, would be addressed in the forthcoming planning discussions to ensure that future plans are robust, and that the University’s operations are sustainable.

In discussion some concern from Senators was noted with regard to how the further savings would be made. It was recognised that further Voluntary Redundancies could have possible impact on staff morale and operational effectiveness in certain areas. It was emphasised that the process to deliver savings was now in its second year, and that much good progress had been made across the University to ensure sustainability. This positive approach would continue to be applied in order to support staff in areas where difficult decisions were having to be made. It was noted that the Schools were best placed to look at the operational detail and to assess the optimal means of achieving recovery.

Institutional Strategy 2018/25
The Secretary of the University reported that the Court had agreed the indicative timetable for developing the Strategic Plan. It was noted that the Senate would have direct input to the process, and that the University Committees for Research and Innovation and Learning and Teaching were already engaged in the development of the respective sub-strategies. The intention was to conclude the process in the autumn of 2018.

The Secretary of the University outlined the process for horizon-scanning and consultation to inform the development of the Plan. It was noted that an external consultancy had been engaged to assist the process, and that the external-focused work would be complemented with interviews and workshops to ensure Staff and Student participation. The process would also be informed by School-level strategic discussions. The important role of the Senate in this process was emphasised. In discussion it was suggested that the consultancy fees being incurred in support of the development of the Strategic Plan were in line with equivalent costs incurred by other institutions undertaking similar exercises.

Subsequent to the meeting the Secretary of the University confirmed that the consultancy fees for horizon scanning and other support for the development of the Strategic Plan to 2025 were in the region of £76,000.

Generation of new Income
It was noted that the Senate would have opportunity for further discussions on this theme. It was stated that the University had grown its income in the past and would do so again. Several activities were being explored, including the expansion of on-line markets, growth of partners, and the development of new programmes. Mentioned in the Principal’s Report was the development of new Graduate Level Apprentice activity with industry. It was noted that there would be more detail to discuss and share in the new year.

Further matters
In discussion on the Principal’s Report, a question was put regarding potential changes to the Universities Superannuation Scheme, which was the principal pension scheme for Heriot-Watt Staff. The Chair noted that the current consultation on the Scheme was being driven by the pensions regulator in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Scheme. It was suggested to be a complex matter, with greater complexity anticipated in the coming months. In the short-term, it was noted that the Scheme had sufficient cash-flow. However it was recognised that sector-wide decisions would have to be taken with regard to securing the longer term viability. A Senate member of the Court informed the Senate that the Court had given this matter considerable attention, and that further discussions were planned at Court once the outcome of the consultation was known.
LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGY

Considered
The Senate received a presentation by the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) and the Head of Academic Quality regarding the process being undertaken towards a new Learning and Teaching Strategy.

Noted
The progress was noted of attaining the outcomes from the 2013-2018 Learning and Teaching Strategy. It was emphasised that the work of academic and professional service colleagues had contributed towards many successes, and a number of major changes over the six-year period. There had been external recognition of these successes, which was very welcome. It was noted that there remained work to be done in certain areas.

The Consultation Framework was outlined for developing the 2018-2023 Learning and Teaching Strategy, with the key themes of: Vision; Global Pillars; and Global Standards. It was noted that the University Committee for Learning and Teaching wished to have a consultation process which was genuinely open and inclusive. The workshops had been attended by over three hundred people on every campus, and around seventy responses had been received to date to the consultation document. The contribution of Senators to date was welcomed.

It was noted that feedback from Staff and Students had been very positive, with significant appreciation of the extensive consultation. It was reported that the comments received had been diverse. It was noted that as the Learning and Teaching Strategy would feed into the overall Strategic Plan, that there would be linkage with the Research and Innovation Strategy. It was suggested that the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) might usefully command a specific theme in the Strategy, however it was recognised that concerted efforts to (for example) enhance retention would be to the benefit of Students, with potentially a knock-on effect of improving such measurements as the TEF.

