

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

SENATUS ACADEMICUS

**Minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2019**

*Present:* Professor K Leydecker, Professor P McGeorge, Professor M Campbell, Professor A Speight, Dr G Gordon, Dr P Sweeney, Professor E Welch, Professor K Bender, Professor I Guz, Professor A Jenkinson, Professor E Pavlovskaia, Professor G Nixon, Professor M Brown, Professor K Shennan, Mr S Bains, Mrs L Tibbets, Dr J Lamb, Dr L McCann, Dr A Zangelidis, Dr A Sim, Professor P Nimmo, Dr G Hough, Dr R Shanks, Dr E Curtis, Dr H Martin, Dr T Rist, Dr F Jürgensen, Professor O'Connor, Dr A Simpson, Dr RB Taylor, Mr S Styles, Dr A McKinnon, Dr I Xypolia, Professor D Anderson, Dr M Barker, Dr D Lusseau, Professor M Pinard, Dr M Delibegović, Professor L Erskine, Professor I McEwan, Dr F Murray, Dr J Pettit, Dr J Rochford, Professor A Lee, Dr D Skåtun, Dr S Miller, Dr D Watts, Dr D Scott, Professor J Jayasinghe, Dr A Rajnicek, Dr K Kiezebrink, Dr J Macdiarmid, Professor N Vargesson, Dr D MacCallum, Dr J Hislop, Dr A Jack, Dr G Jones, Professor D Jovcic, Professor D Pokrajac, Dr Y Tanino, Dr B Rea, Dr J Oliver, Dr M Spagnolo, Dr C North, Professor G Coghill, Dr M da Silva Baptista, Dr P Henderson, Mr L Ogubie, Mrs D Connelly, Mr O Kucerak, Mr A Vodentzis, Mrs S Littlejohn, Miss I Drdakova, Miss J Paneva and Mr H Chalklin

*Apologies:* Professor G Boyne, Professor R Wells, Dr DR Smith, Dr M Bain, Professor G Paton, Professor A Sahraie, Professor P Fowler, Professor P Edwards, Professor D Jolley, Professor G Macfarlane, Mr D Auchie, Dr M Ehrenschtendner, Dr M Hole, Dr J Bohan, Professor W Naphy, Mr E Usenmez, Dr T Fahey Palma, Professor J Schaper, Dr A Cecolin, Dr B Marsden, Dr S Thomson, Dr A Bryzgel, Dr SJ Kim, Dr I Couzigou, Professor P Hallett, Dr G Norton, Dr S Woodin, Professor C de Bari, Dr M Brazzelli, Dr P Murchie, Professor H Wallace, Dr M Jackson, Professor A Akisanya, Professor M Wiercigroch, Dr N Schofield, Professor J Feldmann, Professor C Grebogi, Dr R Hepworth, Dr N Oren, Miss K Richie-Lawless, Miss L Bacon, Miss M Jensen, Mr K Graham, Miss R Chowdhury, Mr T Theurar, Mr J Lumsden and Mr Kirectepe,

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

- 54.1 The Senior Vice-Principal, Professor Leydecker, on behalf of the Principal, opened the final Senate meeting of the 2018/19 academic year. He welcomed members of the Senate to the meeting, the first to be held at the Foresterhill Campus. He reminded members that the meeting would be audio recorded and asked that they wait for the roving microphones to reach them before speaking. Members were also reminded to introduce themselves before contributing to discussion to allow for an accurate minute. Professor Leydecker noted that voting would be undertaken via the Ombea platform, for which specific instruction would be provided in advance of voting.
- 54.2 The Senior Vice-Principal invited members to approve the agenda. He informed the Senate that a request had been received from Dr Lusseau, for item 15.2 to be moved from items for routine approval to be taken for discussion. It was noted that this item would now be considered following item 10. Professor Leydecker further noted that agenda item 11, Motion 2 Regarding Estates, would now be taken immediately following item 6. Members of the Senate raised no objections to these changes. Professor Leydecker noted that there were no further items for routine approval or information that had been brought forward for discussion.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 20 MARCH 2019**

- 55.1 The Senior Vice-Principal, Professor Leydecker, invited members of the Senate to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2019. No objections or comments were raised in regard to the minute and the meeting proceeded.

#### **UPDATE FROM THE PRINCIPAL**

- 56.1 The Senior Vice-Principal, Professor Leydecker, in providing an update to the Senate, began by noting the Principal's apologies. Professor Leydecker informed members of the Senate of an update on the new strategic Teaching and Research posts. He noted that together with some existing vacancies, 60 posts were launched in total as part of a public campaign. Professor Leydecker stated that, to date, 884 applications had been received and that there had been strong interest across the vast majority of the posts. He informed the Senate that work would be undertaken across the Schools to ensure the appointments were made in the coming months. Professor Leydecker informed members of the Senate that the School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture and the Institute of Dentistry had both now achieved their Athena Swan Bronze awards, meaning that all elements of the University now held an Athena Swan Bronze award. He further noted that the School of Psychology had now submitted for a Silver award. Professor Leydecker informed the Senate of good news with regards to Widening Access, noting that in the University's submission to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) as part of the Outcome Agreement, significant commitments to improving Widening Access had been made and that firm acceptances from applicants within this bracket had virtually doubled from 62 last year, to 121. He informed members of the Senate that a targeted late applications campaign would be run for students from SIMD postcodes, in addition to International and Rest of UK (RUK) applicants. Members of the Senate noted that clearing would also be opened for Widening Access students. Regarding student recruitment more generally, Professor Leydecker informed the Senate of a good uplift in International recruitment and noted that it is currently estimated that the admissions position will allow for the budgetary commitments made to Court to be met. He noted that, as such, the budget was close to being finalised. He stated confidence in the University's financial position, despite the funding issues facing the sector as a whole. Professor Leydecker issued his thanks to members of the Senate and the Honorary Degrees Committee (HDC) for their swiftness in transacting the business of the withdrawal of an Honorary Degree. He acknowledged that all had been accepting of the need to move at pace regarding the issues and stated his appreciation for this. Professor Leydecker issued his thanks to all those involved in the achievements mentioned. In closing, he reminded members of the Senate of MayFest, being held from 24 to 26 May and Live on the Lawn, being held on 7 June. He noted that approximately 700 members of staff were currently registered to attend and encouraged all members of staff, including members of the Senate to do so.

