Present: Principal (in the chair)  
Dr M Alexander, Dr P Allan, Dr E Bonnar, Dr C Cassidy, Prof D Christie, Prof B Clark, Prof B Conway, Prof C Cooper, Dr D Dixon, Prof A Duffy, Prof R Finlay, Dr M Grant, Dr D Harle, Prof S Hart, Prof I Hunter, Prof A Inceck, Mr S Jennings, Dr J Liggat, Prof S McArthur, Prof S MacGregor, Prof D Mackenzie, Dr A McLaren, Prof X Mao, Prof S Marshall, Prof J Murphy, Dr V O’Halloran, Prof K Paudyal, Dr K Savage, Prof E Shaw, Prof Z Shipton, Dr S Terzis, Dr D Willison, Dr J Wilson, Prof P Winn

Attending: Mr K Adjei, Prof V Belton, Mr J Ferns, Mrs H Gould, Prof C Grant, Mr H Hall, Mrs E Magennis, Dr A McLaren Dr C Prior, Mr D Thompson

Apologies: Dr G Akram, Mr T Collins, Br B Dickson, Prof S Carter, Dr J Ferguson, Prof J Fraser, Dr D Greenhalgh, Dr D Grierson, Prof A Kendrick, Prof W Kerr, Prof P McGregor, Prof K Miller, Prof D Nash, Prof D Nickson, Dr I Oswald, Prof S Porta, Dr S Rasmussen, Prof I Ruthven, Dr C Schaschke, Dr T Tanyimboh, Dr R Tate, Prof J Thomson, Prof R Thomson, Prof L Woolfson

Formal Matters

11586. Welcome  
The Principal welcomed Senators to the first meeting of the 2013-14 session. He particularly welcomed newly elected and appointed Senators and representatives from the Students’ Association. He explained the increasingly proactive role of Senate in recent years and its ability to help define and deliver the strategic priorities of the University. New members were encouraged to contact the Vice-Principal or Committee Manager to ask any questions about Senate’s terms of reference or remit.

11587. Minutes of the meeting of 12 June 2013  
Members approved the minute as an accurate record of the meeting.

11588. Matters Arising  
There were none.

Presentations and Items for Discussion

11589. Principal's Report  
In addition to noting the Convener’s Actions undertaken by the Principal since the last meeting and listed in Paper B, Senate was provided with an update on the following items:

- The Estates Development Framework had delivered improvements in several areas already and the expansion of the Advanced Forming Research Centre was
scheduled for completion in 2014. Major estates developments would come to Senate to seek key educational and pedagogical perspectives;

- The Chancellor’s Fellowship Programme was underway and would result in a number of key staff appointments designed to build on and develop the University’s Early Career Researcher activity. Executive Deans confirmed that good applicants were emerging from the process;
- A Scottish Government Spending Review announcement was imminent. The sector’s expectations were for a flat cash settlement. The Principal noted that the University was well positioned to be able to attract additional strategic funding from the Funding Council;
- The University was shortlisted for two awards categories in the Times Higher Education Awards 2013. These categories were Outstanding Contribution to Innovation and Technology and Entrepreneurial University of the Year;
- University staff had won a number of significant competitive research grants in recent months. The Principal listed a number of individual grant holders and amounts won; and
- The formal installation of Lord Smith of Kelvin as the University’s new Chancellor would take place on 3 October.

Senate also received an update from Prof Belton on the activity of student interns engaged over the summer on projects supported by the Education Excellence fund. These include 38 undergraduate research interns (in addition to 35 fully supported by external organisations), 27 students working with Professional Services and 16 students working in teams, in partnership with academics, on university-wide curriculum development activities. It was noted that the excellent work of these four teams, which focused on the areas of assessment and feedback, personal development planning, the flexible curriculum and alumni clubs, and was summarised in the posters on display, was in some cases already impacting positively on student experience and in others provided a strong basis for further development.

Prof Grant provided a brief update on the University’s progress in delivering its initial MOOCs in Forensic Science and Business. Timescales had stretched slightly with Forensic Science now expected to launch in January 2014 and Business shortly after this. The intention was to run the MOOCs first before reviewing the results to better determine risks and future strategies. There was strong anecdotal evidence of a global demand for MOOCs. It was confirmed that the University’s initial MOOCs would not be credit-bearing courses. All staff would be made aware when the courses launched.

11590. ELIR – Update
Prof Belton provided an update on the University’s ELIR preparations. A full draft of the reflective analysis would be prepared by the end of September and would be shared with several Court members, including the Convener of Court, for comment. Engagement was also planned with Heads of Departments/Schools and other staff. The document would be submitted to the QAA in October. Senate was content with the preparatory work being done and noted that ELIR would continue as a standing item on the agenda.

11591. Review of Ordinances and Regulations Committee of Senate
Prof Grant introduced a paper on proposed changes to the arrangements for providing scrutiny of amendments to Regulations. Senate heard that a change was required to deliver a more efficient and effective process but was assured that appropriate oversight would continue to be provided by the Quality Assurance Committee, with Senate being assured of the robustness of processes through appropriate annual reporting. Senate approved the proposed changes.

Strategic Session

11592. National Student Survey Results 2012-13
Senate was presented with an analysis of the University’s NSS results for 2012-13, which noted the key messages, the University’s overall position in relation to benchmark institutions and potential actions to help deliver positive change. Senate heard that:

- The University’s current policy on assessment and feedback was under review and would come to the next meeting of Senate for discussion;

[ACTION]
- The Quality Assurance Committee could have a role in sharing best practice and monitoring and would meet later in the month to discuss this;
- A significant amount of work was already underway to address a number of the issues identified;
- A number of other potential initiatives and projects were currently being scoped.

