**University of Glasgow**

## Academic Standards Committee – Friday 15 April 2016

## Academic Review: Update on Progress on the Recommendations arising from the Academic Review of Glasgow International College (GIC) held on 26 March 2015

**Dr Kenneth Hutton, Academic Collaborations Manager and Clerk to the Review Panel**

All recommendations were discussed at the joint UoG/GIC Collegiate Board of Studies (CBoS) and the Joint Academic Management Board (JAMB) at the end of 2015 and actions carried forward by relevant staff.

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*Recommendation 1 (Transition):*

The Panel **recommends** that GIC and UoG address issues, especially around independent learning, for Foundation students making the transition from the College to the University. Although we are aware that the Transitions Project is running (for students going on to Social Sciences), and that GIC has initiated a mentoring process, we feel that more could be done to address transition issues. Specifically, this recommendation contains the following elements:

1. GIC should review the way in which students are supported throughout their programme to encourage a transition from being highly supported to a more independent mode of study that better matches expectations of UoG.
2. UoG should review ways in which highly supported students who enter second year are supported to become more independent. With the two institutions working together, the transitions project in the College of Social Sciences has helped student transition and UoG should look at how it can further work with GIC on induction plans to aid transition.
3. GIC should embed the mentoring process, perhaps even making it a compulsory activity, in order to ensure that students who currently do not take advantage of it do so in the future. Mentoring is especially relevant for students who are least likely to take it up voluntarily since they are likely to be most in need of help and most likely to benefit from it.
4. UoG also needs to look at mentoring and what it can do to help GIC ensure this works to the advantage of students who may find the transition difficult. This is particularly the case for Foundation students who enter UoG at Year Two.
5. There is a lack of awareness amongst GIC students as to what it might be like to study at UoG, what is expected of them and how they need to take control of their own learning. It seems that some students are surprised and unprepared for life as a UoG student and GIC and UoG should work together to address this, perhaps utilising the experience of GIC alumni to try to make UoG more visible to GIC students generally and in more detail.
6. Bearing in mind that Foundation Certificate students enter UoG at Year Two, UoG should reconsider how it scaffolds student advice to fill any gaps which may arise due to GIC students starting later than most of the rest of their UoG cohort who will mostly have come from school and started in Year One together.

*[Paragraphs 3.1.3/4/7/8/10]*

For the attention of:  **GIC Senior Management, CBoS**

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***Response - Dean of Learning & Teaching (Science & Engineering):***

It has not been possible in the CoSE to appoint a member of staff equivalent to the College of Social Sciences Assistant International Student Learning Officer because of budgetary constraints. (A job description had already been drawn up in consultation with Jenny Deane and Nathalie Sheridan, Effective Learning Adviser.) Instead, discussions have focussed on the following actions within existing resources:

1. Enhancing an event run by CoSE in April for FC students to include students from GIC who are currently at UoG and provide personal feedback

2. Introducing welcome packs, which are issued by Engineering to new students, to students at GIC much earlier than in the past, to improve awareness of the opportunities and expectations and UoG

3. Encouraging earlier contact between students from GIC and advisers in Science, where the choice of courses is important

4. Running a separate event for PM students with emphasis on research and other aspirational aspects of masters-level education at UoG

5. Communication will be improved between GIC and subject-specific clubs and societies at UoG so that interested students can participate in activities while they are still at GIC (see also Recommendation 7)

6. Effective Learning Advisers already run sessions specially for GIC students but attendance has been poor and the reasons need to be explored; the timing in week 0 may not have been the best

7. The use of computer packages (probably matlab) at GIC will be explored, both to prepare students better for the use of such applications at UoG and also to enliven courses

8. Engineering has looked at the possibility of running "booster classes" to make up for academic gaps between GIC and UoG but the timing is again difficult; attendance is likely to be poor before Week 1 but the timetable rapidly fills and makes extra classes tricky to timetable as teaching progresses

9. We will strongly recommend that students transferring from GIC to arrive at UoG in time for freshers' week so that they have a full opportunity to engage with University life

10. We would like to explore the relation between results for individual courses at GIC and subsequent performance at UoG but have not yet been able to acquire the necessary information; this would inform the development of academic bridging material and could lead to a more refined progression requirement

***Response – English for Academic Study (EAS):***

EAS has recently carried out a review of in-sessional provision in UoG, which has been submitted to the Vice-Principal for Academic & Educational Innovation. This may result in a case for further in-sessional English for Academic Purposes (EAP) related support being put forward. However, this is still in the discussion stages.

***Response – Dean of Learning and Teaching (MVLS)***

The CoMVLS for MVLS is still exploring how it might support students from their first day rather than from their first assessment. Issues have been identified as follows:

1. Currently the later intake finish their GIC studies around the same time that teaching week zero begins but, naturally, want to take a break.

