****

**ACADEMIC COUNCIL**

**Minutes of meeting held on 2 December 2020**

**Present:** Professor G McCormac (Chair), Professor A Bowes, Professor M Cusack, Dr A Desbois, Professor J Donaldson, Dr P Dudchenko, Ms L Ehresmann, Dr L Forbat, Dr A Gilburn, Professor A Green, Professor A Hadland, Dr M Lovatt, Dr E Macleod, Professor M MacLeod, Professor H Nehring, Professor R Norman, Professor R Oram, Professor N Parish, Professor J Phillips, Prof M Priestley, Ms A Smith, Professor L Sparks, Mr A Seel, Mr E Stainbank, Ms J Stevenson, Dr I Tabner, Professor T Whalley, Professor N Wylie.

**In Attendance:** Ms I Beveridge, Dr A Griffiths (Secretary), Ms J Morrow, Ms E Schofield,

Dr D Telford.

**Apologies:** Professor I Docherty, Professor K Grant, Professor J Tinson, Dr C Wilson.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **1.** | **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING** | **AC (20/21) Minutes 1** |
|  | The minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2020 were noted. |
|  |  |  |
| **2.** | **MATTERS ARISING NOT OTHERWISE ON THE AGENDA** |  |
|  | It was noted that following endorsement from Academic Council, the Annual Report to the SFC on Institution-Led Review for 2019/20 proceeded to University Court, and was approved, signed-off, and submitted to the SFC.  |
| **3.** | **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING** | **AC (19/20) Minutes 4**  |
|  | The minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2020 were approved.  |
| **4.** | **STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIR AND AN UPDATE ON THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT** | **Oral Report & AC (20/21) 9** |
|  | Council received a briefing from the Chair and an update on the external environment:**COVID-19**The University continued to follow government guidelines in response to COVID-19 and had provided the University community with consistent updates and guidance with regard to the University’s position on learning, teaching, research and the return of students home to non-term time addresses at Christmas. The University had established an asymptomatic/no symptom testing centre in the Pathfoot building that utilised one-hour lateral flow testing to support students who received negative tests to return home. This testing regime would support student travel within the UK, but for students travelling internationally many countries were requiring a negative PCR test, which for students without symptoms would need to be paid for privately. The University had therefore provided exceptional reimbursement funds to students requiring this test for asymptomatic purposes to support their return to a non-term time address. Planning was also in place to support and provide activities for students required to remain in Stirling over the Christmas period. **National Student Survey Consultation**The University had provided a response to the review and consultation on the future of the National Student Survey (NSS), advocating for the continued use of the NSS whilst also acknowledging some areas for change and improvement. Contributions were also made to the Universities Scotland response. **REF 2021**Universities were working towards a revised deadline of 31 March 2021 for REF, and that a number of allowances had been put in place by UKRI as a result of COVID-19, such as the inclusion of outputs delayed by the pandemic, and the ability for providers to include commentary to advising panels on how research activity had been affected by COVID-19. Council noted statements from the Chair and the update on the external environment.  |
| **5.** | **TERMS OF REFERENCE** | **AC (20/21) 10** |
|  | Council received and considered a paper on the revised terms of reference for 2020/21 to update the membership of Academic Council following the Academic Council elections in November 2020.It was noted that an election had been held to appoint new members to the four professorial and one non-professorial academic vacancies on Council. For the professorial vacancies, one nomination was received for Professor Adrian Hadland and one nomination was received for Professor Nina Parish, and both were duly elected. For the non-professorial academic vacancy, six nominations were received, and a ballot was held with Dr Melanie Lovatt duly elected after receiving the most votes.Following the election, it was noted that two professorial vacancies remained, and a further election would be held for these posts prior to the next meeting of Council in March 2021. Council noted the updated membership in the revised terms of reference for 2020/21.   |
| **6.** | **ENHANCEMENT-LED INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW REFLECTIVE ANALYSIS** |  **AC (20/21) 11** |
|  | Council received and considered the draft ELIR Reflective Analysis due for submission to the QAA in January 2021 for consideration and endorsement ahead of its onward transmission to Court. It was noted that in advance of the University’s review visits from the QAA and the ELIR panel in spring 2021, the University was required to submit a set of documentation for review by the ELIR panel. This included a reflective analysis structured according to QAA guidelines evaluating the University’s approach to learning, teaching, and the student experience, which should demonstrate self-reflection and critical evaluation of the University’s performance in these areas. It was outlined that the document had been developed in consultation with staff and students across the University, and was now being submitted to Council for consideration and endorsement, after which it would transition to Court in December 2020 in a more finalised version for approval. Thanks were noted by Council to all staff involved, and to the Academic Registrar in particular for leading on the development of the document ahead of its submission. Council endorsed the draft reflective analysis for onwards transmission to Court.  |
