

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

SENATUS ACADEMICUS

Minutes of the meeting held on 16 May 2018

Present: Professor I Diamond, Professor P McGeorge, Professor R Wells, Professor N Haites, Professor M Ross, Professor BD MacGregor, Professor P Hannaford, Dr G Gordon, Dr P Sweeney, Professor E Welch, Dr M Bain, Mr M Whittington, Professor G Paton, Professor S Heys, Professor J Skakle, Professor I Guz, Professor H Hutchison, Professor A Jenkinson, Professor C Kee, Professor E Pavlovskaja, Professor J Masthoff, Professor M Brown, Professor K Shennan, Mr D Auchie, Dr M Ehrenscheidtner, Dr P Bishop, Mr E Usenmez, Mrs L Tibbetts, Dr J Lamb, Dr L McCann, Dr A Sim, Professor P Nimmo, Dr G Hough, Dr H Pierce, Dr P Ziegler, Dr R Shanks, Dr H Martin, Mrs M Stephen, Dr Z Yihdego, Mr S Styles, Dr M Mills, Dr A McKinnon, Dr T Argounova-Low, Professor M Pinard, Dr J Baird, Dr M Barker, Dr A Rajnicek, Dr K Kiezebrink, Dr J Macdiarmid, Dr M Delibegović, Dr M Brazzelli, Dr D Scott, Dr N Vargesson, Dr D MacCallum, Dr J Hislop, Dr G Jones, Dr P Murchie, Dr N Mody, Dr S Fielding, Dr I Cameron, Professor A Lee, Professor G Nixon, Dr E Nordmann, Dr D Ray, Professor D Jovicic, Professor A Akisanya, Professor M Kashtalyan, Dr O Menshykov, Dr B Rea, Dr N Schofield, Dr J Oliver, Dr A Ebinghaus, Dr C North, Professor J Feldmann, Professor G Coghill, Professor C Grebogi, Dr M da Silva Baptista, Dr B Martin, Dr W Vasconcelos, Dr N Oren, Mr L Ogubie, Miss D Connelly, Mr O Kucerak, Miss M Jensen, Mr N Johansson, Miss I Donaldson, Mr J Short and Mr Y Dmitrov,

Apologies: Professor M Greaves, Professor M Campbell, Dr D R Smith, Professor A Sahraie, Professor D Jolley, Professor G Macfarlane, Dr R Neilson, Dr M Hole, Professor W Naphy, Dr T Fahey Palma, Mrs D Bruxvoort, Professor N Hutchison, Professor J Schaper, Dr A Bryzgel, Dr T Rist, Dr A Lewis, Dr B Tribut, Professor P Mealar, Dr P Glover, Dr A Simpson, Professor D Anderson, Dr D Lusseau, Professor J Jayasinghe, Dr A Jack, Professor R Barker, Dr K Foster, Dr F Thies, Professor H Wallace, Dr M Jackson, Dr K Pilz, Miss M Leskovska, Mr K Thomson-Duncan, Miss K Metcalfe, Mr J Brown, Miss K Paterson-Hunter, Miss I Ewart, Mr L Budrass, Miss A McSeveney, Mr L Fuller and Miss K Smith

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- 84.1 Professor Hannaford, the Acting Senior Vice-Principal, opened the meeting, welcoming members of the Senate. He informed the Senate that he would be convening the meeting on behalf of the Principal, who would attend the meeting on his arrival at the University later in the afternoon. The Acting Senior Vice-Principal reminded members that the meeting would be recorded and asked that they introduce themselves before contributing to discussion to allow for the production of an accurate minute.
- 84.2 The Acting Senior Vice-Principal invited members to approve the agenda. Mr Styles proposed the agenda be amended to include a motion of thanks to Professor Greaves, former Senior Vice-Principal for his work over the course of the last year. No objections were raised to this and it was passed for inclusion.
- 84.3 No further objections or comments were raised in regards to the agenda and the meeting proceeded.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- 85.1 The Acting Senior Vice-Principal invited members to confirm that they were content with the minute of the meeting of the Senate held on 23 April 2018. Members of the

Senate were informed that the minute had been amended since its initial circulation, following amendments proposed by Dr Rist.

