UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

SENATUS ACADEMICUS

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2013

Present: Principal, Professors Logan, Haites, Hannaford, McGeorge, Morgan, Greaves, MacGregor and Ross, Ms AM Slater, Dr Morrison, Professors Craig, Coyle, Zalewski, Skakle, Soulsby, O'Donoghue and Lumsden, Dr R Wells, Professors Schaper and Naphy, Dr B Connolly, Dr S Lawrie, Mrs M Beaton, Dr D Hendry, Dr M Ehrenschwendtner, Professor Dawson, Dr J Lamb, Dr C Brittain, Dr DJ Smith, Dr G Sharman, Dr T Burns, Dr A Simpson, Dr L Bennie, Professor Lambin, Dr A Carrington, Dr A Jenkinson, Dr I Greig, Dr J Barrow, Dr A Rajnicek, Dr P Teismann, Dr S Fielding, Professor H Galley, Dr S Semple, Professor S Heys, Dr K Khalaf, Dr R MacKenzie, Dr S Duthie, Dr M Kashtalyan, Dr D Pokrajac, Professor Chandler, Dr J Keifer, Dr F Guerin, Dr N Oren, Miss AC Deseillingy, Mr R Henthorn and Mr P Bond,

Apologies: Mr Cannon, Professor Rodger, Wallace, Buckland, Baggs, McCaig, Macrae and Reid, Dr S Davies, Professors Gow and Nelson, Dr J Masthoff, Mr M Radford, Professor Ritchie, Dr K Shennan, Ms C Banks, Dr Bunduchi, Dr WD McCausland, Dr R O'Connor, Dr A Dilley, Dr A Bryzgel, Dr K Friedrich, Dr P Mealor, Dr D Robson, Dr Y Bain, Dr E Curtis, Ms S Cornelius, Dr J Stewart, Dr T Wills, Dr K Groo, Professor Duff, Dr P Bernhagen, Dr R Vij, Dr M Mills, Dr J Sternberg, Dr D Scott, Dr J Cleland, Dr A Denison, Dr LP Erwig, Professor Schwarzbauer, Dr M Cruickshank, Dr L Aucott, Professor Newton, Dr D Pearson, Dr D Martin, Dr L Williams, Dr A Akisanya, Dr L Philip, Professor D MacDonald, Dr A McLaughlin, Dr TFJ Norman, Dr N Vargesson, Professor S Hutchison and Edwards, Miss J Bjorkqvist, Miss M Dunn, Mr M Kania, Miss HL Smith, Miss CC Hunter, Miss L Reid, Mr HD Naio, Miss R Munday, Mr J Douglas, Miss G Maerker, Miss Z McKellar, Mr M Burke Mr J Kenter and Mr G Maloney

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

43.1   The Senate was invited to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 1 May 2013 (copy filed with Principal copy of the minutes).

STATEMENT BY PRINCIPAL

44.1   The Principal welcomed Senators to the last Senate of this academic year and thanked retiring Senators for their helpful discussion and decisions made over their period of service. He wished all Senators a good summer break.

44.2   The Principal then advised Senate of the news that the University Secretary had resigned in order to take up the prestigious post of Executive Vice-Principal of Hong Kong University. He thanked the University Secretary for his contribution to the work of the University over his many years of service and asked Senate to agree that he might write to the University Secretary, on behalf of the Senate, with thanks for his contribution. This was agreed. The Principal then introduced the Acting Secretary, Mrs Caroline Inglis. The Principal said that there would be a short period of reflection on the structures and reporting lines within the University and whether those were appropriate. Once that had been done the post of University Secretary would be advertised. The Principal added that if colleagues have any particular comments to make on the structures and reporting lines then they should email either himself or Professor Logan.

44.3   The Principal then commented on the Installation of the new Chancellor on Monday 10 June adding what a huge success it had been and what excellent reports had appeared in the media. He thanked all those involved, particularly the University Registrar, and said that the fact that the installation had gone so very smoothly was a consequence of the work put in by the University Community as a whole.