#### **HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLBEING**

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

#### **REPORT FROM THE UNIVERISTY COURT**

- 58.1 The Senate received an update from Dr Shanks on behalf of the Senate Assessors on the meeting of the University Court held on 26 March 2019 (copy filed with the principal copy of the minute).
- 58.2 Dr Shanks informed the Senate of the key issues arising from the meeting as follows:

- Institutional Strategy Development
- Acquisition of a Bond
- Strategic Investment for Growth
- Capital Programme Update
- Embedded International Study Centre
- Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC)
- Gender Pay Gap Report
- Election of the Senior Governor
- Update on Brexit
- Updates on Transnational Education in Korea and Sri Lanka
- Update on REF
- A motion, not agreed by the Court, on Indefinite Leave to Remain for University Staff from Outside the EU/EAA

### **PRESENTATION OF KING'S CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT**

59.1 Mr Donaldson, Director of Estates, gave a presentation to Senate on the King's Campus Development, a copy of which is filed with the principal copy of the minute.

59.2 Following Mr Donaldson's presentation, a short discussion ensued, the main tenets of which were as follows:

- Mr Styles thanked Mr Donaldson for the presentation. He asked Mr Donaldson, in terms of the programme of work already going on within Kings, what the approval mechanism and level of consultation had been. He stated the surprise of him and others when the building work had begun, and there had not appeared to have been consultation on this. Responding, Mr Donaldson acknowledged the work being undertaken on the south quad. He stated that the façade dated to 1865 and the lecture theatre to 1972, having been remodelled in the 1950s. He informed members of the Senate that the process had begun in October 2017, when the Business School approached the then Senior Vice-Principal and Estates regarding the continued growth in student numbers. He stated that this resulted in a proposal on the renovation of the south quad going to the Capital Programme Management Committee in October 2017 for consideration. Mr Donaldson stated that over the period since, the issue had been considered by the Committee on 8 occasions, in addition to consideration at Operating Board and Court. In terms of consultation, Mr Donaldson noted that the focus had been on the growth in Postgraduate Taught (PGT) numbers within the Business School and the School were consulted in this regard. Mr Donaldson acknowledged the very tight timescale in ensuring permissions given the need for planning consent and the fact that the building is both listed and within a conservation area. He stated that final approval had been achieved in February 2019.
- Mr Styles asked whether consultation had been undertaken outside the Business School and whether the meetings at which the matter was discussed were publicly minuted. He stated that for most members of staff, the first they knew of the work was when the builders arrived. He asked whether Mr Donaldson felt this was an optimal way to go about things. Responding, Mr Donaldson agreed that it was not optimal but there were circumstances that had driven the process, namely critical timescales and specific requirements. He stated that the meetings at which the project was discussed were minuted and understood the minutes were available as a record of discussions held.
- Dr Jurgensen, representing the department of Music, asked regarding the proposed changes to the MacRobert building. She stated that there were

rumours circulating regarding significant changes to the building and that these changes are largely driven by the needs of the expansion of the Business School. She further noted rumours that Music was likely to have to move out of the building as a consequence. Dr Jurgensen stated her concern as to the plans for consultation with the people at the coalface in Music. She noted that the department had been struggling for years with inadequate provision in terms of rehearsal space, teaching space, performance space and offices. She stated that while she was excited by the prospect of change, the need for grass root level consultation was crucial. Mr Donaldson acknowledged that there had been recognition of the existing users of the MacRobert Building and that these issues had not been ignored. He referred to the two programme boards now being convened, including the MacRobert building board, chaired and sponsored by Professor Speight. Responding, Professor Speight, Vice-Principal for Student Recruitment, explained that he was the project sponsor for the MacRobert programme board and that there was also a project management group, led by Professor Nixon. He noted that the project management group would act as one of the vehicles through which consultation would be undertaken. He informed the Senate that the project was in two parts, as per the remit approved by the Court, the first of which would address finding a single building solution for the Business School and secondly, in parallel, identifying teaching and staff accommodation space of a similar quality for the building's existing users. He noted that the work of the group was at an early stage, but that analysis had begun with regard to issues including the capacity of the building and the needs of its users. Professor Speight confirmed that the group was comprised of representatives of all user groups. Dr Jurgensen stated that within Music there was no understanding of what was happening or who was representing the discipline. Professor Nixon confirmed Dr Cooke, Head of the department of Music, represents Music as a member of both groups and that he is in weekly discussion with him regarding the proposed changes. Professor Nixon informed Dr Jurgensen that he intended to attend a staff meeting and had undertaken a tour around the Music department.