- 85.2 Professor Wells, Vice-Principal (International) sought clarification of the changes made. The Clerk to the Senate informed members of the changes (the full draft minute, including the proposed revisions, is available [here](#)). No objections or comments were raised in response to the agreed amendments and the meeting proceeded.

HEALTH SAFETY AND WELLBEING

- 86.1 The opportunity for Senators to raise any issues regarding health, safety and wellbeing was provided. No issues were raised and the meeting proceeded.

MOTION OF THANKS TO PROFESSOR MIKE GREAVES

- 87.1 The Acting Senior Vice-Principal invited members of the Senate to vote on Mr Styles' motion, seconded by Dr Shanks, of thanks to Professor Mike Greaves for his service to the University over the last nine months.

In favour of the motion:	82
Not in favour of the motion:	0
Abstaining from the vote:	2

A vote having been taken, the Acting Senior Vice-Principal confirmed that the motion had been passed.

DEGREE CLASSIFICATION

- 88.1 Members of the Senate received the updated paper on the Honours Classification Method and the Comparison of GS vs GPA following its consideration at the meeting of the Senate held on 23 April 2018 (*minute point 74 further refers*). Members of the Senate were reminded of the importance of determining one method of degree classification to be used from September 2018 onwards. Professor Shennan informed the Senate that the paper was similar to the earlier version, now with the inclusion of:
- Additional data received from Schools to allow for, particularly in the Schools where there appeared to be a difference between the Grade Spectrum (GS) and the Grade Point Average (GPA), the comparison of the GPA for students classified on the GS (*table 1 of the paper further refers*).
 - The inclusion of evidence to support the assertion that Schools are not making use of the full Common Grading Scale (CGS) following feedback at the last meeting of the Senate (*figure 8 of the paper further refers*). Professor Shennan noted this provided an analysis of A grades awarded within a School and was supplementary to feedback from External Examiners (EE) that the A grades of the CGS are not being used appropriately.
 - Professor Shennan noted the data had been separated into Schools and was provided in histograms for ease of reading.
- 88.2 Professor Shennan acknowledged that following the last meeting of the Senate, feedback has been received that there exists discrepancies in how Schools determine and handle borderline cases. She noted that the Code of Practice may be unclear in this regard and proposed that, following the outcome of the Senate discussion, the Code of Practice be updated and amended accordingly to provide clarification. Professor Shennan confirmed that students who fall between the marks determined

as the borderline do not also require to have mitigating circumstances in addition to be considered at Examiners Meetings.

88.3 Professor Shennan confirmed that the Senate were being invited to (section 4 of the paper refers):

- (i) Confirm the decision made by Senate in 2014 to adopt a GPA method of classification of Honours/Postgraduate Taught (PGT) degrees.
- (ii) Confirm equal weighting of level 3 and level 4 for Undergraduate degrees, however, where there is good reason, Schools can seek to be exempted from this requirement by way of application to the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC).
- (iii) Confirm weighting of courses being determined only by their credit value.

Professor Shennan informed the Senate that point (ii) had been amended since the circulation of the paper, following feedback from a joint meeting of the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Committees and the recognition that equally weighting is not always appropriate, particularly in instances where a Degree is accredited.

88.4 Professor Shennan concluded her introduction by reminding the Senate that the three issues for discussion were separate and to be considered independently of each other.

88.5 The Acting Senior Vice-Principal invited Dr MacCallum to propose her motion to the Senate. Dr MacCallum, on behalf of the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, delivered her motion as follows:

Senate should be asked to vote on the motion that the weighting of year 3 and 4 courses should be separated from the current discussion on the use of Grade Spectrum or CGS/GPA for Honours classification and should be considered more fully at a future meeting.

Dr MacCallum confirmed that the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition and others felt significantly more discussion and the collection of more evidence was required before a vote could be taken by the Senate on the issue.

88.6 Responding, Professor McGeorge, Vice-Principal (Teaching and Learning), acknowledged the amendment to point (ii) of the proposal and the fact that Schools may seek to have Degree programmes exempted from the requirement for equal weighting where grounds and evidence exist to support this.

88.7 Professor Masthoff reiterated the point made by Professor McGeorge and stated that she felt Professor Shennan had already listened to the concerns of Schools in amending point (ii).

