

ROBERT GORDON UNIVERSITY

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Minute of the meeting held on 16 December 2021 (2.00pm – 3.50pm).

Present: Professor S Olivier (Chair), R Adedokun, Dr C Air, A Ayub, L Binnie, Dr A Butler-Warke, Professor D Cairns, C Campbell, H Christie, J Clifford, Dr D Cockburn, L Curtis, Professor S Dawkes, W Deegan, Dr E Ezeani, Professor N Fyfe, Dr S Henderson, Dr E Ibeke, Dr Isaacs, B Jackson, P Johnston, Professor L Kilbride, D McCaughley, Dr C McCulloch, L Mifsud, A Murray, T Pirie, A Rasheed, Dr J Royle, Professor J Steel, V Strachan, Professor S Vertigans and Dr M Zarb.

Apologies: D Adesanya, Dr N Emmison, I Fairley, Professor E Gammie, T Kouider, Professor A Lamb, Professor D McClean, P Moran and Dr A Oke.

In Attendance: F Antoniazzi, F McLean Whyte (Secretary) and J Strachan.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

- *Ex officio:* Professor Lynn Kilbride, Vice-Principal for Student Experience and Academic Development, and John Clifford, Head of the Law School;
- *Student members:* Amodu Abiola Rasheed, Aberdeen Business School, Damilola Adesanya, President (Education & Welfare, and Doireann McCaughley, School of Health Sciences/Vice-President (Education);
- *Academic staff members elected from each School:* Aberdeen Business School, Dr Carol Air; Gray's School of Art, Cameron Campbell and Annette Murray; School of Computing, Pam Johnston; School of Creative and Cultural Business, Tracy Pirie; School of Engineering, Ahmad Ayub and Dr Cathy McCulloch; School of Health Sciences, Louise Mifsud and Paul Moran; School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences, Wendy Deegan; and The Law School, Hayley Christie.

Members were advised the Academic Council agenda did not include an item for 'Any Other Competent Business (AOCB)'. The Standing Orders of Academic Council, contained in *Organisational Regulation O3: Academic Council, Schedule 3.1*, paragraph 5.1, stated:

Council members wishing to have items considered for inclusion within the agenda for a scheduled meeting must have notified the Secretary to Academic Council and supplied the appropriate paper(s) normally at least ten days before the date of the meeting.

On this occasion, due to the short timescale before the meeting, members of Council who wished to raise an additional item of business were asked to let the Secretary know by 14 December 2021, but no items had been received.

Academic Council
Members

1. MINUTE

Academic Council **approved** the *Minute of the meeting held on 15 June 2021 [AC/21/3]*, subject to removal of a duplicate record of a conferral of a research degree [item 6.2.1(iii) and (iv)], and noted a *Matters Arising Report*.

1.1 Chair's Report: Chancellor appointment [AC/21/3/2]

Dame Evelyn Glennie DBE had been installed at a ceremony on 9 September 2021. Sir Ian Wood, as retiring Chancellor, had also appreciated the event that included music composed and played for him by Honorary Graduate, Paul Anderson.

2. ACADEMIC COUNCIL REMIT AND COMPOSITION

Academic Council noted an extract from *Organisational Regulation O3* relating to its remit and composition. The updated *Membership List* was provided as item 8 below for noting.

3. CHAIR'S REPORT

Academic Council noted a report from the Principal and Vice-Chancellor, and the following was highlighted:

- plans were progressing to organise in-person celebration events for the three cohorts of students unable to graduate in person during the pandemic;
- it was confirmed that January 2022 intake students would be offered the same arrangements regarding quarantine costs as those offered to the September 2021 intake.

4. STRATEGIC PLANNING

4.1 University Strategy

Academic Council considered the *University Strategy*, as considered by the Board of Governors on 14 December 2021. The Board had approved it, in principle, subject to some minor amendments to be made prior to publication.

The Executive Director for Strategy and Planning highlighted the significant engagement of staff, students through the Student Union, the Board of Governors and the RGU Foundation throughout the consultation period. In addition to changes in language to emphasise a more active and participatory approach, the following aspects of feedback from the consultation process had been incorporated into the *University Strategy*:

- the University's commitment to equality and diversity;
- student and staff wellbeing should be explicitly referenced;
- the external public value of research and the need to be inclusive;

- incorporation of cultural and social development within the economic development aim;
- the University's role in the energy transition and its commitment to environmental sustainability;
- that entrepreneurship activities had developed significantly;
- community engagement and existing links with communities for the common good;
- strengthening of the international dimension of the strategy;
- adaption of the infrastructure to meet the needs of post-pandemic modes of work and study;
- the importance of partnership with colleges, particularly North East of Scotland College.