*Clerk's Note: Following the meeting it was confirmed that Dr Cooke is in regular consultation with staff within the Department of Music.*

- Mrs Tibbetts updated the members of the Senate of reasons for the need to increase the space available to the Business School. She noted that between 2015/16 and 2018/19, Business School revenue had grown by 65%, undergraduate student numbers by 25% and PGT student numbers by 100%, to approximately 500 students. She further stated intentions to increase this to approximately 900 PGT students by 2020/21. She stated that she hoped this helped the Senate in understanding the growth within the School and the pressures on the School to accommodate these students. She acknowledged that not all growth was on-campus but that much of it was.
- Dr Barker stated the need for ensuring buildings should be joyful and allow for feelings of inspiration and excitement. He stressed the importance of the human component in discussing buildings and their development.
- Dr Lusseau stated the importance of joined up thinking and in not taking a unilateral approach to addressing the needs of a School. He further stated the importance of taking into consideration the potential consequences for others when considering the buildings on campus.
- Dr Martin expressed her understanding for the need to look at space for the Business School, given their increase in student numbers. She stated that in the short term, priority should be given not to the relocation of staff but to the teaching and learning space available to students. She also stated the importance of consulting with all users of the building and, in particular, those who shared its teaching and learning spaces. With regard to the proposals for

the MacRobert, she noted that it would be hugely helpful to have an idea of the timeline. She noted the levels of anxiety being experienced by staff and the importance of consultation. Responding, Professor Speight stated that the early stages of work were to scope options, whilst being mindful of the requirements of all users and the expectations of growth. He noted that he was hopeful options in this regard could be presented by the summer, followed by a wide consultation on them. He informed members of the Senate that there was a communications plan in place for the project and that further communication would follow in due course.

- Professor Coghill asked whether there were any plans to look beyond the East side of campus and to the Meston Building. He acknowledged the building of the new Science Teaching Hub, however, asked whether there was any strategy for office space. Mr Donaldson confirmed that the money obtained by way of the bond would not be used in this regard. He confirmed that there was a desire to improve it, however, no guarantee of money to do this at this time. Professor Leydecker noted that the construction of the Science Teaching Hub would have knock-on effects on the wider science quarter and that a project board would be set up to take forward the thinking beyond the Teaching Hub. He agreed that it was not sustainable not to have a plan for the longer term and that the process of thinking beyond construction and to begin investment in the building was underway.
- Mr Ogubie stated that, from the student perspective, they were happy to see plans to improve the learning spaces on campus, especially at a time when Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) were more competitive and where students were paying high tuition fees. He stated that the proposals were welcome developments in improving the student experience.
- Dr O'Connor asked whether there were any plans for the books currently stored in the venues identified as being potentially transformed into teaching spaces. Mr Donaldson confirmed that steps had been taken to investigate off-campus option for storing books and the level of capacity required to do this. Mr Bains, University Librarian, reassured members of the Senate that this was an issue of great importance to the Library.

## **MOTION 2 REGARDING ESTATES**

60.1 Mr Styles was asked to present his motion to the Senate as follows:

1. *Senate notes that the primary purpose of the University is research and teaching. Responsibility for teaching and research is overseen by the Senatus Academicus, the body which is responsible for the overall planning, co-ordination, development and supervision of the academic work of the institution (Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2016 section 21(1a)). Responsibility for teaching and research is overseen by the Senatus Academicus not solely by the University Court nor by University Management acting alone or with Court, without the involvement of Senate.*
2. *Senate notes that the University's built environment of classrooms, lecture halls, offices, laboratories, libraries and many other types of buildings is crucial to the fulfilment of the university's primary purpose of research and teaching, as it is within those buildings that the majority of research and teaching is conducted. The built environment is also critically important to the wellbeing of students and all staff at the University.*
3. *Senate notes that there are opportunities to enhance student and staff involvement to ensure that the needs and views of staff and students are properly represented*

*with regard to the development, occupancy and change of use of the University's built environment.*

4. *Senate believes that a system of decision making for the University's built environment which does not optimise staff and student involvement is sub optimal in helping to deliver the University's primary purpose of research and teaching, as well as ensuring student and staff wellbeing.*
5. *Senate respectfully requests that the Senior Vice-Principal review the current arrangements for decision making in relation to the planning and management of our physical environment with a view to ensuring that all major decisions regarding the development, occupancy and changes of use of the University's built environment are taken in a transparent and accountable way which involves staff and students. The Senior Vice-Principal is encouraged to make appropriate new arrangements as soon as possible after wide consultation (including with the Principal, the University Secretary, the Senior Governor, the AUSA President, the Heads of School, the Senate Court Assessors, the elected staff members on Court and all the Campus Trade Unions). It is desirable that the changes be brought into effect as soon as is reasonably practicable and communicated publicly to all university staff. The new arrangements will be discussed at the next meeting of Senate.*
6. *Senate further requests that the Senior Vice-Principal bring forward proposals for improved communication of proposed and agreed changes to the built environment. The new arrangements will be discussed at the next meeting of Senate.*

- 60.2 The Senior Vice-Principal stated that he had enjoyed working with Mr Styles on this and agreed that this was an area in which some changes could be made, and steps could be taken to be more transparent and to look at the co-ordination of decision making. He stated that he was pleased with the motion as set out in ensuring appropriate consultation and communication. He moved to undertake a vote on the Motion regarding Estates.

In favour of the Motion Regarding Estates:	71
Not in favour of the Motion Regarding Estates:	5
Abstaining from the Vote:	2

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

- 60.3 Dr Rist sought confirmation that votes could not be cast more than once. Members of the Senate were assured of this.

### **DEGREE CLASSIFICATION: WEIGHTING OF HONOURS YEARS**

- 61.1 Professor Shennan presented the paper on Degree Classification: Weighting of Honours Years. Professor Shennan acknowledged that the paper had been considered at previous meetings of the Senate and at many rounds of sub-committee meetings. She highlighted the fundamental aim of the paper, to increase consistency in terms of the weighting used to calculate degree classifications. She informed the Senate that there were currently at least 6 models of weighting in operation across the University and that the paper sought (i) to reduce this number and (ii) to increase transparency for students in how their degree is classified. Professor Shennan stated that the paper was similar to previous iterations and was comprised of data from the 2017/18

graduating cohort, with classification based on the GPA and the recently Senate approved, reduced borderline. Professor Shennan clarified that the differential weighting was undertaken by the level of a course and not the year in which that course was taken. She stated that the paper summarised the main points of discussions held at Committee level and at previous meetings of the Senate. Despite a lack of consensus across the University as to a sole model of classification, Professor Shennan stated that there were primarily two main approaches of classification, (i) equal weighting across levels 3 and 4 and (ii) an exit velocity model of a 30% weighting of level 3 and a 70% weighting of level 4. She stated that the paper now details that only these models of weighting should be permitted, for reasons of consistency and transparency. Professor Shennan informed the Senate that Schools would be required to report to the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) which model they wished to use. She noted that this information would be made publicly available on the University's webpages. Following Professor Shennan's introduction of the paper, a discussion ensued. The main tenets of which were as follows:

- Professor McGeorge, Vice-Principal (Education) stated that he was conscious that there were two Schools, the Schools of Education and Law, which had requirements for professional skills courses at level 3, which should not and would not count toward classification. He further stated there was a requirement for a bigger body of work, not only in relation to degree classification, around joint honours programmes. He acknowledged this was an area of activity to be progressed.
- Mrs Connelly, on behalf of the Students' Association, reiterated feedback previously obtained from the student body regarding their understanding of how their degrees were classified. This feedback was summarised as follows:

Question:	Yes	No
Do you understand how your final degree classification is calculated?	40.3%	59.7%
Do you think that courses taken in your 3 <sup>rd</sup> year should count equally with the courses taken in your fourth year?	67.7%	32.3%

Mrs Connelly stated the importance of it being made clear to students how their degrees would be classified and why.

- Ms Paneva reiterated how much confusion students were currently experiencing with regards to the weighting of their degree classification. She encourages Senate to support the paper and the making public of the information surrounding the calculation of degree classifications.
- Dr O'Connor sought clarification as to whether distinct disciplines within Schools could have different models of weighting. Professor Shennan, responding, acknowledged that there were differences in teaching within some disciplines and confirmed that while it was logical for Schools to have a single approach, this was a matter for Schools to determine and to report to the QAC. The Senior Vice-Principal noted, in recognition of the comments received from students, that it would be logical for a School to have a consistent position.
- Dr North stated his support for the paper. He acknowledged that the paper now summarised and understood the situation well and allows for some variation in recognition of the inherent differences between disciplines. He further noted the importance of the needs and requirements of all cohorts of students.
- Mr Simpson thanked Professor McGeorge for his reassurance with regards to the fact that professional skills courses undertaken within Law would not be counted in degree classification.

- Professor McEwan sought clarity as to the distribution of weighting for students undertaking 5-year programmes. Responding, Professor Shennan stated that the numbers were designed to demonstrate velocity but not to weight level 5 too heavily. Professor McEwan further sought clarity around students in Medical Sciences who undertake placement in level 4. Professor Shennan confirmed this was an anomaly to be discussed within the School.
- Professor Delibegovic noted an increasing number of MBChB students who choose to intercalate and noted concern that they would now receive different treatment to any other student. Professor Delibegovic also asked whether appropriate consideration had been given to students articulating into degree programmes in level 3. Responding, Professor Shennan confirmed that intercalating MBChB students would be treated in the same way as students who undertake study abroad. With regards to articulating students, Professor Shennan confirmed that the 30/70% split was designed to address this. She explained to members of the Senate that there were fail-safes in the process to provide support for students who struggle as a consequence of mitigating circumstances.

61.2 The Senior Vice-Principal moved to undertake a vote on whether Schools can adopt either equal weighting or an exit velocity weighting of 30:70 (L3:L4) for four-year programmes and either 33:33:34 or 25:35:40 (L3:L4:L5) for five-year programmes.

In favour of the proposal:	62
Not in favour of the proposal:	12
Abstaining from the Vote:	1

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

### **REF CODE OF PRACTICE**

62.1 Professor Campbell presented the REF Code of Practice. Professor Campbell noted previous discussion at Senate of the requirement for an Institutional Code of Practice in preparation for REF. She noted that the matter had been discussed at various Committees and at open consultation amongst staff. Professor Campbell expressed her thanks to those who engaged in consultation and noted that feedback had been incorporated into the document, where appropriate. She noted that the paper, since circulation to the Senate, had now been considered by the Partnership and Negotiating Consultative Committee (PNCC) and that there were two minor changes to be made to it as a consequence. Professor Campbell noted that following Senate approval, the paper would proceed to Court for approval and for submission to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) by 7 June 2019.

62.2 Dr Watts thanked Professor Campbell and Mrs Barraclough for the consultation. He stated that he had been a consultee and that feedback had been genuinely listened to. For colleagues who could go into more than 1 unit of assessment, Dr Watts queried whether all-nominated papers would be graded. Professor Campbell confirmed that all nominated papers would be assessed.

62.3 Dr Spagnolo sought clarity around why a 13-point scale had been chosen for use for internal review. He expressed concern that these many points presented difficulties. Professor Campbell acknowledged the feedback and informed members of the Senate that there had been much discussion on scoring and that feedback from the majority

had suggested a need for more granularity. Professor Campbell confirmed that the 13-point scale allowed for this granularity but mapped directly onto the four main scoring categories outlined in the REF2021 guidance.

- 62.4 The Senior Vice-Principal moved to undertake a vote on whether the Senate was content to approve the REF Code of Practice.

In favour of the REF Code of Practice:	68
Not in favour of the REF Code of Practice:	3
Abstaining from the Vote:	5

A vote having been taken, the Senior Vice-Principal confirmed that the REF Code of Practice had been approved.

