MIN REF
M19/19

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair welcomed all participants to the meeting, making special mention of those colleagues joining remotely from Dubai and Malaysia as well as two colleagues who were attending to contribute to the presentation on Wellbeing: Dr De Lima, the University Physician in Charge; and Ms Murray, the Head of Student Counselling and Support.
The Chair also welcomed as observers to the meeting Mr Hanafiah (President, Student Association, Malaysia) and Mr Meighan (who currently was clerk to three standing committees of the Senate: UCLT, UCQS and UCR). The apologies for absence were recorded. It was noted that the meeting was quorate.

M19/20 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING
Received The minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2019.
Approved The Senate approved the minutes as a correct record.

M19/21 MATTERS ARISING
M19/21.1 Update on Senate Governance Effectiveness Review (Minute 19/08)
Received The Secretary of the University gave the Senate a brief verbal update on the Review of Governance Effectiveness, which the Senate had discussed at its previous meeting.
Noted The Senate noted that the Court recently had approved the response to the Review and this was now available to view, along with other important documents, on the Senate website. The Senate noted that it would be invited to consider at its next meeting the discussion document on the role of the Senator. In addition, it was noted that the SCIBE (Senate Committee for Interim Business and Effectiveness) periodically considered other potential enhancements to the Senate’s effectiveness and that Senators were welcome to contribute any suggestions to improve the working of the Senate via the Clerk, or via any member of the SCIBE.

M19/21.2 Update on Approvals process for revised Charter and Statutes
Received The Secretary of the University gave the Senate a brief verbal update on the progress of the proposed revisions to the Charter and Statutes.
Noted The Senate noted that the revised Charter and Statutes had completed the extensive scrutiny by the Scottish Government Legal Department and had been forwarded to the Privy Council Office. Notice was now awaited for the date on which they would be received by the Privy Council, where they would be approved in the presence of HM the Queen.

M19/21.3 Staff Engagement
Received The Chair reported that a Senator who could not be present at the meeting had sought an update on a matter from the meeting before last, whereby it had been noted that “each of the Schools currently was assessing the ‘local’ data {relating to Staff Engagement}, and that once there had been reasonable opportunity for School-level actions to be considered and agreed, the data could be pooled together and presented for the Senate to look at in the round.”
Noted The Senate noted that all Schools had now had the intended meetings, with ‘local’ action plans agreed as appropriate; and that the aggregated information had been lodged on the Staff portal.
It was noted that focus groups were being held in the coming weeks and Senators were encouraged to participate in these. It was further noted that Professor Arthur, Dean (Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences constituency) was leading a working group on academic workload and was keen to receive input from Senators to help inform this work.
It was suggested that a future Senate meeting might usefully consider the progress being made against the action plans, with a view to sharing good practice where appropriate.

M19/22 REPORT FROM THE PRINCIPAL AND VICE-CHANCELLOR [Paper: SEN/19/13]
Received A report from the Principal and Vice-Chancellor, which gave the Senate a summary of key issues and news for the University and the wider HE sector.
Noted The Principal congratulated all those who had contributed to the Dornoch Environmental Enhancement Project (DEEP), a partnership with Glenmorangie and the Marine Conservation Society that had won the Business Collaboration category at the prestigious Guardian University Awards 2019. The University had also been runner-up in the Research Impact category for the SCORRES project that was changing lives in India and China. The Senate added its congratulations to all involved in these projects.
In the context of continuing Brexit uncertainty, the Principal emphasised the importance of the University's clear Strategy and sense of direction. The Principal thanked all colleagues who had supported the launch events for the Strategy 2025, which been held at every campus. The Principal expressed how impressed he had been with the enthusiasm of colleagues for the values-led approach and for the values themselves. The Year One special initiatives were highlighted on a slide (available on the Senate SharePoint site), with progress to date summarised in the paper. It was noted that a microsite was being developed to display the impact of the Strategy. The Principal gave an insight to the work going on at a UK-level to try to prepare for the different potential outcomes of the Brexit process. The Senate noted that despite the apparent political impasse, there was significant detailed work continuing behind the scenes to plan for either a ‘hard’ or ‘soft’ Brexit. One aspect was to seek to secure the continuing participation of UK-based researchers in the Horizon 2020 EU Research and Innovation programme, although it was noted that some mixed messages were being received in the academic community. There were still many areas of uncertainty, including aspects of Erasmus schemes. The Senate noted that the University would underwrite Erasmus Students for the coming entry where international experience is a compulsory element of the degree. The Principal emphasised the need to continue to maintain and build contacts with colleagues based in EU countries and urged Senators who work with colleagues in institutions in the EU to write to keep up those relationships. It was noted that the UK government had launched a national campaign to recruit international students and that Universities Scotland would similarly work to emphasise the welcome in Scotland for international students and staff.