In discussion, the following points were raised:

- it was suggested that "Ensuring an excellent and secure digital infrastructure for users both on and off campus" might better refer to 'university community', and it was **agreed** Dr Isaacs and Dr Cockburn would discuss this after the meeting;
- reference to the 'learning community' demonstrated a student focus to the *Strategy*;
- the University's old branding of a 'professional' university was no longer deemed appropriate as all of the University's activities were designed to enhance students' employability. Although 'professional' was mentioned several times, the current review of the *Future of Teaching and Learning*, being led by the Vice-Principal for Student Experience and Academic Development, would reflect on the potential for graduates to change careers during their lifetime, and the *Strategy* was designed to acknowledge this.

Dr J Isaacs &
Dr D Cockburn

With respect to lessons learned from the process, the Principal **agreed** to consider direct liaison with academic staff in Schools, and encouraged Heads of School to consider requesting this in any future consultations.

Prof S Olivier &
Heads of School

4.2 Business Plan and Risk Register

Academic Council noted the *Business Plan 2020/21 – End of Year Report*, that included the Key Performance Indicators, and the *Business Plan 2021/22*, incorporating a summary of high-level risks for 2021/22, from the Executive Director for Strategy and Planning. Both papers had been considered by the Board of Governors at its meeting on 23 September 2021. It was confirmed that the Annexes to the *Business Plan 2021/22* had been omitted from the papers and would be circulated by the Secretary.

F McLean Whyte

The *Business Plan 2021/22: First Quarter Report*, considered by the Board of Governors on 14 December 2021, was noted.

4.3 Outcome Agreement

Academic Council noted:

- the *Interim Outcome Agreement 2020/21: Self Evaluation Assessment Report*, previously considered by the Board of Governors at its meeting on 23 September 2021; and
- the *Outcome Agreement 2021/22*, considered by the Board of Governors at its meeting on 14 December 2021.

4.4 Academic Development Committee

Council noted a report of the meetings held on 13 July, 22 September and 22 November 2021 and, in particular, the following:

- *Recruitment and Overview of Future Plans*: An update from Student Recruitment highlighted the University's priority was its undergraduate SFC numbers and the aim was to increase numbers by 10% for next year. Conversion rates had declined, which resulted in a dedicated and trained conversion team to address this. In addition, investment continued in international markets, including the University's reliance on Nigeria and India, plus diversification into other countries, such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Kuwait, Egypt and parts of southern Africa.
- *Course Portfolio Analysis*: A Course Portfolio Analysis template had been created for Heads of School to complete in order to identify courses for cessation based on a set list of criteria.
- *Course Portfolio Developments*: four new course proposals was approved to proceed to validation, fifteen course change proposals were approved, and four cessation proposals were approved.

4.5 North East of Scotland College (NESCol)

Council considered *Developing the Strategic Relationship with NESCol*, a report from the Executive Director for Strategy and Planning. A draft agreement was being developed between the two institutions in respect of collaborative student recruitment and retention activities, and expansion of articulation routes

Both institutions had written jointly to Karen Watt, the Scottish Funding Council's Chief Executive Officer, seeking further information on the proposed Regional Pathways and future developments would be monitored closely.

5. ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STANDARDS

5.1 Annual Report to the Scottish Funding Council

The *Annual Report to the Scottish Funding Council: 2021-22 – Institution-Led Review of Quality*, endorsed by the Board of Governors on 23 September 2021, was noted.

5.2 Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR)

The Assistant Chief Academic Officer and University Secretary highlighted the excellent outcome of the recent ELIR, and confirmed the recommendations were being proactively addressed. The *Enhancement-Led Institutional Review Outcome Report* and *Technical Report*, published on 20 August 2021, were available at www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/quality-assurance-reports/The-Robert-Gordon-University. The Chair thanked all involved in the ELIR preparations.

5.3 Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee

Consideration was given to a report of the meetings held on 14 October and 30 November 2021.

