

ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
Meeting held on Wednesday 12th April 2017
UNAPPROVED MINUTES

Composition	Membership	Meeting 1 21.09.15	Meeting 2 16.11.16	Meeting 3 15.02.17	Meeting 4 12.04.17	Meeting 5 21.06.17
Vice-President (S&P) (Chair)	Professor Richard Verrall	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Deputy President & Provost (Deputy Chair) (to Jun 17)	Professor David Bolton	A	✓	✓	A	
Vice President (R&E)	Professor Andrew Jones	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Chair of SREC	Professor Ronald Douglas	✓	✓	✓	✓	
SU President	Mr Yusuf Ahmad	A	A	✓	✓	
Senior Elected Senator (to Jun 19)	Dr Rachel Cohen	A	A	✓	S	
Elected Senator (to Jun 19)	Dr Arti Agrawal	A	✓	✓	S	
Elected Senator (to Jun 18)	Professor Charles Baden-Fuller	✓	✓	✓	A	
Elected Senator (to Jun 18)	Professor Susan Blake	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Elected Senator (to Jun 18)	Professor Laurence Solkin	A	✓	A	A	
Co-opted Member (to Sept 16)	Dr Andrew Denis	✓	✓	A	A	
Co-opted Member (to Sept 18)	Ms Claire de Than	A	✓	A	A	

*Teaching commitment

Key: ✓ in Attendance A Apologies

P Part Attendance N/M Not a Member

S Sabbatical

In Attendance	Reason and Meeting Section
Ms Helen Fitch	Assistant Registrar, Student & Academic Services
Ms Christine Edwards	Internal Audit
Dr Anton Cox	Elected Senator
Dr William Jordan	College Secretary
Ms Gemma Watt	Governance Administrator

Preliminary Items

1. Items for Starring

AGC agreed the highlighted items as the main items of business for discussion at the meeting.

2. Minutes

The minutes from the meeting held on 15th February 2017 were approved.

3. Matters Arising

Item 8, City Graduate School Reporting:

The College Secretary explained that work was on-going and the Annual Report was due to be discussed at the 17th May meeting of Senate.

4. Conflicts of Interest

None were noted. The Chair explained that Conflicts of Interest declarations would now be included on the AGC agenda in response to a recommendation from the Internal Audit report on AGC. The full report was included under agenda item 6.

5. Items Specially Brought Forward by the Chair

There were none.

Part Two – Major Items for Discussion or Decision

6. Internal Audit Report for AGC

AGC received a draft version of the Internal Audit Report for AGC. The report was due to be finalised in the coming weeks and was being circulated to AGC in advance as a discussion item. The College Secretary explained that following the recent Minerva report into the effectiveness of Council and its Committees, it had seemed appropriate for this year's internal audit report on a governance issue to cover the work of AGC, which had not been included in the Minerva report. In discussion the following points were made:

- Questionnaires had been sent to all AGC members and survey responses could be found in appendix one.
- Recommendations for the following areas were noted: effectiveness of Senate, committee induction and training, the reporting of conflicts of interest.
- The lack of training for members of committees was likely to be a City wide issue.
- Committee members' understanding of the public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010 also required action. A statement on the public sector equality duty would be produced and discussed at a future meeting of AGC. **[Action]**
- The College Secretary would produce a management response to the recommendations contained in the report in the light of AGC's input. The final report would be circulated to members of AGC once available. **[Action]**

7. Student Discipline Regulation – Proposed Updates to Senate Regulation 13

AGC was asked to consider proposed updates to Regulation 13. The changes provided further clarification on how City would manage disclosures of possible criminal convictions and/ or offences. Initial revisions were considered at the February meeting of AGC and recommendations were made to strengthen the new wording. The Regulation was subsequently updated taking into account these considerations. In discussion the following points were made:

- Changes included further clarification of when to declare a conviction and clarification that the Act (England and Wales) would be applied to convictions obtained internationally by applying the corresponding sentence or nearest equivalent.
- An equality impact assessment was conducted in relation to the changes and it was anticipated that no students would be disadvantaged by this policy.
- Colleagues in Student & Academic Services would discuss the communications plan with the SU and agree how best to relay the changes to students. **[Action]**
- A minor change to paragraph 21 would be made – the word 'expecting' would be changed to 'expected'. **[Action]**

Decision

AGC **agreed to recommend to Senate** the proposed revisions to the Regulation, subject to a minor amendment to paragraph 21. **[Action]**

8. **Assessment Regulations – Proposed Updates to Senate Regulation 19**

AGC was asked to consider the proposed updates to Regulation 19. The first amendment was a minor clarification relating to the wording of the Failure of a Module section of the Assessment Regulations. The second proposed change was in response to a recommendation from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) regarding late diagnosis of a disability. In discussion the following points were made:

- If a student resits an exam at the next possible opportunity they are not required to attend City but they still retain their student card. The Assistant Registrar would clarify what arrangements should be for student access to City when partially repeating a year, and in particular, whether students should have access to 'moodle' during this time. **[Action]**
- Paragraph 4.7.2 made clear whether marks in resits were capped at the pass mark for the module or at the pass mark for the failed component.
- In Paragraph 4.7.3 only the second bullet point made reference to a second attempt at a failed assessment, but the first bullet point did not refer to a second attempt and might be interpreted as referring to another first attempt. The Assistant Registrar would confirm the wording for these two bullet points prior to the paper going to Senate. **[Action]**
- An additional paragraph was included in the Regulation outlining how students could submit an appeal on the grounds of Undisclosed Extenuating Circumstances on receipt of a formal diagnosis of an undisclosed disability. Seeking a diagnosis as early as possible would be important for the appeal process, albeit an appeal could only be made formally when marks had been finalised.
- It might be helpful for all students to undergo a dyslexia assessment. Adjustment could only be considered once a formal diagnosis is confirmed.
- The changes in relation to Extenuating Circumstances had been discussed at a Student Case Forum.
- It would be important when developing the guidance which accompanied the Regulation to hold discussions with the SU.

Decision

AGC **agreed to recommend to Senate** the proposed revisions to the Regulation, subject to clarifications of the wording discussed. **[Action]**

9. **Possible Revisions to Ordinance C1: Composition of Senate**

AGC was asked to consider a way forward in relation to possible revisions to Ordinance C1. Proposals to strengthen female and male representation at Senate had been discussed by AGC when it met on 15th February and by Senate when it met on 15th March. The report has since been amended to reflect the steers from these previous meetings and AGC were being asked to consider recommending to CGNC no change to the composition of Senate as set out in the current Ordinance C1. In discussion the following points were made:

- The College Secretary explained that Council were committed to taking forward the Athena SWAN action plan and the addition of an Equality and Inclusion statement to Ordinance D2 set out the steps being taken to promote equality at Council and most Council Committees. However, as Senate's composition was considered particularly complex, CGNC were consulting AGC and Senate on possible changes before further reflecting on the matter.
- The promotion of gender equality in the ex-officio membership of Senate would be addressed through the Athena SWAN action plan and therefore no change was recommended.
- Elected Senators were currently well represented and therefore no change was recommended, however, as the elected membership can change annually it

would be prudent to monitor numbers and if required CGNC could revisit the matter as required.

- No change was recommended to the composition of student Senators. Athena SWAN does not refer to students and the SU have their own processes for election to SU sabbatical positions.
- As the gender balance of senior academic staff improves over time it is anticipated that this will be reflected in the ex-officio membership of City's committees.
- It would nonetheless be helpful to include in Ordinance D2 some stronger wording in relation to arrangements for monitoring the gender balance of the ex-officio membership of Senate. For example, if the goal was for at least 30% female and 30% male membership this should be clear.
- Although the Athena SWAN action plan would be a helpful way of monitoring gender representation, the action plan was time-limited, and it would be important for the Ordinance as well as the Athena SWAN action plan to record City's goals on gender equality.
- The section of the paper dealing with 'wider issues' paragraph would be included in the paper to CGNC but would be cut back.

Decision

AGC **agreed to recommend to CGNC** that no change should be made in relation to the composition of Senate as outlined in Ordinance C1. However, the paper to CGNC should include a strong steer in relation to developing wording for Ordinance D2 relating to the monitoring of the gender balance of ex-officio Senators. This should make clear the expected minimum threshold for female and male ex-officio membership. The amended paper would be discussed at CGNC on 9th May 2017. **[Action]**

10. Sabbatical Leave Policy

AGC was asked to consider proposed revisions to the Sabbatical Leave Policy. The recommended changes had been made in the light of the Internal Audit on Sabbatical Leave and recent discussions at meetings of AGC and Senate. The VP(R&E) explained that AGC was being asked to discuss the policy changes and make recommendations prior to consideration by Senate. In discussion the following points were made:

- The approval and monitoring of sabbatical leave is delegated to Schools where it is either considered by the BoS or by a delegated sub group. Although there is only one Sabbatical Policy Schools have some discretion in relation to their individual strategies.
- It would be helpful for Schools to make their School strategy known and to give an overview of their approach to sabbatical leave. This would provide a measure to judge the granting of sabbatical leave against.
- Each School could include a section on sabbatical leave in their annual report. It may include their figures for the year, their rationale for the approach, and their strategy for the future.
- It would be helpful to make clear that while a Board of Studies should consider the academic case for sabbatical leave, the resource case fell to the Dean of a School for consideration. Where a request for sabbatical leave was declined on resource grounds, the application should still be reported to the Board of Studies.
- The wording at the top of page two in relation to 'all application' and their delegation would benefit from some strengthening.
- A way forward for the monitoring of sabbatical leave could be included in the Research & Enterprise Strategy implementation plan which would be considered at a future meeting at Senate.
- The Research & Enterprise committee would consider a sabbatical leave monitoring report each year.