|  |  |  |
| **7.** | **AMENDMENTS TO STATUTES AND ORDINANCES** | **AC (20/21) 12** |
|  | Council received and considered a paper outlining an amendment to the University’s Statutes and Ordinances (Statute 9 and Ordinance 72 respectively). The paper detailed an amendment to the remit of Court in relation to its accountability for matters relating to equality, diversity and inclusion, update to the term ‘true and fair’ in the context of financial reporting, and the provision of the facility to extend the appointment term of the Chair of Court and lay members under exceptional circumstances. It was noted that following endorsement by Council, Court would be asked to approve the version of the Statute and Ordinance, after which the Statute would then be submitted to the Scottish Government for discussion. Following consideration by the Scottish Government, Court would then make a special resolution to amend the Statute prior to submission to the Privy Council for approval. Council endorsed the proposed amendment to the Statutes and Ordinances for onwards transmission to Court.  |
| **8.** | **ANNUAL REPORT ON ACADEMIC COUNCIL EFFECTIVENESS TO COURT** | **AC (20/21) 13** |
|  | Council received and considered the draft annual evaluative report from Academic Council to University Court. It was noted that the report outlined the remit and membership of Council, that Council met on four occasions in 2019/20 considering and reviewing business effectively, and that each of these meetings was quorate. The paper further detailed that the relationship between Council and its committees had continued to operate effectively, and that Council had received reports from ESEC and URC at each of its meetings for discussion. Council approved the draft annual evaluative report for 2019/20 for onwards transmission to Court.  |
| **9.** | **REPORTS FROM COUNCIL’S COMMITTEES****Education and Student Experience Committee Report – 21 October 2020** | **AC (20/21) 14** |
|  | Council received thereport from the meeting of the Education and Student Experience Committee held on 21 October 2020.An update from the Committee was noted, including on revisions to policies and procedures in the area of learning, teaching, and the student experience. Main highlights of the meeting were provided such as a presentation on ELIR 2021 preparation, discussion of the student survey results (e.g., NSS, PTES, PRES, and SES), and approval of the Code of Practice for Research Degrees and the Resubmission of Coursework Principles in the Assessment Policy and Procedure. Council noted the report of 21 October 2020 from the Education and Student Experience Committee.  |
|  | **University Research Committee Report – 24 August 2020** | **AC (20/21) 15** |
|  | Council received the report from the meeting of the University Research Committee held on 24 August 2020.It was noted that the University had received SFC and UKRI funding for final year PhD students where projects were affected by COVID-19. A regular update on research performance and research grant capture was also provided, and it was noted that whilst award funding had increased as a result of increased staff applications for grants, approx. 21% of TnR staff were applying, and therefore an increase in applications from TnR staff should be encouraged. It was also outlined that the University had signed the researcher concordat and the Research Environment Group would be taking forwards an action plan to support this across the University. Council noted the report of 24 August 2020 from the University Research Committee. **Joint Policy, Planning and Resources Committee Report – 23 November 2020 AC (20/21) 16** |
|  | Council received the report from the meeting of the Joint Policy, Planning and Resources Committee held on 23 November 2020. It was noted that an update from the committee was provided, with especial reference to the business the committee considered at the meeting. Highlights included developments in the external environment, updates on capital expenditure, developing the strategic plan, and considerations around the Due Diligence and Assurance Policy, and the Respect at Work and Study Policy.Council noted the report of 23 November 2020 from the Joint Policy, Planning and Resources Committee.  |
|  |  |
| **10.** | **COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS AC (20/21) 17** |
|  | Council received a paper presenting nominees for the Student Discipline Committee.Council approved the nominees for the Student Discipline Committee.  |
| **11.** | **ANY OTHER BUSINESS** |
|  | Council noted that there was not any other business. |
| **12.** | **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**Council noted that the date of the next meeting would be Wednesday 10 March 2021, on Microsoft Teams.  |

**Dr Alexander Griffiths**

**Academic Registry**

**December 2020**