### **REVISED POLICY ON RESEARCH LEAVE**

- 63.1 Professor Campbell introduced the revised policy on Research Leave. She noted that the policy had to be updated to reflect revised University structures and in response to a desire, particularly as a consequence of REF, for shorter periods of Research Leave. She noted that such short periods might be used to deliver a large-scale grant application or to undertake something very specific around the return or maximisation of a 4-star REF paper. Professor Campbell stated that the paper had been discussed amongst all School Directors of Research and at the Research Policy Committee. She noted support for the policy from these bodies. Professor Campbell invited comments from members of the Senate. A discussion then ensued as follows:

- Dr Couzigo expressed concern at the potential frequency of research breaks and the impact on teaching within Schools. Responding, Professor Campbell confirmed that all periods of research leave must be discussed and agreed within a School and awarded only within the constraints of a School.
- Professor Anderson stated that he had not previously had sight of the document. He sought clarity as to whether staff engaged in a project with external funding would be required to fill out paperwork for each network meeting in which they are engaged. Responding, Professor Campbell confirmed that the policy was not intended to address everyday research or teaching activity but to address more exceptional circumstances. She committed to clarify wording in this regard if this would prove helpful.
- Dr Jurgensen asked whether current practice, where short-term activity is required, and teaching is covered on an informal basis would now be replaced. Professor Campbell confirmed that the policy was not intended to replace existing practice but to address exceptional activity.
- Dr O'Connor reiterated the suggestion made by Professor Anderson regarding externally funded leave. He further sought clarification around the frequency of research level. He noted that the document stated that the frequency would be no more than 1 in 8 semesters and sought clarity as to whether research sabbaticals would be no more frequent or no less frequent than 1 in 8. Responding, Professor Campbell confirmed it was intended to be the latter and therefore no less frequent than 1 in 8.
- Professor Jovicic welcomed the policy and stated that he felt it was important. He noted that within section 3.7 of the policy, it is asked that applications be submitted 12 months prior to the proposed start date. Professor Jovicic expressed concern that this was a practical obstacle and that timelines, particularly in recognition of the application process for external funding, were not always allowable of this. Professor Campbell stated that feedback had

strongly suggested that, in order to cover teaching, a long notice period was required. She stated that early notice of planned or expected sabbatical was a strong steer from the Schools.

- Dr Curtis also welcomed the proposals as laid out in the revised policy. She sought clarity of the role of the Committee in enabling Schools to make the provisions afforded in the policy a possibility. Dr Curtis stated the huge differences in experiences for staff across the University in this regard. While acknowledging the reasons for constraints within Schools she stated her hope that the provisions afforded by the policy could be made possible to allow for a more even playing field. Dr Martin suggested that at the next Senate, discussion take place to look at the variations between Schools. Responding to the points made, Professor Campbell confirmed the expectation that every School would have its own operational plan in support of the general principles laid out in the central policy. She noted that there were constraints within Schools but expressed the need for Schools to enact the policy in line with the overarching principles. She noted that while she was open to discuss School approaches, she was wary of imposing a common approach without allowing for legitimate differences.
- Mrs Tibbetts noted that staff on a Teaching and Scholarship programme were excluded from the policy. Professor Campbell confirmed that this area could be further investigated.

63.2 The Senior Vice-Principal moved to undertake a vote on whether the Senate was content to approve the revised Policy on Research Leave.

In favour of the approval of the revised policy:	54
Not in favour of the approval of the revised policy:	14
Abstaining from the Vote:	6

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

### **MOTION 1 REGARDING ABERDEEN 2040**

64.1 Mr Styles was asked to present his motion to the Senate as follow below. Mr Styles stated that he welcomed the idea of developing an Aberdeen 2040 Strategy but that he was concerned regarding the way it had been taken forward, without the involvement of the Senate, the body with responsibility for determining academic strategy. He further stated that he was horrified to note a diagram of the structure the strategy would follow, did not include Senate. Mr Styles introduced his motion, designed to address this issue.

1. *Senate notes that the core purpose of the University is teaching and research and that these tasks are carried out by academic staff supported by management and support services.*
2. *Senate notes that it is the body entrusted by statute with responsibility for the research and teaching of University.*
3. *Senate notes that Management has announced “Aberdeen 2040: Developing a 20-year Strategy for the Future”. Senate welcomes the idea of developing a strategy for the future.*
4. *Senate notes with regret that this strategy was decided upon without any consultation with Senate. Senate notes that the structure of Aberdeen 2040 was not discussed at Senate. Senate notes that Senates has been largely excluded*

*from the Aberdeen 2040 process. Senate notes that previously Senate has been involved with and asked to agree to any previous University institutional plan.*

5. *Senate notes that the current membership of the various “workstreams” was decided upon without any opportunity for Senate participation in those decisions. This is a top down form of management rather than a collegiate and inclusive one. Senate regrets the lack of any elected members of Senate of the Strategy Development Steering Group or on the work streams.*
6. *Senate notes that the following diagram has been posted on the University web pages explaining the structure of the Aberdeen 2040 process. A process which completely excludes the University Senate.*

64.2 Responding, the Senior Vice-Principal confirmed that the diagram had now been changed to reflect feedback and to appropriately reference the Senate. He informed the Senate that the Strategy Development Steering Group (SDSG) had discussed governance arrangements and that the minute of this discussion was now available online (applicable extract copied below). He encouraged members of the Senate to engage with Yammer and workstream workshops as means of consultation and to exercise leadership, as members of the Senate, in doing so. The Senior Vice-Principal confirmed that it was inconceivable that a strategy would be taken to Court, without the widespread support of the academic and wider staff and student community.