- The VP(R&E) would revise the policy in the light of the comments received and circulate the amended policy to AGC. It was anticipated that the revised Policy would then go to Senate for further discussion and approval. **[Action]**

11. Senate Elections

AGC was asked to consider arrangements for future Senate elections. The paper included proposals for the timing of the elections, the nomination and voting period and the contact details to be provided to staff wanting to further enquire about the role. In addition, AGC was asked to consider how election data should be treated in forthcoming elections. In discussion the following points were made:

- Following the 2016 elections the Senior Elected Senator and the College Secretary had discussed possible improvements to the election process and these were now being brought forward to AGC.
- A Freedom of Information request had been received following the 2016 election in relation to the publication of the full results. Consideration had been given to the request and the conclusion reached was that the data was personal data and could not be released (other than in anonymised form) without the explicit consent of individuals concerned. This had not been sought when individuals had agreed to stand for election to Senate.
- The SU conducted elections in which all nominees were made aware of how their data will be used following the election, ie that it would be released.
- The Senate election process should be as transparent as possible, but it would be unfortunate if publication of results deterred people from standing.
- It would be preferable to release the data on request, but to not widely publicise the results.

Decision

AGC **agreed to recommend** the proposed changes to Senate and to invite Senate to discuss the use of election data following the election results.

12. Improving Senate Effectiveness

AGC was asked to discuss the on-going progress in relation to improving Senate's effectiveness. The emerging plans had drawn together, recommendations to come out of the Minerva report, HEFCE's Revised Operating Model for quality assessment, and suggestions from the elected senators on improving Senate's effectiveness. Proposed actions and considerations were being presented to AGC for discussion while at the development stage. In discussion the following points were made:

- The CUC illustrative Practice Note had been circulated to AGC members by email and had also been included on the agenda (Item 15).
- Some additional wording for Ordinance C1 had been proposed to take account of Council's new responsibilities with regard to quality and standards. There were also plans to further develop the Ordinances and Regulations to reflect what Senate should look like.
- Following the review into Council's effectiveness it might be helpful to consider whether Senate would benefit from adopting some of Council's processes, for example their approach to the induction process.
- Colleagues in Student and Academic Services were developing plans to effectively align reporting to Senate, taking into account current processes and procedures, as well as TEF and KPI requirements.
- Proposals from elected Senators had been circulated to AGC members in advance of the meeting. The College Secretary, the Senior Elected Senator and colleagues in Student & Academic Services would work together to build the additional contributions into a future iteration of the plan. **[Action]**

- Elected Senators included a proposal for academic staff representation through the appointment of three Senators as staff members of Council. There were already six staff member of Council, but all were members of the Executive. This proposal was not yet ready to take forward but would be considered again on the return of the Senior Elected Senator. **[Action]**

13. Membership of Senate Research Ethics Committee

Professor Ron Douglas would be stepping down as Chair of the Senate Research Ethics Committee (SREC) once a new Chair had been appointed. The Chair thanked Professor Ron Douglas for his contribution to SREC and for his contribution as an ex-officio member of AGC and Senate.

It would be important to ensure that anyone interested in being on an Ethics Committee has the opportunity to apply. City had a responsibility, as referenced in the Athena SWAN action plan, to fill vacant positions in a transparent way. It was noted that the Chair of SREC was a challenging position and it would be important for the successful candidate to have Research Ethics Committee experience.

The VP(R&E) advised AGC that one highly suitable candidate for the Chair of the Senate Research Ethics Committee had already been identified. It was agreed, however, that the VP(R&E) would next email staff asking for further expressions of interest for the position of Chair. **[Action]**

AGC would then be asked, by circulation, to recommend the nomination to Senate who would be asked to approve the nomination. A formal written nomination from the VP(R&E) would be considered at Senate in due course. **[Action]**

14. Nomination for the Award of Fellow Emeritus

AGC was asked to consider the nomination received from the City Law School for the Fellow Emeritus title for the retiring member of staff, Catherine Elliott.

Decision

AGC **agreed to recommend to Senate** the award of Fellow Emeritus for Catherine Elliott, City Law School.

15. Committee of University Chairs: Illustrative Practice Note

AGC **received** the report.

16. Research Ethics Committee

AGC **noted** the minutes of the meeting of the Senate Research Ethics Committee held on the 7th February 2017.

17. Other Business

AGC had no other business to note.

Date of next meeting

21st June 2017 at 2pm in AG01

Professor Richard Verrall
Chair of AGC
April 2017