The Principal referred to the Student recruitment position for 2019/20 and reported that colleagues centrally and in Schools continued to work hard to convert offers to acceptances. The forthcoming applicant visit days would be highly important to aid that process. The changing nature of student recruitment was noted, with potential applicants paying increasing attention to such factors as NSS scores. The importance of putting Students and Staff at the heart of the Strategy was underlined.

The Principal reported the ongoing efforts to integrate the Edinburgh Business School with the School of Social Sciences. It was noted that since the previous Senate meeting, the Court and the Board of EBS had agreed to bring forward the timescale for unifying the bodies. As previously discussed, this would result in a wholly integrated offer in the field of Business education and would enable the provision of online, ‘traditional’ and blended learning.

The Senate noted that the annual elections from Schools to the Senate would be held shortly, with the announcement to open nominations to be made later in the week. The Senate noted the Report.

M19/23 MENTAL HEALTH / WELLBEING PRESENTATION [Presentation] 
Received The Secretary of the University led a presentation as part of the Strategic theme of Building Flourishing Communities and the University’s Year of Health. The presentation was supported by the University Physician in Charge and the Head of Student Counselling and Support. (NB the slides are logged on the Senate SharePoint site)

Noted The Senate was reminded that the Year of Health provided opportunity to focus on the research activities under that theme and to celebrate with a series of themed events. Importantly the theme also underlined the hard work and expertise that was being devoted to enhancing the wellbeing of Students and Staff. It was noted that it was appropriate to have different approaches on different campuses to reflect the differing support needs of Students and Staff, however the definition of wellbeing remained the same for all locations.

It was noted that the University was enhancing its provision for support of Student mental health matters. As encouraged by the sector-wide stepchange initiative, mental health had been adopted as a strategic imperative. The University was contributing to the development of the ‘Student Minds’ Charter and was strengthening its collaboration with the NHS, charities and local authorities. The University was able to draw on the resources made available by the Scottish Government for this purpose and in Dubai consultation was ongoing with a government Minister. It was noted, however, that the main support on the Dubai campus had to come from
the University. Resources for welfare and counselling were increasing accordingly. It was reported that on the Malaysia campus, as part of the PDR process, every member of Staff received basic training to identify Students experiencing mental health difficulties and to direct them to available support. This was assisted by the Malaysian Mental Health Agency. Other activities were also a regular feature of the campus community.

It was noted that the Student Counselling and Support team operated across all campuses and provided a first point of contact. Students were informed of the team before joining and were reminded throughout their time with the University. The Senate noted that the team provided a wide range of supporting activities, including the ‘Stay on Course’ initiative and other stress alleviation activities. Close relations were maintained with Schools, mainly through the Directors of Learning and Teaching and also with individual personal tutors. The team also provided 1:1 counselling for Students averaging around 110 appointments per week. Each case was assessed and an appropriate response agreed, which in some instances would be to refer the person onto the NHS. Confidentiality was maintained throughout. There also was the ‘Big White Wall’, which provides 24-hour access to confidential support and advice. With regard to Staff provision, a wellbeing week highlighted the resources available, which included training and coaching in resilience and other means of support. The University Physician in Charge informed the Senate of the range of resources that was available on the Edinburgh Campus and the emphasis on working in partnership to enhance the mental health of Students and Staff.