88.8 Dr North stated his disagreement that the points raised for discussion were independent of each other and noted that he felt they interacted with each other. He expressed his support for the motion, to remove the discussion of the weighting of honours years from the discussion. Dr North further noted the proposed amended wording of point (ii) had been sprung on members of the Senate without appropriate time to consider the proposal or without the specific criteria that would be accepted by the QAC being provided. He stated the Senate was therefore unable to consider this point.

88.9 Mr Styles proposed a rewording of point (ii) to reflect the fact that some Schools already have agreed differential weightings between levels 3 and 4. He proposed that these

be retained and that the wording be amended to recognise and respect where differential weightings already exist.

- 88.10 Dr Pinard noted the importance of the issue and the impact the differences in approach amongst Schools has on students. Dr Pinard stated that the Senate had had much discussion on the issue previously and that a strong case for a move to equal weighting existed. She stated the importance of students undertaking joint degree programmes and noted concern at the fact that they may be classified in different ways for different parts of their degree. Dr Pinard noted that the situation also affects students taking the same courses but for whom the course may or may not count for their classification, depending on the degree programme for which they are registered.
- 88.11 Dr Shanks stated the importance of recognising the pedagogic reasoning for why some Schools elected to classify in different ways. She expressed that it was not necessarily appropriate to seek a 'one size fits all' solution and that students should be made aware that discipline and/or programmes are different and may be examined differently.
- 88.12 Dr Lamb proposed that the issue be brought back to the September meeting of the Senate to allow for the Senate to be better informed. He stated that this would not affect students.
- 88.13 The Acting Senior Vice-Principal invited members of the Senate to vote on Dr MacCallum's motion made on behalf of the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, to delay any discussion on the equal weighting of Honours years.

In favour of the motion:	41
Not in favour of the motion:	39
Abstaining from the vote:	4

A vote having been taken, the Acting Senior Vice-Principal confirmed that the motion had been passed and point (ii) of the paper would no longer be considered.

- 88.14 The Acting Senior Vice-Principal invited members of the Senate to discuss point (i) regarding the adoption of a GPA method of classification. A discussion ensued, the main tenets of which were as follows:
- Dr North raised a number of issues with regards to the proposal. He stated that while the paper expressed the need for a decision to be made in order for students to be informed as to how their degrees would be classified, this was not justification for rushing into a decision. He expressed concern that the removal of the consideration of the equal weighting of honours years from the discussion undermined the argument in the paper. He noted that he would be interested in the views of the student representatives as, as a consequence of the exam period for staff and students it had proven difficult to receive feedback. Dr North informed the Senate that the School of Geosciences disagreed with the interpretation of the School's data. He stated that the School felt the GS was not less transparent than the GPA and that the case in the document for GPA against GS is weakly made. He stated that the School believes the case made around the lack of proper use of the CGS A grade to be a red herring, noting that an increase in its use made little difference to final outcomes. Dr North emphasised the concern of the School of the impact of a move to GPA and stated, for the record, that use of the GS was more satisfactory. With regards to the paper he expressed concern for the push for the use of the GPA and disagreed with the analysis of the sector background

provided (*section 3.1 of the paper further refers*) stating the selective use of data from a document cited. He stated that the document cited did not state that the sector is moving towards the use of GPA, but in fact the opposite, that the sector believes the GPA is not delivering as promised. He stated that the document noted exit velocity must be protected and in so doing, he highlighted that the equal weighting of honours years is interlinked with this issue. Dr North encouraged members of the Senate to read the document and particularly, pages 45 and 46 specifically. He stated his confusion at the University's push to adopt the GPA, quoting that it was 'unlikely to deliver some of the envisaged benefits'. Regarding the attempt to achieve transparency, Dr North stated that it would not be achieved as a consequence of the fact the GPA would result in more borderline cases. He emphasised the confusion around the borderlines. Dr North stated the need for Senate to receive one document containing all the proposed changes in order to make an informed decision, before rushing into something. He reiterated his concern that the document cited to support the rushed GPA does not make the point claimed and that the lack of information in the paper regarding the handling of borderlines is crucial and requires assessment by Senate.