5.3.1 Annual Appraisal Process: 2020/21

Academic Council considered and **endorsed** the *Annual Report on the Annual Appraisal Process for Session 2020/21*, for onward reporting to the Board of Governors. Council was reassured the *Annual Appraisal Process* provided a sound evidence base for it and the Board of Governors to have confidence in, and be satisfied with, the quality and standards of award-bearing courses.

In respect of the completeness of the quality assurance processes of the 11 Schools, the following was highlighted:

- all required *School Academic Board Appraisal Reports* had been submitted to the satisfaction of the Committee, with the exception of one. The Vice-Principal for Academic Development and Student Experience and the Assistant Chief Academic Officer had confidence in the course level appraisals, coupled with the outcomes from the School's recent Institution-Led Subject Review (ILSR), and therefore agreed that no revised *School Academic Board Appraisal Report* from the School would be required;
- all *External Examiner Annual Reports* had been received and responded to, with the exception of four, and the Committee was satisfied appropriate action was being taken to obtain these outstanding reports.

Board Report
[22.02.22]

Two key areas were highlighted for development and/or improvement from consideration of *School Academic Board Appraisal Reports*, and high level action plans were requested from the relevant Professional Support Departments to address both areas for development and the dissemination of good practice, as a basis for immediate action and for the monitoring of progress:

- *Enhancement of Teaching, Learning and Assessment*, including items relating to assessment and feedback, student engagement, and Course Leader and Personal Tutor support and development, by the Department for the Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Assessment; and
- *Recruitment and Marketing*, including conversion activity, by the Departments of Student Recruitment and Admissions and Communications.

The *Action Plans* aimed to deliver noticeable improvements during the current session, with their impact evident in the next Annual Appraisal Process cycle. Council **approved** the *Action Plan for Enhancement of Teaching, Learning and Assessment* for immediate action. Council members were encouraged to reflect on the *Action Plan for Enhancement of Teaching, Learning and Assessment* to ensure the actions were embedded into practice immediately.

J Strachan

Academic Council
Members

The *Action Plan for Recruitment and Marketing* was currently under development by the Head of Student Recruitment and Admissions and the Head of Communications and it would be shared with Academic Council at its next meeting.

E Corry &
C Thomson

School representatives on the Committee would be asked to provide updates/progress reports on actions identified through *School Academic Board Appraisal Reports* to the Committee at its meeting on 26 May 2022.

Council welcomed and commended the considerable evidence both of the continued resilience, innovation and adaptability demonstrated by all of the Schools and Departments, as well as RGU:Union, in the challenging environment. Another message from consideration of the *School Academic Board Appraisal Reports* was staff wellbeing, and the Committee had acknowledged that the Executive was aware of the burdens on staff and had instigated a number of measures to mitigate against them, such as Wellbeing Wednesday Afternoons and additional days of University-approved leave. The Committee also noted a repeat 'pulse' Staff Survey on staff mental wellbeing would run in December 2021 in order to seek views on the most effective ways to support staff.

Council acknowledged the effectiveness of the engagement of Schools and Departments undertaking the *Annual Appraisal Process* that had led to demonstrable evidence of extensive improvement actions that were either already complete or well advanced, and that the *Annual Appraisal Process* had confirmed these actions were adequate and appropriate.

Council also welcomed the significant number of achievements and examples of good and innovative practice identified by the School Academic Boards in their *Appraisal Reports*, despite the challenges faced due to operating in the pandemic. These had been compiled to enable wider dissemination across the University community, and the Department for

the Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Access would assist with their effective dissemination.

5.3.2 *Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee – Remit*

Academic Council **approved** the following revision to the Committee's remit with immediate effect [new text underlined]:

To consider policy matters and practice relating to teaching, learning and assessment, and the student experience, to formulate appropriate procedures relating to these, and determine appropriate actions for implementation to be considered through its Sub-Committees.