44.4   The Principal then updated Senate on the code of governance that had recently been published by the University Chairs. He said that this would be considered by the various Scottish Government Committees and that it was expected that the new Code of Governance would be supported. He said that the new Code of Governance meant that the University Court would have to consider a number of aspects, for example equality and diversity, transparency of remuneration, transparency of processes and the size of Court. He advised Senate that the Governance Committee would look at the Court's recommendations and that Senate would then be appraised of the Court's decisions. He followed by saying that there would be a period of transition over the year in order to implement the new Code.

44.5   The Principal then updated Senate on the Post 16 Education Bill. He said there were three areas that affected the University. First was good governance in relation to the new Code of Governance, second was socio-economic groupings, and third that the Scottish Founding Council must first talk to the institutions affected before it could review provision (eg propose mergers).

44.6   The Principal's next point related to the 2015/2016 budget saying that he expected to receive an announcement in the next two weeks; after that information on the budget for Scottish Universities. The Principal stated that Universities UK had put together a very strong case for increased funding within higher education and it rested on two main points. The first of these was the role of higher education in economic growth and the second was the role of higher education in transforming lives and enabling social mobility. He added that alongside the request for increased funding was an expectation of efficiencies. The Principal said that Universities Scotland had made a similar case to Holyrood in relation to funding for Scottish Universities. The Principal ended on a cautionary note by saying that even though Universities UK had put together a very strong case, the result might not be increased funds as in 2010 a successful proposal had been executed as flat funding for three years. The Principal added that the University needed to seek other avenues of funding, for example European Research Funding.

44.7   The Principal said that the University was looking forward to the admissions period in August and that we were expecting higher numbers of Scottish students and that applications from postgraduate students was up a little on last year. He added that the University needed to continue to work very hard to be attractive to RUK students.

44.8   The Principal finished his statement by congratulating people throughout the University who had been successful in their applications for funding from the Research Councils UK, and bodies such as Leverhulme. He advised Senate that the Arts & Humanities Research Council Chief Executive would be visiting the University in October. Whilst in Aberdeen, the Chief Executive would be hosting a debate on 17 October, 'Science in Higher Education'. The debate is one in the series '*Enlightening the Constitutional Debate*', organised by the Royal Society of Edinburgh and the British Academy, it being the only debate in the series that is being held outside Edinburgh. He urged colleagues to put the date in their diary and attend if they could. The Principal then opened up the floor to questions. There were no questions.

ENHANCEMENT-LED INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW

45.1   The Vice-Principal (Learning and Teaching) updated the Senate on the Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) (copy filed with Principal copy of the minutes). The Vice-Principal said that the paper was a draft of all the major sections of the ELIR with the exceptions of its conclusion and the case study. The Vice-Principal said he was keen to get comments from Senate. He asked people to use the email link in the document to send in comments and he added that the document would be made more widely available so that as many people as possible across the institution would have an opportunity to contribute. The Vice-Principal added that the submission had to be in by 9 August. He asked whether there were any comments. There were none.

45.2   The Principal then asked the President of the Aberdeen University's Student Association and the Vice-Principal with responsibility for Equality and Diversity whether they were happy with the document. The President of the AUSA said that she and the President of Education AUSA had been involved with the ELIR Committee and had been part of the process from the start and that they were happy with the document. The Vice-Principal with responsibility for Equality and Diversity confirmed that the documents had been shared with her from an early stage onwards and with the Committee for Equality and Diversity and they were happy with the documents. There were no further comments.

UPDATE ON PERSONAL TUTORS

46.1   The Vice-Principal (Learning and Teaching) gave an update to Senate on the paper on Personal Tutors (copy filed with Principal copy of the minutes). He said that the Working Group was now meeting more frequently and they had been meeting with Senior Personal Tutors to decide what information should be made available to Personal Tutors in order to support them in their role. He said that it was hoped that the web-site for Personal Tutors would be made live by Friday 14 June. He said that people were now going out to Schools to discuss aspects of support that Personal Tutors should be aware off when speaking with the students in their role of Personal Tutors, for example in relation to graduate attributes, Achieve, Careers and AUSA can give. The Vice-Principal then asked for any comments or questions.