- Responding, Professor Shennan informed the Senate that the process to adopt a GPA had begun in 2009 and that years of deliberation was not rushing into it. Regarding the analysis undertaken, Professor Shennan noted her agreement that the GPA would result in more borderline cases, however, following feedback from the last meeting of the Senate, stated her understanding that the consideration of cases at Examiners Meetings and the use of discretion would be considered preferable. She stated that the work to amend the Code of Practice was underway and that it had not been provided in order to avoid confusion. Professor Shennan stated her understanding of the document cited within the paper and contested by Dr North, that the paper was not arguing against the use of GPA as a method but in terms of its use in replacing the award of classifications deemed first class, upper first class etc.
- Mrs Tibbetts reiterated comments made around transparency and the lack of clarity as to why GPA is deemed to be more transparent than GS. She stated the issue of borderlines to be critical and the importance of being able to provide transparency to students as to why one student may receive a higher degree classification than another with the same marks. Mrs Tibbetts stated concern as to the number of students who may receive a detrimental result as a consequence of the use of the GPA.
- Responding, Professor Shennan, stated that different Schools would be impacted in different ways. She stated it was a mistake to look only at the headline figure and to understand that it was highly likely students would be in a borderline position and upgraded as a consequence.
- Professor Hutchison, informed the Senate that she had chaired a joint meeting of the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Committees to discuss the paper. She stated that at least one representative from each School had attended along with the Deans of Teaching and Learning and student representatives. Professor Hutchison stated that the Committee meeting had debated the issue thoroughly and arrived at a consensus. She stated that clear guidance on borderlines was critical to getting the issue right and accepted that there was an acceptance that there was some overlap with the issue of weightings but that it made sense to make the decision now. Professor Hutchison informed the Senate that the meeting had been overwhelmingly in favour of moving to the GPA. She explained that the criteria of consistency and discretion were foremost in people's minds. She noted the Committee had been reassured by that the discretion of Examiner's Meetings would remain.

Professor Hutchison expressed to the Senate that it was not the use of one system or the other that would improve transparency but the move away from the use of two and the confusion that this causes for students. She further stated the fact that students sought the transparent release of marks to students and to ensure these, and how a degree is calculated, is transparent. Professor Hutchison confirmed a vote had been undertaken at the Committee as follows:

In favour of the move to the GPA:	19
Against the move to the GPA:	1
Abstaining from the Vote:	1

Regarding point (iii) of the paper, Professor Hutchison informed the Senate that the Committee had voted unanimously in favour of the proposal to ensure all courses are equally weighted, by credit.

- Ms Connolly, Education Officer for the Students' Association, informed the Senate that a short survey had been sent to students to gauge their thoughts on the proposed change. Ms Connolly confirmed 1002 responses were received to the survey and the responses had been as follows:

Question:	Yes	No
Do you understand how your final degree classification is calculated?	40.3%	59.7%
The University currently uses two systems to decide degree class, GS and GPA, do you understand the difference between these two approaches?	24.9%	75.1%
Whichever system is used, do you understand how you are progressing?	44.3%	55.7%
Do you think that courses taken in your 3 rd year should count equally with the courses taken in your fourth year?	67.7%	32.3%

Ms Connolly informed the Senate that some students had emailed her directly to comment on the survey. She read an extract of one as follows:

'I am aware of the differences between GA and SPA grading systems, it is very nice that you ask us of that before you enter into a discussion with the University Senate about switching to a single system but I can also tell them my preference regarding the system being used. Could you please pass on my complaint about this to Senate. Could we please be included in the decision making process rather than being asked to complete a token survey. It is a decision which will affect the mental wellbeing and academic performance of all students and they should be included in the process.'

Ms Connolly stated that the survey had been designed to gather information on the understanding of the current system. She stated that the question 'GPA or GS?' was not asked and that the results suggest that ¾ of respondents do not understand the difference.

- Mr Kucerak, on behalf of the Students' Association informed the Senate that he had also undertaken a survey, to which 35 students responded. The outcome of which had suggested the respondents were unaware that two systems of degree classification were currently being used, that respondents were able to describe the GPA but not the GS and that they were unaware that students who fail a course are not eligible to receive a first class degree. Mr Kucerak stated there was confusion amongst students between CGS and GS.

He acknowledged the University website resources for calculating the classification on the basis of GPA.

