WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair invited the Senate to stand for a few moments in respect of Dr Graeme Collie, Assistant Professor in the School of EPS, who had died in February after a brief illness. The Senate recorded condolences to Dr Collie’s family and colleagues.
The Chair welcomed all participants to the meeting, including two colleagues, Professor Napier and Dr Greated, who had been invited to contribute to the ‘Brexit’ discussion item.

The Chair reported that observing the meeting were two representatives from the Good Governance Institute, the organisation that was conducting the Effectiveness Review of the Court and Senate. It was noted that observers would also attend the Court as well as meetings of Committees of both the Senate and the Court.

The Secretary of the University reminded the Senate of the requirement, under the Scottish Code for Good Higher Education Governance, for the University to undertake the Effectiveness Review. It was noted that the Review would be informed by a survey of members of the Senate, which would be issued to members in the near future. It was further noted that the outcomes of the Review would be reported to the Senate in due course.

The Chair welcomed those colleagues joining remotely from Dubai and Malaysia, as well as Professor Pender, who joined from Orkney.

The apologies for absence were recorded.

M18/17 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING
Received The minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2018.
Approved The Senate approved the minutes as a correct record.

M18/18 MATTERS ARISING
Noted There were no matters arising from the minutes that were not already listed on the agenda.

M18/19 REPORT FROM THE PRINCIPAL AND VICE-CHANCELLOR [Paper: SEN/18/08]
Received A report from the Chair of the Senate, which gave the Senate a summary of key issues and news for the University and the wider HE sector.
Noted The Chair wished to thank Senators and colleagues across the University for helping to maintain a focus on academic matters in the preceding difficult months.

The Chair highlighted to the Senate the recently published Letter of Guidance from the Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). The letter set out the expectations of the Minister for SFC and the strategic priorities for the Scottish Government’s investment in the further and higher education sectors until the end of March 2019. The Chair reported that the tone of the letter had been surprising, and that there had been little focus on research. The letter had, however, highlighted some opportunities that the University could pursue on its own and in partnership with others. This would include working with the new Enterprise and Skills Strategic Board.

The Chair informed the Senate that the indicative funding allocation from SFC for Session 2018/19 had indicated that the University would receive a below inflation increase in funding for its teaching activities. The University would therefore require further nimbleness in its processes, and to enhance its ability to act quickly on opportunities for income generation. The SFC allocation in support of research allocations was still awaited.

The Chair wished to highlight positive activity and achievement within the University. The latest recruitment figures for programmes on the Dubai campus were noted to be back on track. This was due to the considerable efforts and enthusiasm of the Staff, bolstered by enhanced marketing activity in the region. Among the many initiatives raising the profile of the University had been Dubai-specific ‘Year of Robotics’ activities, including ‘AI in construction’.

The Senate noted that the University had re-entered the top twenty institutions in receipt of EPSRC funding. It was noted that this was a healthy indicator of positive change.
Another achievement had been the appointment by the Royal Academy of Engineering of Professor Brian Gerardot as a Chair in Emerging Technologies. This was one of ten such appointments in the UK by the Royal Academy of Engineering.

Further achievements highlighted included the attainment of an Enterprise Grant from the Santander Universities Initiative. This was one of five grants awarded in the UK by Santander. Also welcomed was the shortlisting in the Guardian awards of two ESRC-funded projects within the University. The Senate welcomed these examples of the positive activity and achievement ongoing within the University.

The Chair drew the attention of Senators to an event that was intended to help demonstrate the University’s many successes to the community, and urged all Senators to participate in the first Annual Stakeholders’ Meeting, that would be held on 18 May 2018 on the Edinburgh Campus. This provided an opportunity for Staff and the public to learn and celebrate the achievements of the University. The following day, 19 May, an Open Day would take place for Staff, their families, and the public to experience many aspects of the University’s work under a theme of ‘Exploration’ as part of the Year of the Sea. This would involve (among many others) demonstrations of robotics, wind power, and other labs, as well as specialised talks (including by Sir Geoff Palmer), a celebration of the University's Malaysia campus, and many activities within the Oriam sports centre. It was noted that announcements would be made public shortly.