The Senate thanked the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) and the Head of Academic Quality for the presentation, and looked forward to further considering the topic in due course.

RESEARCH INCOME

Considered
The Senate received a presentation by the Deputy Principal (Research and Innovation), with some analysis of Research Income against targets, and of research proposals against targets. It was noted that some Schools had been omitted from the data presented, but that this had not affected the trends outlined.

Noted
It was noted that the research income targets were ambitious, and that the University had been successful in winning some large awards in recent months. However, it was recognised that there needs to be an increase in the number of competitive proposals that are submitted. Once the increase in proposal submission rate is achieved, it needs to be sustained. There needed therefore to be an increase in the ‘pipeline’ proposals. To that end, greater support would be provided to Staff to prepare and submit proposals.

The Senate thanked the Deputy Principal (Research and Innovation) for the presentation. The topic would be further considered in due course.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR CREATING OUR FUTURE

Considered
A discussion led by the Principal and Vice-Chancellor towards delivering an effective, integrated global University through creation of simpler structures and a joined-up approach to services.

Noted
It was noted that in the all-staff communications, and at the open meetings recently held in Schools that the Principal and Vice-Chancellor had highlighted the intention to bring to Senate and then the Court a proposal to enhance the operational ‘engine’ of the university. This would be informed by the feedback of colleagues and Students about things that need to be fixed, gaps that exist and examples of processes that are consuming time, and/or are not fit for
purpose. It was noted that the University has evolved so much in the last few years and had developed a range of ‘hub and spoke’ models. It was emphasised that now it was necessary to take the step to operate as a more integrated international university. All parts of the University need to be successful and for this to happen, consistent and effective processes are required for Students and Staff.

The Principal reported a consistent comment from Staff to not delay with this change process. Accordingly the Executive had proposed a four College system, intended to be in place by academic session 2018/19. It was intended for education to be focused in constituent schools, and that the planning approach would move to ensure that the Colleges can plan collectively across all locations.

The Principal emphasised that whilst the principle of the structure is proposed to be in place for 2018/19, it was not expected for all the accompanying ‘re-wiring’ changes to be sorted out on such a timescale. It was important, however, for colleagues to work together to develop specific detailed plans for these changes to demonstrate that benefits to Students and Staff can be realised.

It was noted that this was the second of several conversations of Senate on this important topic. This was an opportunity to set the scene on the drivers and principles for the changes. Accordingly the Senate considered aspects of the rationale and processes ahead.

The Head of School (EGIS) gave an outline of the ‘tuning’ that would be required of learning and teaching processes. In particular it was intended that the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching), along with the respective Heads of School, would gain views from each School and report back to the Senate on the means to attain the common, efficient, fit for purpose structures and processes that would be required to deliver transformational education across the globe. It was anticipated that pockets of excellence would be highlighted to inform discussions, and that a common language would be a desired outcome.

The Deputy Principal (Research and Innovation) informed the Senate of the requirements for ‘tuning’ support for researchers, including revisions to Research and Enterprise Services. The aim would be to enhance support to help grow research capacity and delivery across the new structures. Clarity of processes would be a key element. REF and public engagement would be taken into account. Professional service support would be enhanced, as would data systems and software. Capacity would be devoted to ‘policy impact’, in order to better be able to respond to external drivers. Greater emphasis would also be put on growing entrepreneurship.

The Secretary of the University outlined to the Senate the steps required towards delivering integrated professional services. The Secretary emphasised that the University was fortunate with the calibre of its professional services staff, however the current configuration was not ideal to support the global nature of the University’s operations. It was therefore necessary to build common processes and structures, and to put in place robust systems. Progress had been made in recent years with the Student Portal, the Customer Relationship Management system that had enhanced admissions; and more was required. This would be done in a measured and planned manner, with a project team to oversee the project. It was noted that communication would be very important for the successful implementation of change, and that any HR implications would be consulted on appropriately.