- Mr Johansson echoed Professor Hutchison in stating the importance of transparency and that confusion arises from the use of two systems. He stated that the GPA was much easier for students to understand. With regard an increase number of students being considered as borderline, he stated that students would not have an issue with this.
- Professor Jovcic, on behalf on the School of Engineering, stated the preference for GPA. He conveyed to the Senate that with regards to borderline cases, he had received feedback that cases considered borderline should not be upgraded. He noted the importance of applying exit velocity consistently and to all students.
- Dr Nordmann stated that the School of Psychology were very supportive of the move to GPA.
- Dr Rea stated the importance of the student body being asked whether or not they care which system gives them the better result. He expressed that students from the School of Geosciences will be disadvantaged by the GPA.
- Professor Hutchison added that at the joint meeting of the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Committees they had been reassured by the fact that students would be not be disadvantaged, if an appropriate system and associated guidance for the consideration of borderline cases was in place.
- Dr Martin stated that the School of Education sought the move to one system but did not have an overall preference as to which system that was. Dr Martin noted concern arising from the discussion that Schools favoured different systems and proposed that there was no need for consistency across the Institution as a whole, but only within Schools. She acknowledged the problem of joint degrees but encouraged conversations between Schools to resolve this.
- Ms Jensen, Social Science Convener, noted that the School of Social Science would benefit from the use of the GS. She stated that from discussions with classmates there was a lot of confusion about the use of two systems or how they work. Ms Jensen stated the importance of students being able to understand the classification they are on track to obtain. She stated that the differences between Schools highlight the need to consider the use of different systems in different Schools.
- Responding to the point raised by Dr Martin, Professor Shennan informed the Senate that the Universities UK report referenced in the paper had highlighted the importance of consistency across an Institution. She further stated it would be a quality assurance disaster to manage two systems in this way.
- Dr Martin stated that she had also read the report, noting it as well written, well referenced and neutral in its stance. She conveyed her understanding that the report highlighted the importance of consistency within disciplines and not necessarily across an Institution. She further noted its emphasis of the differences in disciplines for good pedagogic reasons and for and for an Institutional decision to be made on a pedagogic and not systems based basis.
- Dr Bishop, on behalf of the QAC, stated the importance of considering joint degrees. He noted them as a selling point to the Scottish system and therefore the importance of ensuring they are not overcomplicated. He informed the Senate that the QAC were concerned by the consistent negative feedback from with External Examiners' reports regarding the use of two systems. He reiterated the need for the Senate to make a decision on the system to be used. Dr Bishop also noted the importance of borderlines and stated that the principles as outlined in the paper were strong in this regard and provided an appropriate starting point.

- Dr Mills expressed the importance of considering joint degrees and, as such, the confusion which would be caused by the use of two systems in calculating one degree.
- Professor Masthoff informed the Senate that the discussions regarding a move to a GPA system dated back as far as 2006 and proposals as part of the Curriculum Reform project to move to the system for pedagogic reasons. She stated that the process had not been rushed. Professor Masthoff acknowledged the confusion created amongst students by the GS and further stated that students who failed one course under this system would no longer be entitled to a first class classification. With fairness in mind, Professor Masthoff stated the GPA system is favourable. She noted the amount of consideration the issue had been given amongst the University's Committee structure.
- Dr North stated to the Senate his concern that a move to the GPA system could cause confusion and that the definition of GPA at the University did not equate to its definition elsewhere. He stated the importance of clear transcripts for students detailing its definition to avoid misunderstanding and to ensure clarity at key points of use.

88.15 The Acting Senior Vice-Principal invited members of the Senate to vote on item (i) of the Degree Classification paper as follows:

Senate is invited to confirm the decision made by Senate in 2014 to adopt a GPA method of classification of Honours/PGT degrees.

In favour of adopting a GPA method of classification of Honours/PGT degrees:	71
Not in favour of adopting a GPA method of classification of Honours/PGT degrees:	13
Abstaining from the vote:	0

A vote having been taken, the Acting Senior Vice-Principal confirmed that item (i) had been passed.