2. This complicates enrolment and leads to students enrolling in weeks 1 and 2 and, particularly in L2, there is limited spaces left in courses by that time.

3. MVLS will continue to work with GIC to ensure that students are aware that a late start makes creating a 120 credit curriculum very difficult.

4. Across all GIC students there needs to be a push to get them to engage with MyCampus and enrolment at an earlier stage.

5. The current system of mini-progress reviews does identify all students at risk and works well. The difference is that these pick up the at risk students after they have completed assessments etc. that let us identify them as at risk.

6. Trying to do this at an earlier stage is difficult with the data available.

7. The Social Science approach of building in support from day one seems to be proving more useful for these students.

## *Response – GIC:*

Meetings have taken place with MVLS and Science & Engineering with an intention of addressing these issues, as well as continued work with Social Sciences. Our intention is to act on these concerns and look for internal resources to help with activities going forward. Our focus for the coming year is on:

1. Tailoring content in the Foundation areas to ensure it gives students the best possible preparation for the courses they are progressing onto;

2. Working with the University to stress the importance of enrolling on time and following correct enrolment procedures to ensure they do not arrive late;

3. Working with subject-specific clubs and societies to offer a wider integration into the UoG academic community;

4. Ensuring that data-sharing is sufficient to support initiatives going forward.

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### *Recommendation 2 (Data and Entry Requirements):*

The Panel **recommends** that GIC and UoG initiate a protocol around gathering data on students over their relevant learning career, from their entry to GIC to exit at UoG. This is intended to produce meaningful statistics on retention, attainment and progression throughout the students' career in Glasgow and would help identify areas where improvements are needed and resources can be focussed. The Panel felt that the current lack of meaningful data (in both directions: UoG/GIC) is inhibiting attempts to scaffold the transition from GIC to UoG. *[Paragraphs 3.1.11 and 6.3.3]*

For the attention of: **GIC Senior Management, CBoS**

For information: **JAMB, JSMB, SRC**

In close connection to this is the issue of entry requirements and concerns raised by the Panel where is seems that students have been admitted with lower level qualifications or grades than stated in the published entrance requirements. GIC agreed that a formal sharing point be instituted each year whereby entrance requirements are compared to what qualifications and grades GIC students actually have in order to ensure there are no discrepancies and that there is complete transparency in this area. This formal sharing point would be best dealt with through RIO. [Paragraph 3.1.2]

For the attention of: **GIC Senior Management, RIO**

For information: **CBoS, JAMB**

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*Response – CBoS Convener:*

CBoS discussed ways of retrieving data from MyCampus and **agreed** that since Social Sciences were able to provide this for their subject area, they would modify their existing MyCampus queries to provide data for the other subject areas. This will be actioned by the CBoS convener, Mr Fred Cartmel, and Andrew Napier**.**

CBoS members also **agreed** that data from GIC was also needed to gain a fuller picture of student progression and attainment issues. This contains academic and English results as well as attendance records. It was already provided by GIC to MaRIO and will be disseminated to the Convener, Deans and any others on the Panel who would find it useful as soon as it is available and on an ongoing basis. This will be actioned by Katy Scott.

CBoS members **noted** that retrieving data on GIC students was difficult because of the way that the data is entered into MyCampus. Members **agreed** that the GIC data would be most usefully extrapolated together with UoG data if it were available from MyCampus and that this would require input of the GIC data.

*Response – MaRIO:*

An existing MyCampus query (UOG_PLANNING_ID_FORMER_GIC_V3) pulls basic student details only, however MaRIO is working with SLSD to create a better top level query which includes CGPA, exit award and degree classification of former GIC students. As an interim measure, this data has been manually collated by MaRIO and shared with GIC. Details of performance at individual course level is a longer term project; Deans of Learning & Teaching are leading on this and creating a 'wish list' of data to which they would like access.

GIC will now include details of the student's initial qualification (that used to obtain entry to GIC) in the progression spreadsheet which is sent to MaRIO in May and August. The progression spreadsheet will also include grades for all courses completed at GIC. This document will be stored by MaRIO and shared with Deans of Learning & Teaching as required. This will allow UoG to have a clear picture of all educational attainment by students prior to enrolment at UoG and ensure that GIC are adhering to published entry requirements.

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*Recommendation 3 (Subject Moderator Role):*

The Panel **recommends** that GIC and UoG jointly (through CBoS) clarify the role of the Subject Moderator in order to provide a clear understanding of what they are expected to do. Although the Subject Moderator process is working, the Panel feel it would be enhanced by further clarity. It would also be useful if the role covered the communication of UoG curriculum changes to GIC in as short a time as possible to allow GIC to revise marketing materials and update advice for students. *[Paragraph 6.3.5]*

For the attention of: **GIC Senior Management, CBoS, Subject Moderators**

For information: **JAMB**

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*Response - CBoS:*

The Subject Moderators' role was discussed at CBoS and members **noted** that developing a generic Moderator remit would be problematic since subject areas had subtle differences in the requirements of the Moderator and that this was further affected by student numbers.