5.3.3 *Academic Regulations Sub-Committee: Student Conduct Procedure: Sanctions*

The Committee had noted the extensive discussion by the Academic Regulations Sub-Committee regarding the existing sanction of the automatic termination of enrolment for two instances of the same form of misconduct. Having noted the important issues explored by the Sub-Committee, the Committee had supported the recommendation to remove this specific sanction. In doing so, the following had been highlighted:

- The University's whole ethos was focused on inclusivity, widening access and education for all and it was important that the Academic Regulations reflected that ethos. The Regulations should ensure the maintenance of standards but should also ensure that they supported attainment and did not unnecessarily penalise students.
- The University had experienced a significant increase in the number of misconducts in Session 2020/21 when compared with previous sessions, with 237 cases of academic misconduct investigated, 219 of which were established with 20 of those resulting in the termination of enrolment due to multiple instances of misconduct.
- The Sub-Committee was of the view the change would allow termination of enrolment to be requested by the Head of School on a discretionary basis depending on, for example, the severity of the established misconduct and previous instances. This would negate the requirement for the exceptional waiver which was used where, for example, a student had submitted two plagiarised assessments in close proximity and had had no opportunity to learn from their first instance. The removal of the automatic termination would provide Heads of School with more discretion, would facilitate a more streamlined process, and would allow cases to be concluded more quickly which would be of benefit to both the student and the School.

Academic Council was reassured the removal of this automatic sanction would be a positive development and would provide Heads of School with greater discretion, whilst not precluding a request for the application of a termination of enrolment sanction in severe cases. The current sanction was deemed punitive and contrary to practice in the sector.

F McLean Whyte

Academic Council **approved**, with immediate effect, a revision to *Academic Regulation A3-Section 2: Student Conduct Procedure*, to remove the automatic termination of enrolment sanction for two instances of the same form of misconduct.

5.3.4 Items for Noting

The following additional items were noted:

- *Enhancement-Led Institutional Review*: the Assistant Chief Academic Officer provided updates on progress with addressing the ELIR recommendations.
- *Advance HE Anti-Racist Curriculum Project*: Committee members were asked to share the *Anti-Racist Curriculum Project Guidance* and resources, available at www.advance-he.ac.uk/anti-racist-curriculum-project/project-guide, with their respective School Academic Boards. The Equality and Diversity Sub-Committee was taking forward activities to respond to the project.
- *Quality Events*: The Student-Facing Support Services Review theme for Session 2021/22 was *Student Internal Communications*. It would be led by Rob Smith, Communications Manager. The initial meeting was expected to be held before Christmas, and the review meeting would be held in June 2022.
- *Academic Regulations Sub-Committee*: Following approval by the Academic Regulations Sub-Committee, Convener's and Chair's Action was taken on behalf of both the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee and Academic Council respectively to progress an amendment to *Regulation A6: Research Degrees*, relating to paragraph 11: The Award of PhD by Public Output, thereby facilitating immediate implementation.
- *Equality and Diversity Sub-Committee*: The Committee had received a detailed update on business from the Equality and Diversity Sub-Committee.
- *2021 Student Partnership Objective: Physical, Mental and Social Health*: The *2021 Student Partnership Objective, Physical, Mental and Social Health*, would continue for a second year, given there was still a phased approach to on-campus learning and the importance of understanding physical, mental, and social wellbeing of staff and students in this context continued.
- *Policy on Recording of Teaching and Learning Activities*: The Committee approved revisions to the *Policy on Recording of Teaching and Learning Activities*, that arose following discussion with the Inclusion Centre and to comply fully with new legislation implemented regarding the Equality Act 2010.
- *Assessment Moderation Guidance*: The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Sub-Committee received an update on guidance for *Assessment Moderation* from Dr Keir Thorpe, Academic Practice Developer in DELTA. The Sub-Committee had endorsed the proposed changes, believing they provided further clarity for staff. It was noted, however, that a more rigorous review and refresh of the policy and guidance would be required as the University planned its future approach to teaching and learning. The

Committee agreed Committee members would be asked to share the guidance with their respective School Academic Boards

5.4 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Emmanuel Akerele, the recently appointed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser, updated Council on progress with activities. His appointment straddled both the Human Resources Department and the Directorate of Student Life, approximately on a 70:30 basis with the aim of supporting staff and students. A key priority was mainstreaming of equality, diversity and inclusion across all functions, underpinned by the University's core value of respectfulness. The recent installation of Dame Evelyn Glennie as the University's Chancellor had been a particularly welcome and timely event.

Activities centred around the development of the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, and included:

- equality outcomes;
- policy review and strategy development;
- communications;
- training, development and support;
- staff engagement;
- staff and management representation and diversity;
- public sector equality duties;
- reporting mechanisms;
- charter marks.

He had been working closely with the Vice-Principal for Student Experience and Academic Development and the University Secretary in respect of 'decolonising the curriculum' within the context of the current review of the future of teaching and learning. The University Secretary had, as a member of the Executive, recently assumed responsibility for equality, diversity and inclusion.