88.16 The Acting Senior Vice-Principal invited members of the Senate to discuss point (iii) regarding the equal weighting of courses, by credit points. A brief discussion ensued, the main tenets of which were as follows:

- Mr Whittington sought clarification as to whether the issue covered the regulation governing PGT students whereby they cannot receive a degree classification at a higher level than the mark received in their dissertation. Professor Shennan confirmed this was not covered by this discussion. Professor Kee further clarified that this was a matter for the PGT Committee but that the regulation was to be used 'normally' and not necessarily in every instance, where discretion could be applied.
- Dr Shanks asked whether students undertaking placements would now need to have these placements graded in order to meet the requirements of the proposal. Professor Shennan confirmed that this was not the case.
- Professor McGeorge further emphasised that professional practice and/or accreditation courses would not be affected.
- Professor Feldmann sought clarification as to whether this would impact of the use of general papers for the award of notional credit. Professor Shennan confirmed the exemption of zero credit courses from the proposal, stating the

importance, however, of students being aware of how such courses are weighted.

- Mr Styles proposed the rewording of the point from ‘courses’ to ‘honours outcomes’ to make it clear only honours courses counted towards classification and not professional practice and/or accreditation courses.
- Professor Shennan stated this would not be appropriate. Mr Styles stated concern as to the definition of this point.
- Professor Masthoff clarified to the Senate that the issue concerned only course grades with credits attached to them.
- Dr Mills informed the Senate of the widespread system across the University and clarified that students undertaking Erasmus would undertake courses in their third year which would not count towards classification.

88.15 The Acting Senior Vice-Principal invited members of the Senate to vote on item (iii) of the Degree Classification paper as follows:

Senate is invited to confirm weighting of courses being determined only by their credit value.

In favour of confirming the weighting of courses only by their credit value:	71
Not in favour of confirming the weighting of courses only by their credit value:	11
Abstaining from the vote:	1

A vote having been taken, the Acting Senior Vice-Principal confirmed that item (iii) had been passed.

88.16 Professor Shennan confirmed that issue (ii), regarding the weighting of honours years would return to a future meeting of the Senate, following its consideration through the usual Committee cycle.

RECTORIAL ELECTION RULES

89.1 Professor Kee introduced the paper on proposed revisions to the rectorial election rules. He noted that the paper was clear in detailing the proposed changes, made following the running of the rules at the last rectorial election. Professor Kee highlighted the change to 2.3 and the change to candidate eligibility criteria preventing registered University of Aberdeen students from standing for rector. He stated this was consistent with the Sector.

89.2 Mr Styles proposed a small but important amendment to section 2.2 and the addition of ‘Convener’ to this section. Professor Hannaford confirmed that the Rector was entitled to this role but may choose not to do so. The change was accepted with the revision of ‘Convener’ to ‘right to preside’ in line with the wording of statute.

89.3 Mr Ogubie, Student President, sought clarification that the rules now prevented non-humans from standing for the role. Professor Hannaford confirmed that this was covered by the requirement that the Rector become a trustee of the University and therefore must be a human being.

89.4 Subject to the slight amendment to section 2.1 as proposed by Mr Styles, the Acting Senior Vice-Principal invited members of the Senate to vote on the revised rules.

In favour of the revised rectorial election rules:	77
Not In favour of the revised rectorial election rules:	1

A vote having been taken, the Acting Senior Vice-Principal confirmed that item had been approved.

ENHANCEMENT-LED INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW: REFLECTIVE ANALYSIS

- 90.1 Professor McGeorge, Vice-Principal (Teaching and Learning) introduced the Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR) Reflective Analysis. Professor McGeorge noted that the ELIR visit did not fit well with the Committee schedule and therefore a partially complete document was being brought to Senate at this time. Professor McGeorge asked for the consent of Senate to the signing off of the final document by the Senior Vice-Principal and Senate Business Committee. He noted that the paper makes clear the University is now aware of the makeup of the ELIR panel and when the visit will take place.
- 90.2 Professor McGeorge acknowledged that the reflective analysis is a huge piece of work and stated that the document would benefit from additional examples of the good practice being undertaken across the Institution. He acknowledged that there is much in the way of good practice across the University but that as a whole, the Institution is not good at praising itself. He noted the opportunity provided by ELIR and the production of the reflective analysis in doing so. Members of the Senate were asked to discuss this with their respective constituents and gather information to be returned to Professor McGeorge.