A number of points were raised in discussion. It was noted that the Personal Tutor (PT) scheme was central to providing support to Students and it was suggested that training for PTs usefully should include early identification of Students experiencing mental health difficulties. A suggestion was made that such training for PTs should be mandatory and should include an annual refresh. It was suggested that the particular needs of postgraduate Students should be recognised, taking into account the relatively short period of postgraduate study and the different nature of the ‘life experiences’ that older Students may have as opposed to Students who may have come to the University straight from School. A further factor suggested for consideration was the cultural aspects of accessing assistance. It was also suggested there is benefit in translating material so that Students could access information in their own languages. It was recognised that the mental health of Staff also required greater focus and it was noted that training was becoming available for individuals and managers to increase awareness of mental health needs. It was noted that the suggestions made would inform future discussions on the development of support to Staff and Students.

The Senate thanked the Secretary of the University, the University Physician in Charge and the Head of Student Counselling and Support for the presentation and contribution to discussion.

M19/24 ELIR4 2020 [Presentation] (Paper SEN/19/14)

Received

The Head of Academic Quality gave the Senate a detailed presentation of the preparations towards the University’s fourth Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR4) to be undertaken in 2019/20. The presentation (lodged on the Senate SharePoint site) complemented the previously circulated paper.

Noted

The Senate noted that the Review would focus on all of the University’s credit-bearing provision across all modes and locations, and the learning experience of all Students, including Research Students. The Review would have an enhancement focus and would also scrutinise evidence of academic decision-making and evidence of impact. It was noted that the agreed ‘contextualised themes’ to be explored by the review team would relate to the global nature of the Heriot-Watt learning and teaching experience, Student Engagement and Retention.

The Senate noted the timetable for preparing for and receiving the review visit. The draft Reflective Analysis would be submitted in September 2019, with the agreed documentation to be submitted by mid-November 2019. There would be two stages to the review, with a ‘Planning Visit’ on 30 January 2020 and the main Review Visit in the week of 16 March 2020, probably for a period of five days. It was noted that the review team would meet with several Staff and Students and that there was therefore a likelihood that some Senators would be selected to meet with the review team. Suitable briefing and support would be provided to those from Schools meeting with the review team.
The Senate thanked the Head of Academic Quality, and all others involved in the preparations, for the significant volume of work so far, and looked forward to receiving further updates as the preparations progressed. It was suggested that this would provide an opportunity to celebrate the successes of the University in providing an excellent student experience in our complex learning environment.

M19/25 REPORT FROM THE SENATE COMMITTEE FOR INTERIM BUSINESS AND EFFECTIVENESS (SCIBE)

Received and noted A verbal report from the Principal that the sole matter considered by the SCIBE since the previous meeting had been to approve by correspondence a professorial appointment committee under the terms of Ordinance F2.

M19/26 UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE FOR QUALITY AND STANDARDS [Paper: SEN/19/15]

Received The minutes of the meeting of the University Committee for Quality and Standards (UCQS) held on 20 March 2019.

Noted The Senate received and noted the report of business conducted by the Committee, which had included requirements for ELIR Mapping to the QAA Quality Code and revisions to the Internal Audit Handbook.

M19/27 UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION [Paper: SEN/19/16]

Received The minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2019.

Noted The Senate received and noted the report of business conducted by the Committee, which had included consideration of developments on the Orkney Campus in the field of renewable energies. The Committee had also considered some definitions of Research and Enterprise among other matters.

M19/28 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Noted The dates of further meetings of the Senate in Session 2018/19 were noted as:

- Wednesday 12 June 2019; 
- Wednesday 11 September 2019; 
- Thursday 12 December 2019; 
- Wednesday 26 February 2020; 
- Thursday 23 April 2020; 
- Wednesday 17 June 2020.