5.5 External Examiner Appointments

In respect of nominations received from the School Academic Boards, Council:

- **approved** three re-allocations of duties; and
- **ratified** 18 appointments, four extensions of duties, and five re-allocations of duties.

6. RESEARCH

6.1 Research Committee

Council noted a report of the meeting held on 2 November 2021 and, in particular, the following:

- *Research Strategy*: The Committee's extensive discussion of the draft *Research Strategy*, that had helped inform the next iteration of the draft *Strategy* that had subsequently been circulated to all Schools.
- *Research Culture Survey*: a very high response rate had been achieved and Town Hall sessions were being organised for January 2022 to disseminate the outcomes.
- *Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021*: The REF team would publish the results of REF 2021 on 12 May 2022. Preparations were already underway to prepare an appropriate communications strategy. The Committee had also re-scheduled its third meeting of the session to Tuesday 17 May 2022 to accommodate the publication date.
- *Matters Arising*: The number of developments achieved to support research activities since the Committee's last meeting.
- *Research Committee*: The Committee agreed that the Research Degrees Committee's minutes (unredacted and therefore confidential) would be submitted to the Committee for information as a standing item.
- *Research Integrity and Ethics*: The Committee agreed, in principle, to the re-constitution of the Research Integrity and Ethics Sub-Committee, with formal links to the School Ethics Review Panels (SERPs). Work would now progress to finalise the remit and supporting procedures ahead of the first meeting scheduled for 20 January 2022. Once finalised, the paper would be circulated to the School Ethics Review Panels (SERPs) for feedback.
- *Key Performance Indicators*: The Committee agreed to establish a short-life working group to develop research key performance indicators/data. The working group had been scheduled to meet on 13 January 2022, 24 February 2022 and 12 April 2022.

6.2 Research Degrees Committee

Consideration was given to a report of the Research Degrees Committee meetings held on 22 June and 12 October 2021.

6.2.1 *Conferral of Awards*

Academic Council **approved** the awards to the undernoted students, and **agreed** the students and their supervisory teams be congratulated:

Graduate School

- (i) The degree of PhD be conferred on Ms Clare Hancock-Fraser, School of Applied Social Studies with effect from 3 June 2021, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: "The Search for Missing Pieces: A Grounded Theory of Adult Adoptees' Experiences of Searching and Re-Engaging with Birth Families".
- (ii) The degree of PhD be conferred on Mr Benedict Stephens Hemingway, School of Health Sciences, with effect from 23 July 2021, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: "The Utility of Mathematical Fitness-Fatigue Models for Assisting with the Planning of Physical Training for Sport".
- (iii) The degree of PhD be conferred on Mr Alasdair Crawford, School of Engineering, with effect from 9 August 2021, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: "Defect Detection and Condition Assessment of Adhesively-Bonded Joints Using Acoustic Emission Techniques".
- (iv) The degree of PhD be conferred on Mr Aliu Moomin, School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences, with effect from 23 August 2021, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: "*Terminalia ivorensis* and human health: the impact of *Terminalia ivorensis* on biomarkers of cyto- and genotoxicity in human cells *in vitro*".
- (v) The degree of PhD be conferred on Mr Auwalu Mohammed, School of Engineering, with effect from 12 September 2021, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: "An Investigation of Casing Structural Integrity in Shale Gas Horizontal Wells During Hydraulic Fracturing Using FEA and Machine Learning Algorithms".
- (vi) The degree of PhD be conferred on Mr Haider Al-Mashhadanie, School of Engineering, with effect from 13 September 2021, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: "Computational Fluid Dynamics modelling of Fluid flow inside Fractured Reservoirs".
- (vii) The degree of PhD be conferred on Mr James Gyasi-Addo, Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Built Environment, with effect from 6 October 2021, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: "Evaluation of the effect of urbanization on urban thermal behaviour using Urban Heat Island indicators – The case of the CBD of Accra".
- (viii) The degree of PhD be conferred on Ms Helen Dargie, School of Creative and Cultural Business, with effect from 18 October 2021, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: "'This post is sponsored but all opinions are my own...': Does fashion blogging offer an authentic voice? An investigation into the credibility of fashion blogger sponsored content and blogger perspectives on the tensions between authenticity and commercialisation".