*The Group discussed the governance arrangements in place to support the strategy development process and agreed on the importance of ensuring Senate was explicitly and formally included as a key stakeholder group. To this end, it was agreed that:*

- *As with all good governance arrangements, openness and transparency should underpin all activities undertaken in developing the strategy, and all decisions made.*
- *The draft strategy would go to Senate in September and November, in advance of submission to Court for approval. The strategy development schedule would be updated to reflect this.*
- *If the timing of meetings did not align with the strategy development schedule, additional meetings of Senate could be arranged.*
- *In addition, Senators would be contacted directly and encouraged to engage with different consultation activities as part of the wider engagement process for strategy development. This would include the Yammer launch and promotion of workstream open sessions.*
- *Senate would be formally factored into the governance structure published on the Aberdeen 2040 website.*

64.3 With regards to the membership of the SDSG and its associated work streams, the Senior Vice-Principal confirmed there was an elected Senate member on the SDSG. He explained that Senate members, as with all members of staff, had had the opportunity to apply for membership of a work stream. He stated that the rate at which Senate members were appointed to the work streams was the same as that of all other members of staff. He noted that the intention of the composition of the work streams was to move away from a representational approach to strategy development, towards an inclusive approach which allows all members of the community to engage, be they Senate members or not. He stated his feeling that there have been good opportunities for the community as a whole to engage and that there will be further opportunities in the coming months.

64.4 Professor McEwan stated that he was a member of the Internationalisation work stream. He expressed concern as to point 12 of the motion and that the Senate might parachute members onto the work streams, given there was a process which enabled

all staff to apply. He stated that it would not be an open or inclusive strategy to do so. Professor McEwan noted that if members of the Senate wished to contribute to the development of the strategy, there were several means by which they could do so, including planned workshops, open meetings and Yammer discussions.

- 64.5 The Senior Vice-Principal moved to undertake a vote on whether the Senate was content to approve the motion as follows:

*Senate resolves that no final Aberdeen 2040 Plan should be sent to Court until it has first been approved by Senate.*

In favour of the motion:	59
Not in favour of the motion:	11
Abstaining from the Vote:	5

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

- 64.6 The Senior Vice-Principal moved to undertake a vote on whether the Senate was content to approve the motion as follows:

*Senate calls upon SMT to include 2 elected Senate representatives on the Strategy Development Steering Group and 2 elected Senate representatives on each of the 4 work streams.*

In favour of the motion:	20
Not in favour of the motion:	47
Abstaining from the Vote:	7

A vote having been taken, the Senior Vice-Principal confirmed that the motion had not been passed.

### **REVISED DEAN STRUCTURE**

- 65.1 The Senior-Vice Principal, Professor Leydecker, introduced the paper on the Revised Dean Structure, brought forward for discussion (*minute point 54.2 above refers*). He noted that colleagues would be aware of the recent University restructure, including a new set of Vice-Principals and a newly constituted Senior Management Team (SMT). He stated that the SMT had worked under the leadership of the Principal to ensure that the Dean structure is fit for purpose, in terms of how the University is now structured and the way the Vice-Principal roles are now constituted. He informed the Senate that a lot of work had gone on on the structure and had initially been brought to the Senate for information, in the hope that it would command the widespread support of members. The Senior Vice-Principal invited discussion from the floor.

- 65.2 Dr Lusseau thanked the Senior Vice-Principal and stated that he, along with other colleagues, had proposed the move of the paper to allow for its discussion. He noted that this request had been made to allow for some further information on restructuring and to better understand the motivations for the changes offered. He further sought clarity around how the restructure would dovetail with the ongoing strategic development. He asked whether the change was timely, or whether it was more appropriate to wait until an agreed strategy was in place. Responding, the Senior Vice-Principal stated the view of the Principal and the SMT was that irrespective of ongoing strategy work, there was a lot of business to get on with and the University needed to

be driving income, the research agenda and international activity forward, in addition to improving the student experience. He stated the view of the SMT that it was the wrong time to pause. The Senior Vice-Principal noted that much of the proposed structure was recognition of work already ongoing and for the Deans, it was helpful to have an approved structure. He noted that the structure would be kept under review, however, there was an anxiety to ensure the new academic year could begin with the revised structure in place.

- 65.3 Dr Lusseau asked regarding the interaction between Heads of School, Vice-Principals and Deans. He stated that it was unclear as to how these roles might interact in terms of providing priorities to Heads of School and how these roles would impact teaching and research activity. He asked what the role of the Deans was in line-managing or advisory roles. Professor Campbell, Vice-Principal (Research), informed Dr Lusseau and members of the Senate that the Research Deans have cross institutional roles and are therefore able to advise on issues specific to their area of expertise. Professor McGeorge, Vice-Principal (Education), confirmed this was also the case for the Teaching Deans.
- 65.4 Dr Watts stated, with regards to the existing International Deans, that there was a concern the expertise of those who act as Deans and are native to the regions in which they have responsibility would be lost. He sought clarification as to whether this would impact recruitment. Professor Speight, Vice-Principal (Student Recruitment), confirmed that the Dean Structure for Student Recruitment and International had been reviewed closely and the decision had been taken to move to a more function-based approach across the regions. He stated that those Deans in post would see through their term.
- 65.5 Dr Rea sought clarification that those undertaking these roles would have 50% of their salary covered by the Centre. The Senior Vice-Principal confirmed that the proposal was not to cover 50% of the salary but to cover the teaching buy-out required to cover the responsibilities of the staff members concerned. Dr Spagnolo reiterated the importance of acknowledging that if a School loses a member of staff at 50%, research output and administrative roles will also be lost. He stated that to cover only teaching responsibilities was unfair. Members of the Senate acknowledged this model was an improvement on that previously in place.
- 65.6 Professor Lee sought clarification as to why a Dean for Postgraduate Teaching was being lost. Responding, Professor McGeorge noted that it had been a long discussion and that it had been felt that spreading the activities of students would be more effective. Professor Lee asked whether this was an issue that could be revisited if the new structure proved not to work. Professor McGeorge confirmed this would be the case.
- 65.7 Professor Guz spoke in support of the paper and in moving forward with the revised structure. He noted the importance of Deans, particularly since the loss of the College structure. Professor Guz stated that the new structure was focussed on cross-School collaboration.
- 65.8 Mr Gordon stated he was pleased to see the focus on interdisciplinarity and impact, however, that these might have more appropriately been separate roles. He suggested that this be kept under review.
- 65.9 The Senior Vice-Principal moved to undertake a vote on whether the Senate was content to approve the amended structure and responsibilities for the Deans as detailed in the paper.

