

Glasgow Caledonian University Court

Minutes of the University Court held on 21st September 2023 at 9am in The Lantern

Present: Rob Woodward (Chair), Chidozie Nwaigwe, Sylvie Freund Pickavance, Professor Steve Decent, Dr Lyle Gray, David Halliday, Asif Haseeb, Ellen Gibson, Jennifer Abali Meg Lustman, Neena Mahal, Bill McDonald, Dr Nick McKerrell, Professor Catriona Miller and Austin Sweeney.

Apologies Sharon Lowrie, Daniel Gallacher, Ian Kerr, Amit Bhargava and Jane Wilson.

In attendance: Jan Hulme, University Secretary & Vice Principal (Governance)
Ehsan Mesbahi, Provost & Deputy Vice Chancellor
Susan Mitchell, Chief Operating Officer & Deputy Vice Chancellor
Professor Andrea Nelson, Pro Vice Chancellor (Research)
Professor Alastair Robertson, Pro Vice Chancellor (Learning and Teaching)
Paul Queen, Chief Financial Officer
Fiona Campbell, Vice Principal (People & Student Wellbeing)
Claire Hulsén, Vice Principal (Strategy & Planning)
Dawn Anderson, Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement)
Professor John Lennon, Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Engagement)
Professor Mike Mannion, PVC and President GCNYC
Paul Brown, Director of Governance & Legal Services

Chair's opening remarks

The Chair welcomed Alan Dickson, Chief Financial Officer at the BBC, to his first meeting as lay governor, and additionally welcomed Professor Ehsan Mesbahi, Provost and Deputy Vice Chancellor, Professor John Lennon, Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Engagement, and Dawn Anderson, Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Global Engagement and interim Director of the International Office to their first meetings in attendance in their new roles.

The Chair advised members that the meeting was being observed by Carol Burns of Advance HE as part of her work conducting the Quinquennial Court Effectiveness Review commissioned to complement the annual court effectiveness review.

1. Minutes

- 1.1 Court **noted** that the minutes of the Court meeting held on 15th June 2023, had been approved by prior circulation.

2. Matters arising

- 2.1 The Court **noted** a report on the matters arising from the Court meeting on 15th June 2023 and the actions taken since that meeting to address them.
- 2.2 The COO/DVC explained that cyber security training for Governors had been delayed as a result of changes that are being made to the University's cyber security provision which is a priority at the moment given threats to universities at the moment but that when this is complete, training will be provided to governors. This should remain as an item on the Matters Arising and will be addressed as soon as possible.

- 2.3 With regard to training on the topic of GBV, again the University's policies and processes are being updated to account for changes that have been made in legislation and the application for recognition under the Emily Test and that this will be carried forward to the first quarter of 2024.

3. Declaration of interest

- 3.1 A summary of the register of interests was included with the court papers. Court members were reminded of the importance of this being kept up to date and invited to advise the University Secretary or the Director of Governance & Legal Services of any changes to their position or if any agenda items gave rise to a conflict of interest.

4. Items brought by the Chair of Court

- 4.1 The Chair updated members that after 4 years as lay governor, Peter Baguley has decided to step down from his role for personal reasons and thanked him for his contribution over that period.
- 4.2 The Chair provided a brief report on the recent Court Effectiveness Review, highlighting key findings, and thanked governors for their participation and assistance with that. The Chair advised Court that after a review of the various ideas and suggestions shared by members in the review a further report will be brought to the Court in November in conjunction with the report on the quinquennial review. The summary table of responses is included in the University Secretary's report and overall, it demonstrated that the Court was in a strong place and working effectively.
- 4.3 The Chair updated members that Amit Bhargava, who had been intending to step down as a governor due to his relocation to the USA, will now be working from London and as such, will remain as a governor.
- 4.4 The Chair congratulated Sylvie Freund Pickavance on being appointed by the French Government as a Trade Adviser.
- 4.5 The Chair reminded governors of the upcoming Court Strategy Day and the importance of this in ensuring that the University's strategy was reviewed and well-honed for sustainability and success.
- 4.6 The Chair informed Court that a recruitment firm, FWB, have been commissioned to progress the search for a prospective Chair of the F&GPC. While recognising there had been no opportunity for discussion by the Court Governance and Nominations Committee, Court approved the Chair's proposal, made in light of Mr Baguley's unexpected resignation, that FWB should be asked now, to undertake a search for lay governor whose expertise lay in property and estates matters.
- 4.7 The Chair reminded governors of the dates of the graduations in November and encouraged governors to attend at least one of these.
- 4.8 For the last item on the agenda, the Chair of Court's Annual Appraisal, the Chair would withdraw and the Vice Chair of Court, Meg Lustman, would take the chair.
- 4.9 The Chair then requested that the Principal and the Trade union governors provide an update to Court on the ongoing industrial action.
- 4.10 **Action: Court approved the appointment of FWB.**

5. Principal and Executive Board Report

- 5.1 The Principal presented his report which provided a summary of items arising since the previous Court meeting, including the summary of recent discussions with the Glasgow City Council Management focusing on the estate, student accommodation, economic regeneration and inclusive growth, graduate apprenticeships, graduate employment.
- 5.2 Additional items to report on included Student Recruitment; Scottish Government matters and the NSS results.
- 5.3 The Principal provided an update on the University's success in recent League tables from the Times, Guardian and Daily Mail newspapers. The Principal expressed pleasure in the results which came about as a result of the hard work and effort of each and every member of the University staff. The Chair and Court congratulated the university community on this success.
- 5.4 In response to a question about Professor Yunus, the Principal described how supportive contact was being maintained with Professor Yunus.
- 5.5 In response to a question about the Advance Higher hub, the Principal explained that funding for this was being removed by the SFC. He explained that the University is speaking to Glasgow City Council as the other funder.
- 5.6 In response to a question about the NSS, the Principal explained that the OFS had not published what had been expected and that the University is in discussions with the OFS and the SFC.
- 5.7 In response to a query about student recruitment and the student staff ratio, the Principal explained the rationale behind the most recent student recruitment plan and that in response to this a number of additional posts had been approved in the University.

6. Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Vice Chancellor report

- 6.1 The court **noted** the report from the Chief Operating Officer (COO) which gave an overview of key developments in finance, staffing, IT and the estate as well as the University's management of the continuing impact of Covid.
- 6.2 She explained that another Scottish university had recently been the victim of a cyber attack and that the University team were once again, reviewing and enhancing cyber security. She reminded Court that a significant amount of work had been undertaken in the past few years but that there is no complacency about the threat and that this is constantly under review. She thanked Sharon Lowrie for her continued help and support with that.
- 6.3 She provided an update on the budget and the factors that were affecting it but that she was confident that the University would achieve a positive outcome this year.
- 6.4 In response to questions about accommodation, she explained that student accommodation and supporting them with this was still very much a focus for the University and that with various partners these issues were being addressed.

7. Student President's report

- 7.1 The Student President reported on issues affecting students and on the activities of the Students' Association drawing particular attention to the work carried out to maintain the Excellent award for the SOS-UK Green Impact Award, the National Student Survey 2023 and the Teaching Awards 2023.

- 7.2 He provided an update on the additional work that was being undertaken by the Students' Association in London and that student engagement both in Glasgow and London was increasing.

8. University Secretary's Report

- 8.1 The Court **noted** a report from the University Secretary and addressed the Court's fulfilment of its Primary Responsibilities in 22/23 and **approved** the Statement of Primary Responsibilities for 2023/24.
- 8.2 The Modern Slavery Statement for the financial year ended 31st July 2023 was presented to and **approved** by Court.
- 8.3 She thanked everyone for taking for engaging in the annual Court effectiveness review and the Quinquennial Review and that the results of the latter will also be reported to Court at its next meeting.
- 8.4 **Action: Court approved the Statement of Primary Responsibilities and the Modern Slavery Statement.**

9. Student Recruitment Trimester A 2023-24

- 9.1 The Court noted a report from the VP (Strategy and Planning) detailing the indicative student recruitment for Trimester A 2023-24, at undergraduate and postgraduate taught levels.
- 9.2 In response to questions about the recruitment strategy she and the Principal explained the requirement to increase home student recruitment and the measures that had been taken to address that. She explained that the Schools, through the Deans and Vice-Deans, had been involved in the process and that they were supportive of the strategy for student recruitment.
- 9.3 It was noted that there remained a level of uncertainty around the international recruitment position for 2023-24 due to the UK Government policy announcement on changes to student immigration rules coupled with a challenging situation with payment arrangements in some the University's key markets.
- 9.4 Court **noted** the report.
- 9.5 **Action: Principal to prove a report to Court on staffing levels and student recruitment.**

10. Draft SFC Outcome Agreement 2023-2024

- 10.1 The VP (Strategy & Planning) introduced the report and explained the purpose behind the report.
- 10.2 The Court **endorsed** the draft SFC Outcome Agreement 2023-2024.

11. Research Update Trimester A

- 11.1 The Court **noted** a report presented by the PVC Research on research successes, the positive trajectory, the revised approach to research investment, various policy updates and the future research excellence framework (REF'28).

12. Update on GCNYC

- 12.1 The Chair referred to the report from the Principal updating Court on the current position with GCNYC. The Chair explained that a significant amount of work was ongoing and that further details of the progress of the partnership would follow in due course.

13. Annual Report on institution-led review of quality and governing body statement of assurance for AY 2022/23

- 13.1 The Court **approved** a report from the VP (Learning and Teaching) on the Annual Institution-led Review (ILR) of Quality and the Governing Body Statement of Assurance for the academic year 2022-23, which is part of the University's external reporting commitment to the Scottish Funding Council.

14. Standing Committee reports

14.1 Audit Committee- 11th September 2023

The Chair of the Committee, Bill McDonald, presented the report on matters discussed at the Committee on 18th September 2023.

14.1.1 Court **noted** the report.

14.2 Finance & General Purposes Committee – 18th September 2023.

14.2.1 Court **noted** the report.

15. GCNYC Board of Trustees Report from Meeting on 23 June 2023.

- 15.1 The court **noted** the report of the meeting which took place on 23 June 2023 presented by the Chair of the GCNYC Board of Trustees.

16. Media Report

- 16.1 The Court noted the Media Coverage Analysis Update Report for the period of May, June and July 2023.

17. Date of next meeting

- 17.1 The next Court meeting will take place on **Thursday 16th November 2023.**

18. Chair's Appraisal and Chair of Court Appointment Process

- 18.1 The Chair of Court having left the meeting together with all who had been "in attendance", other than the University Secretary, the Vice-Chair took the chair. She reminded governors of her earlier invitation for reflections earlier in the summer and led the discussion with governors on the Chair's performance. After satisfactory conclusion the Vice-Chair undertook to feed back to the Chair of Court.

- 18.2 Further discussion took place regarding the proposed process for appointing a new Chair of Court when that becomes necessary. It was agreed that the voting process would be amended to reflect

the voting arrangements that exist for other elections within the University system. It was also agreed that clause 37 regarding non endorsement would be removed.

18.3 Action: Court approved this amended Appointment process.