

## SENATE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

## Minutes of the meeting of 15 May 2023

*Present:* Karl Leydecker (Chair), Akua Agyeman, Marion Campbell, Chantel Den Daas, Richard Hepworth, Diane Skatun, Tracey Slaven, Ruth Taylor, Neil Vargesson, Zeray Yihdego and Louise Thomson (Clerk)

*Apologies were received from:* Mary Stephen

**559 Approval of previous meeting's minutes** **SBC22-23:20**

559.1 The draft minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 29 March 2023 were approved.

**560 Matters arising**

560.1 The Committee was updated on developments with regards to the Hay of Seaton appointments. The committee was informed that the Hay of Seaton Memorial Lecture Series was established in the name of Malcolm Hay of Seaton, who devoted his life to highlighting the history of anti-Semitism and the Jewish people. His widow, Alice Ivy Hay of Seaton, made a bequest in her will to the University of Aberdeen and a memorial lecture series was established for the promotion of greater understanding and furtherance of the knowledge of the history and culture of the Jewish people.

560.2 Previous appointments have been approved by the Senate Business Committee, but it is unclear at what point the University agreed to take on the group as a formal committee, or if indeed it did. The University Secretary confirmed that further investigations are ongoing and that no progress has been made while discussions proceed.

560.3 The University Secretary agreed to circulate further information at a later date to aid discussions of the Committee before progressing any appointments.

***Action: University Secretary to circulate further information ahead of any discussions on the composition of the Hay of Seaton group.***

**561 Draft agenda for Senate meeting on 7 June 2023** **SBC22-23:21**

561.1 The draft agenda for the forthcoming meeting of Senate was discussed and the following comments made.

561.2 The academic year structure paper is submitted for further academic input, following the discussion at the last meeting of Senate and the subsequent information submitted. The paper will focus on one proposal, rather than the four previously discussed.

561.3 It was noted that the additional input is appreciated by academic colleagues.

- 561.4 The Research Committee paper will provide an update on the REF stocktake and its impact alongside reflecting national REF discussions. It is anticipated that the item will consist of a presentation and discussion.
- 561.5 It was requested that the Honorary Degree Nominations item be moved above the proposed break to reinforce the importance of the topic. The Committee agreed to that change.
- 561.6 A Committee member requested that time be given to the issue of the industrial action affecting the University. The Chair suggested that this could be covered as part of the Principal's update.
- 561.7 Various members of the Committee suggested that the timing of agenda items should be revised to support the full consideration of the business to be transacted. It was agreed that items would be reconfigured and timings revised following the close of the meeting.

*Action: Clerk to revise the draft agenda in line with discussions and agreed at the Committee meeting.*

**562 Decision Time roll out SBC22-23:22**

- 562.1 Given the feedback from the previous Senate meeting and the work required to fully support colleagues in the transition to Decision Time, the University Secretary withdrew this item from the draft agenda.

**563 Updates to elected Membership of Senate SBC22-23:23**

- 563.1 The Committee discussed the rationale and approach to the Senate composition proposals. The University Secretary advised members that the proposals followed the established methodology and the paper sought to reflect the current FTE staff and student populations (as at snapshot #3). There was no intention to change the totality of the number of Senators, but to amend the distribution of seats as per staff and student numbers across the Schools.
- 563.2 The Committee recognised the need for any changes to the composition of Senate to reflect the requirements of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016. The Committee was advised that changes to the membership that remained within the requirements of the Act, may be approved by resolution by Court. More fundamental changes would require an ordinance and Privy Council approval and that was not being sought for these proposed changes.
- 563.3 It was suggested and agreed that additional information be added to the paper to outline the methodology taken, including the data used to inform the calculations. The University Secretary further suggested that the data tables used for those calculations may be helpful and should be included in the revised paper.

*Action: Senate Composition paper to be revised as detailed above by the University Secretary and Committee Clerk.*

## **564 Senate and Assessor elections**

564.1 A question was asked with regards to the content of the Senate and Assessor Elections item. It was confirmed that the content would be standard information pertaining to the timings of elections for Senators and Senate assessors.

## **565 Dates of future meetings**

565.1 The Committee noted the meeting dates for the coming academic year.

565.2 Committee dates for 2023/24 are as follows:

- 30 August 2023
- 18 October 2023
- 24 January 2024
- 6 March 2024
- 13 May 2024

565.3 The forthcoming dates for Senate covering the academic year 2023/24 are included, for information.

- 20 September 2023
- 8 November 2023
- 14 February 2024
- 27 March 2024
- 5 June 2024