The Senate noted the Report.

M18/20  BREXIT UPDATE: IMPLICATIONS FOR ACADEMIC STAFFING, RESEARCH AND INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

Received  
An introduction from the Principal and Vice-Chancellor that gave some insight into the political aspects of Brexit, followed by presentation from some colleagues who provided their experiences and perspectives of working collaboratively with international partners prior to, and following, the Brexit decision.

Noted  
The Principal and Vice-Chancellor introduced this discussion topic as an opportunity for the Senate to share thoughts on this difficult issue and to hear and consider some different perspectives. It was emphasised the need for the University to plan for the ‘Post-Brexit’ reality, and to be able to take advantage of opportunities.

The Senate was informed that the representative bodies in the sector, Universities Scotland and Universities UK continued to make representation to Government on overarching issues, such as student mobility and the maintenance of research networks. In parallel the Governments’ industrial strategies offered opportunities to tap into the new income streams including to support international co-operation. There remained significant detail yet to be agreed and there was further opportunity to influence Governments as a sector.

The Head of the Research Institute for Biological Chemistry, Biophysics and Bioengineering gave a brief presentation outlining experiences relating to her role as a co-ordinator of a cross-EU research group, which has academic and industrial partners in several different countries. The Senate was informed that collaborative activity was still thriving and that despite some uncertainty over practicalities, there were still many opportunities to expand and deepen collaborative relationships with partners in Europe institutions - particularly through ‘Horizon 2020’ projects.

The Director of Research and Enterprise Services informed the Senate of the Role of the United Kingdom Research Institute (UKRI), which sought to foster initiatives and partnerships between academic institutions and industry. It aimed to help the UK meet Global challenges and encouraged different ways of working. It was noted that the UKRI had established working groups and that these, and others at a UK level, offered way to engage with policy makers across Europe. Bi-lateral and multi-lateral options were available to be explored. The Senate was informed that the UK Government was making funds available to support this through the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). Partnerships were being encouraged at regional and institutional level. It was emphasised as important therefore to think strategically and keep engaging with Governments, Research Councils, and other institutions and to forge further partnerships.
The Deputy Head of School of Social Sciences (and Head of Languages and Intercultural Studies; Chair of Intercultural Communication) informed Senate of the work that has been conducted to date and which was ongoing to continue the promotion of student movement across Europe through Erasmus+. A conference has been held to explore the issue which was of particular importance to disciplines such as Languages that would be vulnerable if freedom of movement were restricted. It was noted that the present position was that the UK would continue to be part of the Erasmus+ scheme until 2021. Work continued to seek to gain governmental approval to extend this timeframe. It was emphasised that Heriot-Watt had an opportunity to be a leader in ensuring further connectivity. It was further stated that Heriot-Watt could, by building on the Go-Global initiative, further enhance its international activities and influence. It was noted that overall, the next year would be critical in terms of timing for Erasmus+ and its replacement;

The Depute Principal (Engagement & Staff Development) gave an update on the support that continued to be provided to colleagues (and which would need to be provided in future). It was noted that much reassurance was being provided, especially towards continuing to make the University an attractive place for people to come and work – and to stay. 

Considered
In open discussion, it was noted that internationally, work with prospective partners was important to counter the overall lack of clarity about Brexit. Similarly, the University needed to work hard to overcome the impression that the UK was not as welcoming as it had been. A difficulty was reported in attracting high quality research staff in the current environment.

It was noted that one BEIS initiative related to collaboration in the Gulf region, and that the University was therefore very well placed to play a prominent role – although there were many strong competitors in that and many other regions in which the University operated.

In closing the discussion, the Principal and Vice-Chancellor commended the excellent work on-going within the University, and also emphasised the external positioning being proactive in engaging and messaging with EU and international students, staff and collaborators.

M18/21 DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY TO 2025 – UPDATE REPORT

Received
The Senate received and considered a verbal update from the Principal and Vice-Chancellor on the progress towards developing the Strategy to 2025.

