The Senate

Minutes: 06 September 2023

In the Chair: Professor Richard A Williams, Principal and Vice-Chancellor

Present:

Dr Çakil Agnew
Professor Mushtak Al-Atabi
Dr Nasir Al Lagtah
Dr Ross Alexander
Dr Yousef Al-Gumaiei
Professor Mark Biggs
Dr Linda Buchan*
Ms Joleen Chong Si Cheng*
Professor Malcolm Chrisp
Mr Jose Condé
Dr Demetrios Cotsovos
Professor Paul Dalgarno
Professor Dugald Duncan
Dr Neamat El Gayar
Dr David Ellis
Dr Erkal Ersoy*
Professor Anna Fenge
Dr Fadi Ghailth
Professor Igor Guz*
Dr Amos Haniff
Professor Ted Henry
Dr Kirin Hilliar*
Dr Timothy Johnson
Professor Helenor Johnston
Dr Britta Kalkreuter*
Dr Craig Kennedy
Mr Ryan Koh*
Professor Reza Kouhy
Professor Angus Laing
Mr Andrew Lee
Dr Helen Lewis
Dr Min-Hsiu Liao*
Professor Sara Lombardo
Ms Jasmine Low
Dr Alex MacLaren

In attendance:

Mr Nathan Bircham
Professor Martha Caddell
Mr Iain Dods
Professor Fiona Grant
Mr Mark Hamid (Clerk)

Apologies:

Professor Lehel Banjai
Dr Anne Bernassau
Ms Sue Collier
Professor Annie Hill
Ms Samantha Kane

Dr Bill MacPherson
Professor Julian Malins
Professor Mercedes Maroto-Valer
Dr Alistair McConnell*
Professor Martin McCoistra
Dr Richard McCracken*
Professor Dame Heather McGregor
Dr Yvonne McLaren-Hankin
Professor Steve McLaughlin*
Mr Lee Miles
Dr Shameel Muhammed*
Professor Gillian Murray
Dr Katriona Myhill
Dr Hendrik Nahler
Dr Yasemin Nielsen
Dr Rabee Rustum
Dr Chris Rutherford
Dr Christian Saemann*
Professor Mathini Sellathurai
Dr Harpreet Seth*
Ms Devanshi Sharma*
Mr Nader Shouly
Ms Celia Silva*
Ms Andrea Sneddon
Dr Kathrin Stark
Dr Katerina Strani
Dr Monica Tamariz
Mr Andrew Waite
Professor Fiona Waldron
Dr Tze Chuen Yap
Dr Humphrey Yiu*
Professor Hind Zantout
Dr Maggie King
Ms Ruth Moir
Ms Susan Orr
Mr Marc Quinn
Ms Kirsty Scanlan

* denotes partial attendance
CHAIR’S WELCOME & NOTE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Principal and Vice-Chancellor welcomed all participants to the meeting, especially those new members of the Senate who were attending for the first time.

The apologies for absence were noted.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: 15 JUNE 2023

The Senate received and approved as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2023.

MATTERS ARISING & ACTION LOG

There were no matters arising from the minutes or actions outstanding to comprise an action log.

REPORT OF THE JOINT MEETING OF COURT AND SENATE HELD ON 10 MAY 2023

The Senate received a report from the Vice-Principal summarising the feedback which had been received from the joint meeting of the Senate with the Court in the preceding semester. He noted that the views expressed supported the importance of sport, in its various forms, to the University community and that there was a manifest need for the opportunities and facilities offered to be inclusive for all. A key theme highlighted the challenges of providing provision on and off campus, and the desire, within financial constraints, to provide opportunities to a similar level globally.

The Senate noted the update.

PRIORITY FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2023/24 INCORPORATING PRINCIPAL’S REPORT

The Senate received a series of presentations by the chairs of the Senate’s Committees setting out priorities for the academic year and framed by an introduction from the Principal and Vice-Chancellor.

In his introduction, the Principal noted the challenging times being faced by the University and the wider sector, particularly in terms of international recruitment. He opined that clarity of purpose would allow the University to face these challenges. He also highlighted anticipated funding challenges which would affect the academic work which the Senate was tasked to lead on, and that the Global College was intended to secure international recruitment and its funding streams.

He noted that the University was now half-way through its strategy 2025 and that its QS rankings had exceeded expectations; the University had also managed to achieve success in recent surveys including being ranked 1st in Scotland and 2nd in the UK for Postgraduate Positive Outcomes.
M23/51 PRIORITY FOR THE UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE FOR RESEARCH & INNOVATION

Professor Steve McLaughlin, Deputy Principal (Research & Impact) presented the year’s priorities for the University Committee for Research & Innovation (UCRI) as its chair.

M23/52 PRIORITY FOR THE UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE FOR LEARNING & TEACHING

Professor Malcolm Chrisp, Deputy Principal (Education & Student Life) presented the year’s priorities for the University Committee for Learning & Teaching (UCLT) as its chair.

M23/53 PRIORITY FOR THE UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE FOR QUALITY & STANDARDS

Professor Fiona Waldron presented the year’s priorities for the University Committee for Quality & Standards (UCQS) as its chair, assisted by Dr Maggie King, Head of Academic Quality.

Following the three presentations from the Committee chairs, the Senators divided into breakout sessions of around 6-10 members to discuss two questions posed by the Chair, viz.:

• How can we ensure these priorities can be delivered as part of a global university?
• What are some of the challenging areas and how might we work together to achieve them?

M23/54 FEEDBACK FROM BREAKOUT SESSIONS

The Senate received feedback from three rapporteurs from the breakout sessions and agreed that all feedback would be collated and received at the next Senate meeting.

The rapporteurs selected to feed back to the Senate meeting noted a desire the drive engagement between staff and foster a sense of community, which may have been lost during the pandemic, by bringing colleagues together. It was suggested that, at the Senate level, business should seek to go beyond the reporting of information and that engagement could take place more widely through town hall meetings and other forums.

The rapporteurs also noted a focus on ensuring that University strategy could be meaningfully implemented at an operational level, together with aspirations to ensure that flexibility in learning and teaching could be achieved, with the option to relax certain requirements to facilitate this.

A desire to promote cross-campus collaboration around research, in order to deliver a good return on capacity which had been invested for research across the University’s global footprint and maximise research funding, was also expressed.

M23/55 HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA CONSTITUTION (SEN-23-31)

The Senate received and endorsed the proposed new constitution for Heriot-Watt University Malaysia for onward approval by the Court and Malaysia Board.
During the discussion of the proposed constitution, it was noted that the document used a diversity of terms (notably for the Primary Academic Units) and suggested that these should be standardised in order to provide consistency with the University's other governing documents.

M23/56 ANNUAL SFC REPORT ON QUALITY (SEN-23-32)

The Senate received and endorsed the final draft of the HWU Annual Institutional Quality Report 2022/23 which had been circulated to Senators in advance.

M23/57 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of other business.

M23/58 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 18 October 2023
Thursday 30 November 2023
Thursday 08 February 2024
Wednesday 24 April 2024
Thursday 13 June 2024
Wednesday 08 May 2024: Joint Meeting of Court & Senate