

SUMMARY REPORT OF COURT 23rd APRIL 2020

The University Court met virtually today, 23rd April 2020, following the Extraordinary meeting of Senate which took place virtually on 9th April 2020 having been specially convened to discuss the University's response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

What follows is a high-level summary of the main issues addressed by Court today, which will also appear on the University website. Minutes of the meeting will be published on the University website in due course.

The Court thanked the Principal, the Executive, staff and students for the exemplary way in which they have worked together in response to the Covid-19 crisis. The efforts of all concerned were warmly commended.

Court also thanked Eilidh Fulton for her work as President of the Students' Association and the strong leadership she has shown throughout her term. Court looks forward to marking her contribution, in person, later this year.

Rob Woodward
Chair of Court

1. Principal & Vice Chancellor & Executive Board Report

The report provided a summary of items arising since the previous Court meeting in the context of the impact that Covid-19 has had on the institution. Among topics highlighted were the pride that the University feels for its student nurses, 99% of whom have volunteered to work for the NHS during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the students on the BSc Paramedic Science programme who have also joined the Covid-19 NHS emergency response working with the Scottish Ambulance Service. The University is also using portable 3D printers to make plastic headbands for protective health equipment for the NHS such as face shields and has donated 6,700 nitrile gloves, 600 non-sterile gloves, 1,400 aprons and 32 new safety glasses to NHS services. The GCU Foundation's Kiltwalk Appeal raised more than £10,000 in just a number of days to support students facing hardship during the pandemic so they can pay for vital essentials such as food and rent. The University's Chancellor, Dr Annie Lennox OBE, shared an uplifting message of support with the University community and urged us all to continue to work together in the extraordinary manner in which we have these past few weeks, keeping positive and most importantly, staying safe.

Court will review the implications of Covid-19 on the University at its meeting in June once the implications of the pandemic on the sector and GCU in particular are better understood.

The University's continued strong performance in the recent THE University Impact Rankings was commended. Despite a 60% increase in global participation, the University moved up a place to 43rd out of 767 universities and ranks 8th in the UK.

2. Chief Operating Officer's Report

The Court noted the report on the key activities across the Chief Operating Officer portfolio taking place in response to the Coronavirus pandemic and highlights the next steps to move the University through this period and beyond.

3. Student President's Report

The Student President went on to report on the activities of the Students' Association in supporting the student body and the University during the Coronavirus pandemic.

4. University Secretary's Report

The Court approved the final version of the GCU Amendment Order of Council 2020 amending the GCU Order of Council 2010 in line with the requirements of the HE Governance (Scotland Act 2016). This will now be submitted to the Privy Council and then laid before the Scottish Parliament to come into force on 1st October 2020.

The Court also noted the progress towards recruiting two lay governors for the new academic year and the annual Complaints Handling Report.

5. Final Draft of Outcome Agreement 2020/21

Court approved the final 2020/21 Outcome Agreement and National Measures which will now be submitted to the Scottish Funding Council by 30th April 2020.

6. Student Recruitment Report

The Court noted a high level overview of student recruitment in academic year 2019/20 as at 6th March 2020 including the early implications of the Covid-19 pandemic on 2020/21 recruitment of home and international students along with the details of the actions which the University is undertaking.

7. 2020 HESA Performance Indicators

The Court noted the report which provides an overview of GCU's performance in the 2020 HESA Performance Indicators relating to participation of under-represented groups and the key teaching and quality metrics set within the context of the Scottish HE sector. The University's performance has improved on the previous year in key areas, and the University performs very strongly in the context of the sector in Scotland.

8. Strategy 2030

Court supported Strategy 2030 noting the strength and relevance of the University's mission, vision and goals in the context of a future environment heavily influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic. Given prevailing circumstances, it was agreed that the Strategy launch would be postponed to December 2020 / January 2021. Prior to the launch the Court would review the Strategy and KPIs with their associated targets in light of unfolding external events.

9. Research Bulletin and REF Update

The Court noted the Research Bulletin, which provided an update on the achievements of the University in relation to research funding, along with an update on the response of the response of the GCU research community to Covid-19. The Court also noted the REF Update which provides details on the progress with preparations for REF2021.

10. GCNYC

The Court noted the updated provided by the DVC Strategy on the actions that had been taken at GCNYC in response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

11. Report from Senate meeting held on 6th March 2020 and the Extraordinary Meeting on 9th April 2020

The Court noted the business of the Senate meeting on 6th March 2020 and the Extraordinary Meeting on 9th April 2020 which was specially convened to discuss the University's response to the Coronavirus pandemic. Court approved the revised composition of Senate in compliance with the HE Governance (Scotland) Act 2016, which was agreed by Senate at its meeting on 6th March 2020.

12. Standing Committee Business

The Court noted reports presented by the Chairs of the Audit and Finance and General Purposes Committees.

13. Media Coverage Analysis – March Update

The Court noted the report which highlights the media coverage received by the University in March.

14. Date of next Court meeting

The next meeting of Court will take place on Thursday 25th June 2020.