Noted
It was noted that the Head of School of Social Sciences was chairing an Academic Steering Group to help take the matter forward. It was noted that discussion workshops were continuing and that these involved Staff, Students and some members of the Court. Any Senators not yet involved in these workshops were invited to contact the organisers. It was noted that further workshops may be held later in the development process. There were also opportunities for contributions to be submitted online. It was emphasised that the development process was intended to involve Staff and Students across all campuses.

The Senate noted the report.

M18/22 CREATING OUR FUTURE UPDATE [Paper: SEN/18/09]

Received
Collated notes from recent workshops (including Dubai and Malaysia) towards the creation of a modified academic structure to deliver an effective, integrated global University.

Noted
The Principal and Vice-Chancellor thanked Senators for their continued involvement in the process to develop proposals for the academic structure. It was noted that the next stage would be a formal proposal to be submitted in September to the Senate.

The Senate considered the summery notes that had been circulated following the workshops. It was noted that further such discussion workshops could be held later in the process. It was noted that further consideration was needed to ensure that proposals for the new structure would properly reflect the requirements for research. It was emphasised that research in the
new structure should be considered in parallel and simultaneously with learning and teaching. Detailed feedback on the role of Heads of School in the new structure had also been included in the notes.

The Deputy Principal (Research and Innovation) informed the Senate of the timing of developing the proposals, and of the process that was underway under the auspices of the University Committee for Research and Innovation. This included seeking views from colleagues across all campuses and focused discussions. It was intended to build consensus on requirements by the end of June.

The Secretary of the University outlined the governance requirements for the change of the academic structure. It was noted that the definitions in the Charter were proposed to be modified so as to simply refer to ‘primary academic units’. It was noted that this change in terminology was important to ‘future proof’ the Charter and Statutes.

The Principal and Vice-Chancellor reported that the detailed proposals would be set against the criteria that had been considered by Senators at the initial set of workshops, and that evidence would be set against these criteria. It was noted that appropriate time would be allocated for discussion so that the Senate could agree to support the proposals, which would then be put to the Court for approval. It was emphasised that a new structure was an important element towards the effective engagement of Staff to secure the future of the University.

The progress report was noted.

M18/23 SENATE COMMITTEE FOR INTERIM BUSINESS AND EFFECTIVENESS [Paper: SEN/18/10]

Received The report of a meeting held on 24 January 2018, which included matters considered by correspondence from December 2017 to January 2018.

Noted It was noted that the SCIBE had agreed as a pragmatic measure to recommend to the Court the interim reappointment of the Heads of three Schools whose period of appointment would expire before any new structure would be in place. The three Heads were intended to be reappointed to 31 December 2018, by which time it was expected that a structure would have been approved, and appointments would have been made to senior positions. It was noted that the SCIBE had recognised that there was no provision for such an interim appointment in the Ordinance, and that this point would be made clear to the Court when asking for its approval of this pragmatic measure. It was emphasised that it was hoped that there would not be any need for any further interim re-appointments.

It was noted that as a precautionary measure, and for Session 2017/18 only, the SCIBE had authorised the use of emergency measures as specified in Regulation 31 (Authority of Heads of Schools and Examiners in Exceptional Circumstances). It was explained that this was in order to ensure that no groups of Students would be disadvantaged, and that secure views could still be reached in the event that not all information be available to the examination boards. It was emphasised that the authority to implement Regulation 31 had been granted for the current Session only, and that the measures would only be used in exceptional circumstances. The Senate would be informed of any instances where the emergency measures had been required.

It was noted that the SCIBE had approved the appointment of Dr Tom Ward (EPS) as an Associate Dean to support the Dean (Science and Engineering). It was noted that this meant that there was now a Dean or Associate Dean based at each of the main campuses of the University. Other business had included agreement of transition arrangements regarding the Senate-elected members of the Court; the granting of honorary titles, including an Emeritus Professorship; and the granting of interim awards.