- (ix) The degree of PhD be conferred on Mr Ofasa Abunumah, School of Engineering, with effect from 19 October 2021, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: "Immiscible Displacement of Trapped Oil through Experimental and Data Mining Techniques".
- (x) The degree of PhD be conferred on Mr Ranjeet Gupta, School of Engineering, with effect from 22 October 2021, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: "Magnetic Polyamide 6 Nanocomposites for Increasing Damage Tolerance Through Self-Healing of Composite Structures".
- (xi) The degree of PhD be conferred on Mrs Alison Lawman, Aberdeen Business School, with effect from 26 October 2021, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: "The Relevance of Trait Theory for the Professionalisation of the New Corporate Professions: A Case Study of Project Management".
- (xii) The degree of PhD be conferred on Mr Stephen Isa, Aberdeen Business School, with effect from 28 October 2021, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: "The Impact of Environmental Forces on Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation's Growth Strategy and Profitability".
- (xiii) The degree of PhD be conferred on Mr David Alaita, School of Engineering, with effect from 29 October 2021, in recognition of a programme of work entitled: "CFD Modelling of Multiphase Flow Transition in Presence of Solid Particles".

6.2.2 *Research Degrees Annual Appraisal for Session 2020/21*

Council noted the Committee's consideration of the *Research Degrees Annual Appraisal for Session 2020/21*, prior to its onward reporting to the Board of Governors.

Board of
Governors
[22.02.22]

6.2.3 *Items for Noting*

The following additional items were noted:

- *UKRI Phase 2 funding support for COVID-19*: The internal panel met to review research student submissions and confirm outcomes. The criteria used were based on a needs priority basis.
- *Institutional Research Culture Developments*: The Committee noted a number of initiatives designed to review and enhance both institutional research culture and strategy.
- *PhD by Public Output*: In line with the criteria for the above award, a working group of the Committee would meet during the session to explore potential revisions to *Academic Regulation A6: Research Degrees*.
- *Enhancement-Led Institutional Review – April 2021*: The Committee considered ongoing work in relation to the implementation of a system to verify attendance at the above DELTA course, and in turn the eligibility for a research student to potentially undertake paid teaching and demonstrating offered by their host academic School.

- *100 Projects@RGU Initiative*: The Committee noted the timeline for the above initiative which aimed to enhance research student recruitment in 2022 and subsequent years.
- *Supervision Excellence Programme – Session 2021/22*: The Committee noted the new supervision excellence programme which included external facilitators for the first time.

7. ACADEMIC APPEALS, MISCONDUCT AND COMPLAINTS

Council noted the *Annual Report of Complaints: August 2020 – July 2021*, and the *Summary of Academic Appeals and Misconduct: Session 2020/21*.

8. ACADEMIC COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

The *Academic Council Membership List: 2021/22*, updated following the recent nominations/ elections for School representatives, was noted.

The election for a Staff Governor, appointed by Academic Council, to the Board of Governors had concluded earlier that day, and it was confirmed that Dr John Isaacs, Head of the School of Computing, would serve from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2025.

9. ACADEMIC REGULATIONS – CHAIR'S ACTION

A paper detailing approval of exceptions to the *Academic Regulations* by the Chair of Academic Council was noted.

10. APPOINTMENT OF PROFESSORS, READERS AND TEACHING EXCELLENCE FELLOWS

Council noted a paper confirming the appointment of Professors, Readers and Teaching Excellence Fellows since 1 December 2020 and congratulated the appointees.

11. HONORARY DEGREES

The following honorary degrees were conferred at the December graduation ceremonies:

7 December 2021: Jane Spiers DLitt (*honoris causa*)

8 December 2021: Professor John Harper DSc (*honoris causa*)

12. HONORARY AND VISITING PROFESSORS

No new Honorary and Visiting Professor appointments had been made since Council's last meeting in June 2021.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Academic Council would next meet on Tuesday 15 March 2022 at 2.00pm.

14. VALEDICTORY

On behalf of Academic Council, the Assistant Chief Academic Officer and University Secretary wished to record its thanks and appreciation of Professor Don Cairns who would be retiring from the University in the new year. Professor Cairns had joined the University in 2003, been promoted to Professor of Pharmaceutical and Medicinal Chemistry in 2006, and had been, since 2010, the Head of the School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences. He had also served as the Academic Council appointed Staff Governor on the Board of Governors, and held several significant external appointments and memberships.

Professor S Olivier, C