46.2   A discussion then followed, the main points of which are summarised below.
- A member asked who would be taking on the role of allocating students to the Personal Tutors. The Vice-Principal responded by saying that it would be overseen by the Senior Tutors whose principal role would be to ensure that there was consistency of process across Schools and Colleges. He added that there would be Personal Tutor support staff in place to assist with this task.
- Another member asked whether the guidelines on the number of students per Personal Tutor had changed at all. The Vice-Principal responded to say that the base line numbers remained the same; however, there would be some changes in the College of Arts and Social Sciences due to the impact of their research leave scheme.
- Another member asked how it was intended to provide Personal Tutors for exchange students. The Vice-Principal responded to say that it had not been decided yet but that the group was aware of the need to make a decision about this.

46.3   The Principal then thanked the Vice-Principal (Learning & Teaching) adding how well the paper had gone through Senate and how well Senate had responded to it. He considered that the few comments that were now being made indicated the transition that the University had made towards introducing this important measure.

UPDATE ON RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK

47.1   The Vice-Principal (Research and Knowledge Exchange) updated Senate on the progress of the Research Excellence Framework exercise saying that there had been a series of reviews in April and that at the end of this month the group was about to look at the final draft of the submission. The Vice-Principal said that by agreeing the draft submission by the end of the month, it would allow the Univesity time to manage any minor issues. The Vice-Principal said that the submission system had now been tested. He added that 73% of the eligible staff had been selected and that the period after reviewing the draft submission could be used by staff who had not been selected to appeal. He then asked whether there were any comments or questions. There were none.

REPORT FROM THE UCTL

The Senate approved and noted the actions taken by the University Court at its meetings on 15 May 2013.

1. Model Complaints Handling Procedure

48.1   On the recommendation of the University Committee on Teaching and Learning, the Senate approved and agreed to forward to the University Court, the policies included as part of the paper (copy filed with Principal copy of the minutes).

2. Policy on Student Absence

48.2   On the recommendation of the University Committee on Teaching and Learning, the Senate approved the *Policy on Student Absence* (copy filed with Principal copy of the minutes).

3. Curriculum Reform and Postgraduate Taught provision

48.3   On the recommendation of the University Committee on Teaching and Learning, the Senate approved the proposals that:
(i)   revalidation of postgraduate taught (PGT) provision take place through the 2013/14 Planning Cycle;
(ii)   mapping of PGT provision to the PGT Graduate Attributes is at programme level;
(iii)   consideration is given to opportunities for work placements/study abroad within the curriculum;
(iv)   PGT courses should adopt the 15 credit structure.

4. Postgraduate Research Graduate Attributes

48.4   On the recommendation of the University Committee on Teaching and Learning, the Senate approved the Graduate Attributes for postgraduate research students (copy filed with Principal copy of the minutes).

5. Sustainability in the Curriculum

48.5   On the recommendation of the University Committee on Teaching and Learning, the Senate approved the Draft *Policy Statement on Sustainability in the Curriculum* (copy filed with Principal copy of the minutes).

6. Policy on Alcohol and Drugs Misuse (Students)

48.6   On the recommendation of the University Committee on Teaching and Learning, the Senate approved the draft Policy on Drugs and Alcohol Misuse (Students) (copy filed with Principal copy of the minutes).

7. Changes to General and Supplementary Regulations

48.7   On the recommendation of the University Committee on Teaching and Learning, the Senate approved and agreed to forward to the University Court, the draft Resolutions 'Changes in Regulations for Various Degrees' and 'Changes to the Supplementary Regulations for the Degrees in Education' (copy filed with Principal copy of the minutes).

The Senate was further invited to ask the University Court that, in accordance with the provisions of Section 6 (2) of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966, the draft Resolution be passed forthwith, so that the amended provisions may be applied with effect from date on which they are passed by the University Court.