Considered The proposed Terms of Reference of the new Research Degrees Committee as introduced by the Deputy Principal (Research and Innovation). It was noted that the Terms of Reference had been considered in depth by the Committee for Research and Innovation (UCRI) as well as the SCIBE; they had been mapped against the Senate Statement of Primary Responsibilities and
Delegations as well as the remits of existing committees: primarily the Postgraduate Studies Committee, but also the Research Student Coordinators Group. It was emphasised that the aim was to enhance the discharging of these responsibilities. It was requested that the Research Degrees Committee be established at the earliest opportunity in order that it could consider a number of items of business associated with both internal and external policy developments. It was noted that the current Postgraduate Studies Committee would continue its responsibilities regarding taught postgraduate matters until such time as the new Studies Committee is established (a proposal to come to the June Senate meeting).

In discussion, the role of Deans on the new Committee was noted to be a change from their current role(s) as Chairs of the Postgraduate and Undergraduate Studies Committee. It was noted that the Chair of RDC would be appointed by the University Committee for Research and Innovation (UCRI), which would be the ‘parent’ body for the RDC. It was agreed to record a stated view that the Chair should be a member of the Senate, however, it was emphasised that the best person for the role would be appointed, and they did not require to be a member of the Senate.

Agreed

The Senate approved the Terms of Reference, and agreed that the new Committee should be established at the earliest opportunity.

**M18/24 UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING  [Paper: SEN/18/11]**

Received

The minutes of the meeting of the University Committee for Learning and Teaching (UCLT) that had been held on 4 April 2018.

Noted

The Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) highlighted in particular the ongoing important role of UCLT of drawing together different strands of work towards enhancing Student retention. It was emphasised that the UCLT ensured that this large amount of work covered all locations and ensured depth of activity. It was noted that the UCLT would make a report to the University Executive in the near future in order that resourcing matters could be considered.

A query regarding lecture capture was considered, and it was noted that significant work was underway in relation to staff and systems. It was noted that colleagues in Information Services were integrally involved in this work.

**M18/25 UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE FOR QUALITY AND STANDARDS  [Paper: SEN/18/12]**

Noted

It was noted that due to the close proximity to this meeting, and staff absence, the minutes of the meeting held on 11 April 2018 would be brought to the next meeting of the Senate.

**M18/26 UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION  [Papers: SEN/18/13 and SEN/18/14]**

Received

The minutes of meetings held on 25 January and 29 March 2018.

Noted

The report of business conducted by the Committee, which included the ongoing discussions toward building the Research and Innovation elements of the University Strategy and several aspects of research-related activities in the University.

**M18/27 POSTGRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE  [Papers: SEN/18/15 and SEN/18/16]**

Received

The minutes of the meetings held on 16 January and 27 March 2018.

Noted

The report of business conducted by the Committee, which included: reports from external examiners; and new programme proposals.

The Chair’s Actions taken between meetings as reported in the minutes related to: the approval of thesis titles and the appointment of internal and external examiners for specified research students; the appointment of approved supervisors for specified research students;
amendments to students' registration; the appointment of external examiners for postgraduate taught programmes; approval of supervisors nominations for postgraduate research students.

M18/28 UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE [Paper: SEN/18/17]

Received  The minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2018.

Noted  The report of business conducted by the Committee, which included: consideration of a request to compulsorily withdraw a student from a programme; a new programme proposal and a modified programme proposal.

The Chair’s Actions taken between meetings as reported in the minutes related to: the approval of amendments to students’ registration, and the appointment of external examiners for undergraduate programmes.

M18/29 ACADEMIC COUNCIL (DUBAI) [Paper: SEN/18/18]

Received  The minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2017.

Noted  The report of business conducted by the Academic Council, which included some discussion around the performance of second-year Students in particular.

M18/30 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Noted  That the next meeting of the Senate would be held on Wednesday 6 June 2018 in the Craig Room, James Watt Centre, commencing at 9.30 am (UK time).

M18/31 CLOSING REMARKS

Noted  The Senate noted that a positive future practice would be for papers to be made available via SharePoint to members at the earliest opportunity. The Chair thanked members for their forbearance with the late distribution of the papers for this meeting.