With regard to governance, the Secretary of the University reported that the power to change the academic structure of the University lay with the Court, which would act on the recommendation of the Senate. The definitions of the terms ‘College’ and ‘School’ would require to be refined, with any necessary amendments to the Charter and Statutes being tied in with the on-going work of the Constitutional Review Group. The Ordinances and Regulations Committee would be involved as appropriate, including to advise on changes as necessary to the Ordinances and Regulations.

The Senate considered the outline proposals as stated, and noted that there would be further opportunity at future meetings to consider the rationale behind the proposed College structure, as well as the detail of structures and processes. It was emphasised that it was not intended for disciplines to be ‘absorbed’. It was necessary, however, for some structural change in order to enhance commonality, consistency and efficiency of processes. Clarification of terminology would also be a desired outcome. It was also stated that Staff would wish to know the detail at an early stage of changed processes, new structures, and the split of budgets. In further discussion, the rationale behind four, rather than three, Colleges was explained.
The implications for the governance documents of the University were outlined. In particular the identification of ‘Schools’ as the primary academic unit. There would therefore need to be a clear understanding of the changes to be made to the various governance documents. Implications were also identified for the number of Senators, both elected and ex-officio.

The Principal and Vice-Chancellor concluded the item by emphasising that there would be opportunity for discussion in the Schools, and that the Senate would return to the matter in due course, with the opportunity to discuss a paper containing a proposal.

M17/87
APPOINTMENT OF DEANS OF THE UNIVERSITY [Paper: SEN/17/52]

Considered
A report from the Secretary of the University to inform the Senate of the outcome of the election for the Deans, and a proposal to appoint the successful candidates (in accordance with Ordinance L1 *Deans of the University and Associate Deans*).

Noted
That the election for the Deans had closed the previous afternoon with the following outcome:
- Dean of the University (Science and Engineering constituency):
  - Dr Fadi Ghaith, 59 votes; Mr Larry O’Brien, 44 votes
- Dean of the University (Pan University constituency):
  - Dr Amos Haniff, 94 votes; Professor Patrick Corbett, 88 votes

Agreed
The Senate approved the appointment, with effect from 1 January 2018, of Dr Ghaith as Dean of the University (Science and Engineering), and Dr Haniff as Dean of the University (Pan University). The terms of office to run until 31 December 2020.

The Senate offered congratulations to Dr Ghaith and Dr Haniff, and commiserations to the candidates who had not been successful this time. The Senate commended the collegiate manner in which the election was conducted. Thanks were expressed to the Secretary and her team for the professional organisation of the election. The Senate also expressed thanks to all who had participated in the election. It was noted that Associate Deans would be appointed in the new year, and that one of the Deans would join the Court.

M17/88
UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING [Paper: SEN/17/53]

Received
The minutes of the meeting held on 3 October; 1 November; and 6 December 2017.

Noted
That the UCLT had put forward several items that would require significant discussion by the Senate. There was insufficient time on this occasion to devote to the matters.

Agreed
To defer consideration of the UCLT report to the next meeting, where sufficient time could be allocated for a full discussion.

M17/89
SENATE COMMITTEE FOR INTERIM BUSINESS AND EFFECTIVENESS [Paper: SEN/17/54]

Received
The report of matters considered by correspondence from October to December 2017.

Noted
The Senate noted that, among other business, the SCIBE had: received the resignation of Professor Ritchie as Dean (Pan University constituency), and had authorised the election for a successor to take place at the same time as the election for the successor to Dr Kew as Dean (Science and Engineering). The SCIBE had also approved the granting of various honorary titles, including Emeritus Professorships and a Visiting Professorship.

M17/90
UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION [Paper: SEN/17/55]

Received
The minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2017.

Noted
The report of business conducted by the Committee.
MIN REF

M17/91 UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE FOR QUALITY AND STANDARDS [Paper: SEN/17/56]
Received The minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2017.
Noted The report of business conducted by the Committee, which included the 2016/17 Annual Report to the Scottish Funding Council on institution-Led Quality Review.