Members **agreed** that some remit requirements could be generic in order to ensure that the role was consistent across subject areas, but that the best way forward would be one remit for Science & Engineering and another for the other subject areas.

Members also **agreed** that it would be useful in creating the new Moderator remit to know what GIC's External Examiners' remit was in order to satisfy the wording of this recommendation. This part of the recommendation (clarifying the Moderators' remit) is being actioned by Deans/GIC. It is anticipated that the CoMVLS and CoSE remit may be the same**.**

*Response - Dean of Learning & Teaching (Science & Engineering)***:**

This issue was discussed at CBoS and members felt that School level changes could be missed if Moderators were tasked with communicating curriculum changes which would affect pathways. As an alternative, members **agreed** that one month before CBoS (or its successor) meets, School Learning & Teaching Conveners should notify Deans of any curriculum changes and Deans would communicate this to GIC through CBoS.

Convenors of Learning & Teaching in CoSE were asked at the most recent L&T committee meeting to communicate any significant course changes to GIC.

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### Recommendation 4 (Integration):

The Panel **recommends** that GIC review the way it deals with student integration issues internally. In certain subject areas the student population is quite polarised at GIC and, aside from the possibility of solutions at the recruitment stage, some aspects of educational culture could be promoted with a view to enhancing the understanding of diversity and integration. This could help the student experience and foster independent learning. This objective should be aligned to UoG strategy and dovetail with the diversification agenda. *[Paragraphs 3.1.7/8 and 3.2.4 3.2]*

For the attention of:  **GIC Senior Management**

For information: **CBoS, JAMB, SRC Subject Moderators**

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*Response – GIC:*

GIC is continuing its efforts to promote an educational culture beyond simply achieving the requisite outcomes to progress onto their chosen degree; both embedded into the curriculum (groupwork and class discussion assessments) and outside (book clubs, educational trips). However, the difficulty lies in ensuring students engage with those learning opportunities and understand the importance of them. The college network will be reviewing its 'graduate outcomes' next year to ensure that students are leaving GIC with the necessary attributes to succeed in Higher Education, including – but not limited to – digital literacy, independent learning and citizenship.

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### Recommendation 5 (Programme Evaluation):

The Panel **recommends** that GIC review its programme evaluation and feedback processes with a view to achieving better alignment with current practice across the HE Sector. It was noted that work has begun on this but the Panel would recommend further progress jointly between GIC and UoG. *[Paragraphs 3.4.4]*

For the attention of:  **GIC Senior Management, Subject Moderators, Deans of Learning & Teaching**

For information: **CBoS**, **JAMB, SRC**

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*Response – GIC:*

Programme Evaluation and Feedback has been recently reviewed across the college network with an intention of capturing feedback in line with norms across the HE sector while also being relevant to an entirely international student body. The result is a new survey which will be used from May 2016 onwards.

In terms of working with the University, GIC had meetings with the Director of Planning and Business Intelligence with a view to how the University sought to survey its students. We will look to mirror changes in UoG's surveys going forward.

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*Recommendation 6 (Science and Engineering Provision):*

The Panel **recommends** that the balance of study skills and subject-specific elements for Science and Engineering programmes at GIC be reviewed. This is a joint action on GIC and UoG (the latter conducted primarily through Subject Moderators and Deans of Learning & Teaching). Cohort sizes are beginning to grow in Science and Engineering to the point where meaningful analysis of student performance at UoG can inform the shaping of support at GIC. *[Paragraph 6.3.5]*

For the attention of: **GIC Senior Management, CBoS, Subject Moderators, Deans of Learning & Teaching**

For information: **CBoS, JAMB**

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*Response - Dean of Learning & Teaching (Science & Engineering) and GIC*:

GIC is developing a new module of material for engineering and physical science; this is likely to require revision of the Physical Sciences and Basic Engineering modules as well. The material is being developed in collaboration with UoG and should improve academic aspects of articulation to engineering, physical science and mathematics.

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*Recommendation 7 (Student Participation in Clubs and Societies):*

GIC students appear not to feel as though they are part of the wider university community and do not self-identify as students of the UoG. One specific reason given was that students had tried to join UoG clubs and societies and were told that they were too late and that membership was closed. The Panel **recommends** that GIC and UoG work with the SRC to smooth that pathway. *[Paragraph 6.1]*

For the attention of: **GIC Senior Management, SRC**

For information: **CBoS, JAMB**

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*Response – GIC and SRC:*

GIC has communicated with SRC on this and there is an ongoing dialogue towards fulfilment of the recommendation.