In favour of approving the amended structure:	52
Not in favour of approving the amended structure:	10
Abstaining from the Vote:	10

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

## **POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

66.1 Professor Pavlovskaia introduced the paper on the Postgraduate Taught Student Experience, brought to the Senate for an academic view. Professor Pavlovskaia noted that the proposals for the three key sources of data, (i) the PGT students survey, (ii) leavers' destination data and (iii) degree attainment and retention rates, had previously been considered and approved by the Senate. She noted the results as follows:

- (i) With regards the survey, Professor Pavlovskaia informed members of the Senate that many Institutions now undertake their own survey for Postgraduate students and that the University will do so again this year. She noted that there was now a baseline to compare and that moving forward there was now a lot of information available.
- (ii) Regarding leavers' destination data, Professor Pavlovskaia stated that the response rate was variable but that it had improved. She noted that more students were employed that in previous years. Professor Pavlovskaia stated that despite sounding somewhat contradictory, there was lower employment in the areas of Engineering, Geosciences and Natural and Computing Sciences, a trend clearly linked with the downturn in the oil industry.
- (iii) Professor Pavlovskaia noted the high completion rates of Postgraduate Taught students and the high number of commendations and distinctions being awarded. She stated this was not surprising as a consequence of the high entry tariffs for PGT programmes.

Professor Pavlovskaia drew the attention of members of the Senate to the School PGT student enhancement plans, through which Schools were asked to provide details of actions they were taking to enhance the PGT student experience, based on the results of the PGT student experience survey. She noted that the paper provided a summary of the good ideas detailed within the enhancement plans, such as using Personal Tutors, developing career development guidance for students and improving PGT induction. She noted that managing the expectations of students, with regards to issues including assessment and feedback, was a high priority for Schools. Professor Pavlovskaia noted that further updates on School progress would be sought. A short discussion then ensued on the paper amongst Senate members. The main tenets of this were as follows:

- Mr Ogubie thanked Professor Pavlovskaia for the paper and the interesting feedback contained within. Referencing paragraph 4.9, he noted that PGT satisfaction is slightly lower than undergraduate honours students. He asked why this was the case and if it was an issue arising from student expectations not being met. Professor Pavlovskaia, responding, acknowledged that the management of expectations was clearly an area which needed to be addressed, in addition to student workload, feedback and communication. Professor Pavlovskaia also noted the importance of addressing issues around employability.

- Dr McKinnon noted that the difference wasn't that great, particularly in recognition of the variation in response rates between the PGT survey and the undergraduate National Student Survey (NSS).
- Professor McGeorge thanked both Professor Pavlovskaja, the Postgraduate Taught (PGT) Committee and all those involved in putting the paper together. He noted the value of a summary of this nature and welcomed suggestions on other things they would like to see included or other ways in which the data could be presented. He acknowledged the direction of travel to increase PGT student numbers and stated the importance of the area.
- The Senior Vice-Principal echoed Professor McGeorge's comments and informed members of the Senate that a draft postgraduate survey going on across English HEIs, driven by the Office for Students, and that it was highly likely that at some point in the future, postgraduate experience will be a metric that is available and visible across the sector and likely to appear in league tables. He stated the importance of improving the postgraduate experience and of being ahead of the game in looking at it holistically.
- Professor Coghill queried the leavers' destination data and the way in which it was recorded. It was noted that data would no longer be recorded in this way as a consequence of a move to the graduate outcomes survey from 2020.

### **DRAFT CHANGE MANAGEMENT TOOLKIT**

67.1 The Senior Vice-Principal, Professor Leydecker, invited members of the Senate to discuss, in order to provide an academic view, the draft Change Management Toolkit. He noted that the Senate had received the document in parallel with the usual consultation through the Policy Review Group and the Joint Negotiating and Consultative Committee (JNCC). The following key points were raised:

- Professor O'Connor expressed his thanks to those members of staff who had put the document together. He stated that it was good to have the issues in black and white. Professor O'Connor noted concern with regards to the section titled '*Guidance on use of Protected Conversations, Settlement Agreements and Non-Disclosure Agreements*'. He acknowledged that the section had been amended and that track-changes were visible, however, expressed concern over the paragraph on Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) and specifically the sentence which read, 'Inappropriate use of NDAs would include improper 'gagging' of staff'. Professor O'Connor sought clarity around the use of NDAs and their improper use and the inclusion of reassurances for staff.
- Dr Oliver stated concerns as to the number of policies within the toolkit and suggest that there may be too many. He noted that it may be difficult for a Head of School, or alternate, to determine which policy is appropriate for use. Dr Oliver further expressed that the Change Management Protocol doesn't clearly articulate that consultation may need to go outwith a School. He emphasised that it should be an obligation to look outside of a School, to ensure other programmes are not affected, and that this should be clearly articulated.
- Professor Anderson echoed the comments of Dr Oliver and specifically the comment made regarding the proliferation of documents. He stated that the documents did not speak to, or reflect, each other. He proposed that this be rectified by putting them all within the Change Management Policy. Professor Anderson also echoed concerns that the Change Management Protocol as a whole did not reflect cross-School interests. He expressed ambiguity in the use of the word 'manager' throughout the document and suggested that the reference to specific roles would be better. Finally, he suggested that the inclusion of '*recognising that the extent of the process being followed (planning,*

*consultation and communication) will vary according to the nature, scale and potential impact of the change' within section 1.4 of the Change Management Policy, was an example of circular logic. He sought clarity on who would determine this.*