A strategic discussion followed on areas where it was felt that improvements should be sought, such as assessment and feedback, organisation and management, course content, and consistency in practice across Faculties and Departments/Schools.

During discussions, it was noted that:

- NSS was, essentially, an exit survey for a particular cohort of students and the University’s recently implemented approach to surveying all students on a yearly basis may have an eventual positive influence on NSS responses from final year students. The results of the first such survey had been made available on SharePoint so that Departments and Schools could perform their own analyses;
- It was important to respond to the concerns of students and all Departments and Schools should be urged to have student satisfaction as an item on their agendas;
- The outputs of the student interns’ project will include the development of a MyPlace page with resources for staff to use in implementing best practice, such as sharing the reports of student/staff committees widely;
- Achieving consistency in practice across Faculties and Departments can be a challenge and the use of targeted resource could help. It should be possible to measure the success of any attempt to standardise;
- Mechanisms for sharing best practice across the institutions are important and identifying best practice in the sector would be helpful. A paper highlighting examples of sector best practice should be produced;

[ACTION]
- Students and staff often had a different understanding of ‘feedback’ and students are sometimes unwilling to make use of existing opportunities for feedback. An early warning system to highlight poor performing students and target support could help;
- Creating appropriate monitoring processes to ensure compliance with existing policies and procedures was key;
- Current work to develop University-wide values should help inform practice and raise awareness amongst staff of being part of a large organisation with specific ambitions;
- It is important to communicate and engage using social media outlets and alternative media formats. The current University policy of responding only to emails received from a .strath.ac.uk address should be reviewed; and
- The functionality available through MyPlace may be under-utilised.

11593. Widening Access

Senate received three presentations on the following aspects of widening access activity:

- The current recruitment position and the status of on-going negotiations with SFC on the 2014-15 Outcome Agreement;
- The University’s widening access strategy and the development of a the University’s policy on the use of contextual admissions; and
- The development of the University’s Engineering Academy, including the uptake of the 80 additional SFC places.

Senate noted that future Outcome Agreements would be based on a three-year timescale and that this created a better fit with the University’s own planning horizon. Work to develop the University’s 2014/15 three-year Outcome Agreement was underway and a draft would be shared with Senate in November

[ACTION]

Senate heard that the environment for the recruitment of widening access students was becoming intensely competitive, driven by the additional widening access places provided by SFC for 2013/14. This had created a challenge for recruiters this year and remedial action was required to ensure that targets were met. Future years were likely to bring similar challenges as SFC additional places were recurring and therefore the University was introducing a new policy on the use and application of contextual admissions data. Such a policy would reduce the need for remedial action in future years by assisting the recruiters in identifying widening access students.

Senate was informed that current University initiatives to increase access for disadvantaged groups were largely focused on raising general aspirations amongst these potential students. In future, a greater focus would be placed on creating specific routes into Strathclyde for these students. The Engineering Academy was cited as a good example of such a route. A transparent policy on the use of contextual admissions would also help in this area. Senate approved the draft Policy on Contextual Admissions.

The Principal was concerned to hear anecdotal evidence that suggested a lack of awareness amongst local schools of the University’s open and inclusive approach to widening access. He stated that he would be keen to meet with all local Secondary School Heads to clarify the University’s position and asked that appropriate arrangements be made. The Director of Student Experience and Enhancement agreed to take this forward.

[ACTION]

The Principal also asked to be provided with statistics to show the percentage of the 2013/14 first year student intake from SIMD20 and SIMD40 backgrounds. The Director of Strategy and Policy agreed to provide this information.

[ACTION]

Senate noted the success to date of the Engineering Academy model. The Principal stated that he was keen to see this success replicated in other areas through adoption of the model. The Student President suggested that USSA could liaise with the Engineering Faculty to ensure that the incoming ‘Associate’ students were aware of the representation available to them. This offer was welcomed.

It was noted that the partnership approach, with local colleges was already replicated in other areas, such as in Education and Social Sciences, where student numbers had increased in recent years. The approach to assessment and feedback for these particular students would need careful consideration.

Items for Approval or Recommendation, without discussion

11594. Senate Appointments and Membership on Main Committees 2013-14
Senate approved this item.

11595. Annual Statement on Institution-led Review of Quality 2012-13
Senate approved this item and recommended to Court that the final report be endorsed.

11596. Streamlining the Regulatory Framework: Revised Ordinances and Regulations 2013-14
Senate recommended the revised Ordinances and Regulations to Court for approval.

11597. Code of Practice on Investigations Involving Human Beings
Senate noted and approved this item.

Committee and Faculty Reports to Senate

11598. Executive Team
Senate noted the report from the Executive Team

11599. Court
Senate noted the report from Court

11600. Education Strategy Committee
Senate noted the report from the Education Strategy Committee

11601. Quality Assurance Committee
Senate noted the report from the Quality Assurance Committee

11602. Ordinances and Regulations Committee
Senate noted the report from the Ordinances and Regulations Committee

11603. Strathclyde Business School
Senate noted the report from the Business School and approved the staffing appointments noted in the paper.

11604. Faculty of Engineering
Senate noted the report from the Faculty of Engineering and approved the changes to prizes and the staffing appointments noted in the paper.

11605. Senate Discipline Committee
Senate noted the reports from the Senate Discipline Committee

11606. Higher Doctorates Committee
Senate noted the report from the Higher Doctorates Committee and approved the recommendation for the award of DSc.

11607. Report from Senate Business Committee
Senate noted the report from the Senate Business Committee.

Reserved Business