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***Recommendation 8 (Student Support, Representation and Engagement):***

The Panel **recommends** that GIC have a dialogue with SPARQS (Student Participation in Quality Scotland: http://www.sparqs.ac.uk) who might be able to provide useful material and perhaps even physical engagement on student training and representation which could benefit student representation in GIC in a way that would make it more aligned to the Scottish Quality Enhancement Framework. *[Paragraph 3.4.4]*

For the attention of: **GIC Senior Management**

For information: **CBoS, JAMB, SRC**

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***Response – GIC:***

> We are currently undergoing a review of our student representative system that has produced a report, and once those findings have been reflected upon we will engage with SPARQS in order to progress fulfilment of the recommendation.

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***Recommendation 9 (Review of Boards):***

The Panel **recommends** that, in consultation with GIC, the current three Boards are reviewed. Currently the CBoS reports to the JAMB which reports to the ASC. A review discussion could be centred around the CBoS reporting directly to the ASC and the JAMB being stood down – provided there are no Quality Assurance issues as a result. Any operational work at the JAMB could be taken on by the CBoS and the remainder, the more strategic issues, could be taken on by the JSMB which could meet more frequently – perhaps three times per year rather than the current twice. This would require some minor membership changes to the CBoS and perhaps the JSMB. [Paragraph 5.1.1]

For the attention of: **GIC Senior Management, CBoS, JAMB, JSMB**

For information: **SRC**

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***Response – CBoS and JAMB:***

> The Clerk of CBoS submitted a proposal (to CBoS) which was discussed at the meeting of 26 November 2015 and recommendations were submitted to the JAMB. The JAMB, at the meeting of 9 December 2015, accepted these recommendations with certain modifications with the result that *at this stage* of the Review of Boards the following has been agreed but more work is needed to finalise the proposal. Specifically, CBoS could take over the following from JAMB, to:
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> 1. Consider the programme/course recommendations;
> 2. Approve proposed programmes and courses and changes to them (see item 7 below);
> 3. Consider issues relating to the transition of GIC students to the University;
> 4. Consider and approve GIC's External Examiner nominations (see item 7 below);
> 5. Consider the Annual Course Monitoring reports and recommend changes where necessary;
> 6. Approve the pathways available to GIC students (see item 7 below).
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> It was agreed (at JAMB) that the following matters would need consideration or action:
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> 1. Membership of CBoS might be affected by restructuring the Boards but would not need to be altered radically. It was suggested that:

a) A representative from Kaplan International Colleges on CBoS might be useful, however, this could be by invitation as appropriate. GIC/KIC will take this forward;

b) MaRIO should continue to be actively involved, with a representative on CBoS;

c) Deans of Learning and Teaching should be permitted to nominate a representative on CBoS;

d) Mr Cartmel should continue as CBoS Convenor in the short to medium term;

2. It was agreed that the JAMB would continue to exist in a much reduced form and that consultations would take place electronically following the model of the University's Collaborations Group;

3. The Clerk of CBoS would include a Clerk's note in the CBoS minute to confirm JAMB approval where relevant;

4. JAMB would continue to submit an annual report to ASC;

5. The proposed changes required the approval of JSMB and ASC before they could be deemed to be effective;

6. The Clerk of CBoS would liaise with Professor Coton on the submission to ASC and JSMB;

7. Although the JAMB would continue in a reduced online form to monitor any CBoS approvals, the necessity for the continued existence of JAMB would be reviewed in due course.

The proposals will be refined and re-presented to CBoS and JAMB in May/June 2016 then the outcome would be submitted to ASC and JSMB for approval prior to implementation. This is being actioned by the Clerk of CBoS in consultation with Professor Frank Coton.

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*Recommendation 10 (ADU Involvement in the next SER):*

The Panel **recommends** that ADU be involved in support for the next academic review, possibly including preparation of (but not writing) the next SER.

For the attention of: **GIC Senior Management, ACO**

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*Response GIC and ACO:*

The Academic Collaborations Office and GIC have agreed to work together to include the ADU at the next Academic Review to satisfy this recommendation.

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*Recommendation 11 (Student Welfare):*

The Panel **recommends** that GIC investigate reasons for and explore solutions to student welfare issues connected to the average of 3.5 out of 5 for this area in programme evaluations.

For the attention of: **GIC Senior Management**

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*Response – GIC:*

We have reworded the question on welfare and support services to hopefully generate more meaningful data. As noted, the question previously asked all students to comment on their experience of welfare support when they had perhaps not used the services. We have also had further communication with the Counselling & Psychological Services who have been extremely helpful, although capacity concerns at the service have meant reduced access to

the services this year. We have explored peer mentoring training with the Counselling and Psychological Services to assist going forward.