- Dr Rea, with reference to the section of the Use of Protected Conversations document, expressed concern regarding the bullet point which reads, '*Where concerns relate to capability or conduct, staff will be aware of such concerns, as a minimum informally.*' He stated that staff should be aware of such issues very formally indeed. Dr Rea also raised concerns regarding the sentence within the Use of Protected Conversations document which reads, '*Clarity will also be given that the member of staff is entitled to up to 10 days to consider the settlement agreement and to receive advice from a legal adviser of their choice (including a union representative).*' Dr Rea expressed concerns that the *minimum* legislative requirement is 10 days and that the University's policy should adequately reflect this.
- Professor Jovcic stated, regarding decision making in restructuring, that this was a matter for the Senate to consider and not only for the Head of School, with the approval of the Head of Human Resources and the Senior Vice-Principal. Professor Jovcic sought clarity on the difference between minor and major change.
- Dr Rist echoed the comments made and specifically that made by Professor Jovcic, that the Senate should have final say in instances of major change. Dr Rist stated that with regard to the inappropriate use of NDAs, that substantial clarification be provided, including examples.
- Finally, Professor Anderson stated that not all the comments made at the last meeting of the Senate were reflected in the document. He asked that these be incorporated or reasoning as to an objection be provided.

## **ANY OTHER ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

68.1 Dr Watts was invited to ask his question as follows:

*The new protocol stating that at least two staff members be elected to panels convened to appoint new heads of school has been widely welcomed. Unfortunately, in the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition a problem arose with the implementation of the electoral process. On 5 April, staff in the School were invited to elect two colleagues to serve on the panel convened to appoint a new head of School. The e-mail inviting staff to vote stated that: "To ensure gender balance on the panel, one female and one male representative will be appointed based on the highest number of votes received". However, after the results of the election had been announced to staff on 17 April, a further e-mail sent to them on 18 April stated that: "Due to the size and complexity of the School, the nominee who received the third highest number of votes will also be appointed to represent the School for the Head of School appointment process". This post-hoc change in the basis for the election of staff to serve on the panel has caused widespread concern, with constituents approaching me to express their unease about it. Therefore, can the Principal provide an undertaking to Senate that, in future elections, the basis on which candidates are appointed is kept consistent with the basis on which the election was held?*

68.2 Professor Vargesson stated that there was no widespread upset within the Institute of Medical Sciences regarding how the election was undertaken. Professor Erskine echoed this comment and stated that many staff were in fact, pleased with how the situation had been handled by senior management.

- 68.3 Dr Kiezebrink stated that there were mixed views across the Institutes comprising the School. Professor Lee echoed this comment and stated that it was the fact that three individuals were elected when staff were asked only to vote for two that was the basis for complaint.
- 68.4 In responding to the question specifically, the Senior Vice-Principal confirmed absolutely that, in future elections, the basis on which candidates are appointed will be kept consistent with the basis on which the election was held.
- 68.5 Dr Rea asked what the requirement for three representatives rather than the standard of two was. It was confirmed that this reflected the scale of the School concerned.
- 68.6 Dr Skatun noted the importance of communication and that once explained to staff, they had understood the actions of the SMT.

### **REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING**

The Senate approved and noted the actions taken by the University Committee on Teaching and Learning at its meeting on 22 April 2019.

#### **1. Omnibus Resolution**

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

The Senate further invited 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.

#### **2. Regulations for the Diploma of Higher Education in Dental Technology**

- 69.2 The Senate approved, on the recommendation of the UCTL, the proposed regulations for the Diploma of Higher Education in Dental Technology (copy filed with principal copy of minute).

#### **3. Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic)**

- 69.3 The Senate approved, on the recommendation of the University Committee on Teaching and Learning, and forwarded 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 further asked 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.

#### **4. Code of Practice on Assessment**

- 69.4 The Senate approved, on the recommendation of the University Committee on Teaching and Learning the 'Changes to the Code of Practice on Assessment' (copy

filed with principal copy of minute). The attention of the Senate was drawn to sections of the revised Code which will not be pursued, should the Senate not approve the paper on Honours Weightings.

### **5. Assessment and Feedback**

- 69.5 The Committee considered papers on (i) Weighting of Honours Years and (iii) the Code of Practice on Assessment which would be forwarded to the Senate for discussion and approval.

### **6. Review of the Student Course Evaluation Process**

- 69.6 Senate noted that the Committee had considered the paper from the Student Course Evaluation Form (SCEF) Working Group (copy filed with principal copy of minute) and approved the Working Group's proposals with regards to the SCEF and the wider Student Course Evaluation process.

### **7. PGDE Teaching Timetable**

- 69.7 Senate noted that the Committee considered a request from the School of Education to, exceptionally, permit teaching on Wednesday afternoons. It was agreed that this request could be approved for this cohort of students only.

### **8. Recommendations of the Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR) Panel**

- 69.8 Members of the Committee considered, and approved proposals made with regards to (i) Preparation for Teaching: Postgraduate Research Students and (ii) Preparation for Teaching: Staff following recommendations made by the ELIR panel.

### **9. Disability Provision: Exam Scheduling and Exam Location**

- 69.9 The Committee considered a paper on Disability Provision regarding Exam Scheduling and Exam Location. The Committee agreed that a Working Group should be convened to review the situation.

### **JOHN REID TRUST**

- 70.1 The Senate noted that the Senate Business Committee had approved Professor Ed Welch and Dr Heather Morgan to replace Professor John Morrison and Professor Grant Macaskill as trustees 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.

### **SPC CONVENOR**

- 71.1 The Senate noted that the Senate Business Committee, on the recommendation of the Convenor of the Quality Assurance Committee, approved Dr Alexey Sevastyanov as Convenor for the Student Progress Committee for Arts & Social Sciences

- 72.1 The Senior Vice-Principal thanked all those Senators demitting office for their service. He thanked the AUSA executive for their service and contribution. He noted that the Senate Effectiveness Review would begin in the Autumn and that elections for Senate representation on the reviewing group would be undertaken in due course.

DRAFT