UPDATE FROM MR BRIAN HENDERSON, DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL & INFORMATION SERVICES REGARDING THE CHANGES BEING MADE TO THE UNIVERSITY WEB PUBLISHING SERVICES

- 91.1 The Senate received a presentation from Mr Brian Henderson, Director of Digital and Information Services regarding the changes being made to the University Web Publishing Services. A copy of the presentation is held with the principal copy of the minute.

REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

The Senate approved the recommendations arising from the meeting of the University Committee on Teaching and Learning on 1 May 2018.

1. Code of Practice on Student Discipline

- 92.1 The Senate approved, on the recommendation of the University Committee on Teaching and Learning, and forward to the University Court, the draft Resolution 'Changes to the Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic)' (copy filed with principal copy of minute).

The Senate would 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.

Mrs Tibbetts noted the importance of identifying instances where a student may pay another party to undertake work on their behalf. The Senate recognised that this was covered by the Code and the importance of the issue. The Senate noted the Sector

wide awareness of the issue and work in this regard. Professor McGeorge highlighted the importance of communication with the student body to ensure they are aware of cheating in all its forms and the consequences of it.

2. Omnibus Resolution

- 92.2 The Senate approved, on the recommendation of the University Committee on Teaching and Learning, and forward to the University Court, the draft Resolution 'Changes in Regulations for Various Degrees' (copy filed with principal copy of minute).

The Senate would 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.

JOHN REID TRUST

- 93.1 The Senate noted that the Senate Business Committee had approved that Professor Pete Stollery replace Professor John Morrison as an elected member of the John Reid Trust Scheme. The Trust exists to assist distinguished Aberdeen University graduates, preferably with Honours, and preferably in Arts, which failing, in Science, to continue their studies in Arts or in any other branches of higher learning at any institution outside Scotland.

UPDATE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

- 94.1 The Principal provided a brief update to the meeting. The Principal began by thanking the Acting Senior Vice-Principal for convening the meeting in his absence. He also expressed his thanks and the thanks of Senate as a whole to Professor Greaves for all his work as Senior Vice-Principal.
- 94.2 The Principal informed the Senate that he was late for the Senate as he was giving evidence to the Education Skills Select Committee on behalf of the University on Widening Access. He informed the Senate that the evidence went well but that he did not feel the Committee had a good sense of the sort of things the University is doing (i.e. Access Aberdeen, 111 Different pathways) and expressed the importance of the University telling the world about the work being undertaken in Widening Access as well as in ensuring our record in the area is impeccable. The Principal further informed the Senate that the Chair and Committee as a whole were keen that the work they had done on gender based violence with the toolkit produced by the University of Strathclyde was conveyed to all members of staff and students in all Institutions. The Principal stated it was incredibly important that all tutors are completely aware of the issues and that the University works tirelessly, not only through direct action with students, but with AUSA in as wide a way as possible, to ensure no student is unaware of the zero tolerance for gender based violence.
- 94.3 The Principal also updated members of the Senate on the dispute around pensions. He noted the position reached between UCU and UUK was that an independent panel would be set up. He informed the Senate that the composition of this panel was underway. He expressed his view that the panel be put together quickly and that it is given the opportunity to deliberate. He informed the Senate that, in the meantime, USS had invoked section 76.4 and explained that this meant that USS have said that if there isn't a deal, one will be imposed. The Principal further explained that from 1 April 2019 Universities and their staff will be required to pay all the money required in order to pay off the USS defined deficit.

- 94.4 Mr Styles expressed his concern at the position with regards pensions and the invoking of section 76.4. He sought clarity as to whom decided to take this action. The Principal confirmed that it was the decision of the trustee board and that no further information was available. He stated there was no published evidence as to whether there had been robust debate on the issue.
- 94.5 The Acting Senior Vice-Principal took the opportunity to note that the University of Aberdeen is the lead University for the National Centre for Excellence in Oil and Gas in Decommissioning and Late Life. He informed the Senate that this was a major achievement for the University. He also issued his personal congratulations to Professor John Speakman, made a fellow of the Royal Society earlier in the week.
- 95.1 The Acting Senior Vice-Principal thanked members of the Senate for their attendance and drew the meeting to a close.