M17/92 UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE [Paper: SEN/17/57]
Received The minutes of the meetings held on 20 September 2017; and 8 November 2017.
Noted The report of business conducted by the Committee.

The Chair’s Actions as reported in the minutes relating to: amendments to students’ registration; the appointment of examiners for specified undergraduate programmes; the appointment of approved supervisors for specified research students;

M17/93 POSTGRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE [Paper: SEN/17/58]
Received The minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2017.
Noted The report of business conducted by the Committee.

The Chair’s Actions as reported in the minutes relating to: the approval of thesis titles; the appointment of examiners for specified research students; amendments to students’ registration; the appointment of approved supervisors for specified research students;

M17/94 ACADEMIC COUNCIL (DUBAI) [Paper: SEN/17/59]
Received The minutes of the meeting held on 31 May 2017.
Noted The report of business conducted by the Academic Council.

M17/95 ORDINANCES AND REGULATIONS COMMITTEE [Paper: SEN/17/60]
Received The minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2017.
Noted The report of business conducted by the Committee.

That a proposed modification to the wording of the Terms of Reference of the Committee had been recommended for approval. The proposed change was to ensure that future appointments of the Chair of the Committee would be drawn from those members of the Committee who were not ex-officio. It was noted that the proposed change had received the endorsement of the Governance and Nominations Committee of the Court.

That a number of Ordinances and Regulations required to be modified to reflect the disestablishment of the former Senate Business Committee (SBC) and establishment of the Senate Committee for Interim Business and Effectiveness (SCIIBE). A proposal had been put to the Senate whereby the Court would be asked to agree, as an interim measure, that any mention of the SBC would be read as meaning the SCIIBE. It was further noted that the ongoing overall review of the Ordinances and Regulations would, in time, ensure the appropriate specific amendments would be made.

Agreed The Senate agreed that:

i. the wording of the Terms of Reference of the Committee should be amended to ensure that in future the Chair of the Committee would be appointed from those members of the Committee who were not ex-officio;
ii. as an interim measure, the Court should be asked to agree that any mention in the Ordinances and Regulations of the Senate Business Committee (SBC) would be read as meaning the Senate Committee for Interim Business and Effectiveness (SCIBE).

M17/96

**APPOINTMENT OF ACADEMIC STAFF IN 2017** [Paper: SEN/17/61]

**Received** The information regarding academic staff appointments and leavers, which is provided to the Senate as prescribed by Ordinance F2.

**Noted** The information, which is provided to the Senate for information on a regular basis.

M17/97

**VALEDICTIONS AND CLOSING REMARKS**

**Noted** The Senate paid tribute to the two Deans of the University who would demit office on 31 December 2017.

The Senate recorded its appreciation of the contribution made by Dr Kew to the office of Dean (Science and Engineering), and for his considerable input to the development of the Dubai campus, his service to many students, and to the University as a whole. The Senate joined the Chair in wishing Dr Kew every success in his future endeavours. Dr Kew stated his appreciation of the support and warmth he had received over his period with the University. Dr Kew wished his successor, Dr Ghaith, every success in the role.

Sincere appreciation was also recorded of the contribution made by Professor Ritchie to the office of Dean over several years, firstly as Dean (Science and Engineering), and latterly having been elected from the Pan University constituency. The Senate offered thanks to Professor Ritchie for the diligence and expertise that he had brought to the role of Dean and to his overall contribution to the University. The Senate joined the Chair in sending warmest wishes to Professor Ritchie.

The Chair closed the meeting by wishing all members and attendees the best wishes of the season, and a peaceful and restful holiday.

M17/98

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**Noted** That the next meeting of the Senate would be held on Wednesday 7 February 2017 in the Craig Room, James Watt Centre, commencing at 9.30 am (UK time).