8. Learning & Teaching Operational Plan and Risk Register

48.8   The Senate noted, for its part, that the University Committee on Teaching and Learning would consider and make updates as appropriate to the Learning and Teaching Operational Plan and the associated Risk Register.

9. Retention Forum

48.9   The Senate noted, for its part, that the University Committee on Teaching and Learning had approved a proposal to establish a Retention Forum. The Forum will focus on the dissemination and sharing of good practice in regard to retention.

10. Evaluating Teaching Excellence

48.10 The Senate noted, for its part, that the University Committee on Teaching and Learning had approved the pilot of a methodology for evaluating teaching quality. This was developed by the Working Group on Teaching Quality. It was agreed that the Teaching Fellows Network should be asked to consider piloting the system during the first half-session 2013/14 with a view to a report on its outcome being brought to the meeting of UCTL in January 2014.

11. Partnership Agreement

48.11 The Senate noted, for its part, that the University Committee on Teaching and Learning had considered the current version of the Partnership Agreement and had agreed its use in 2013/14. As noted at the meeting in October 2012, the Agreement is reviewed annually to ensure its continued fitness for purpose.

12. Class Representative Reform and Improvements for Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Students

48.12 The Senate noted, for its part, that the University Committee on Teaching and Learning noted the progress of the development of the Class Representative Reform and the Universal Academic Representation Scheme. It was further noted that the Students' Association would be undertaking pilots of the new scheme in two schools, Biological Sciences and Language & Literature, during 2013/14.

13. Review of CAS and Grade Spectrum

48.13 The Senate noted, for its part, that the University Committee on Teaching and Learning noted that, in order to test further the proposed revisions to the Common Assessment Scale and the Grade Spectrum, it was planned to do further modelling work using data from the June 2013 Exam Boards. Having undertaken this work and having also reviewed the comments made by Senate in November 2012, it is intended to bring recommendations for revisions to CAS and the Grade Spectrum to UCTL in early in 2013/14.

It was further noted that implementation of any revisions to the CAS and Grade Spectrum once approved, are likely not to be implemented in the current student record and rather will be introduced as part of the OneSource Student Lifecycle Project. It is important, however, that agreement is reached on the assessment schemes in advance of this aspect of the OneSource project being scoped.

14. Term Dates for Academic Year 2014/15

48.14 The Senate noted, for its part, that the University Committee on Teaching and Learning noted the term dates for academic year 2014/15 which were approved by circulation. Term dates are available at http://www.abdn.ac.uk/students/13891.php

RATIONALISATION OF TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

49.1 The Senate approved revisions to the remit and composition of the UCTL sub-committees and the Students' Progress Committee and redistribution of the roles and responsibilities of College Postgraduate Officers and Directors of Undergraduate Programmes (copy filed with Principal copy of the minutes).

49.2 In the light of these changes, the Senate further approved, and agreed to forward onto the University Court, the draft Ordinance which sets out amendments to the composition of the Senate which are required in the light of these changes. These

changes propose replacement of the seven Directors of Undergraduate Programmes as *ex officio* members of Senate with the seven members of the Quality Assurance Committee as *ex officio* members (copy filed with Principal copy of the minutes).

UPDATE ON ONESOURCE STUDENT LIFECYCLE PROJECT

50.1   The Senate noted the update on progress in regard to the OneSource Student Lifecycle Project (copy filed with Principal copy of the minutes). The Principal emphasised within the items for information the importance of the OneSource Student Lifecycle Project saying that it was very important that staff became engaged with this very strategic development.

SENATE ELECTIONS

51.1   The Senate noted, for its part, that the Senate Business Committee approved the timescale for election of non *ex officio* members to the Senate and of Senate Assessors to Court (copy filed with Principal copy of the minutes).

SENATE APPOINTMENTS

52.1   The Senate noted, for its part, that the Senate Business Committee approved the re-appointment of Mrs Y Dewhurst as one of the University's Governors of the Dick Bequest Trust from October 2013 for a further period of five years to October 2018.