Glasgow Caledonian University Court

Minutes of the University Court held at 9 am on Thursday 12th June 2025 in person in the Lantern, Annie Lennox Building.

Present: Yvette Hopkins (Chair), Amit Bhargava, Arlene Cairns, Professor Steve Decent, Daniel Gallacher, Ellen Gibson, Dr Lyle Gray, Scott Haldane, Asif Haseeb, Sharon Lowrie, Meg Lustman, Bill McDonald, Dr Nick McKerrell, Professor Catriona Miller, Gavin Munn, Oluwatomisin (Tom Tom) Osinubi, Sylvie Freund Pickavance, Hamza Siddiqi, Austin Sweeney and Jane Wilson.

Apologies Alan Dickson and David Halliday.

In attendance Jan Hulme, University Secretary & Vice Principal (Governance)
Susan Mitchell, Chief Operating Officer & Deputy Vice Chancellor
Professor Andrea Nelson, Pro Vice Chancellor (Research)
Claire Hulsen, Vice Principal (Strategy & Planning)
Paul Queen, Chief Financial Officer
Fiona Campbell, Vice Principal (People & Student Wellbeing)
Dawn Anderson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International)
Paul Brown, Director of Governance & Legal Services
Professor Anita Simmers, Dean of SHLS, for item 6.1
Professor Joanna Lumsden, Dean of SCEBE, for item 6.2

Chair's opening remarks

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the meeting and in particular, Tom Tom Osinubi and Hamza Siddiqi to their first Court meeting as Student governors. She also thanked Dr Lyle Gray and David Halliday, who would be stepping down at the end of July following elections, for their service and commitment to Court during their term on Court. The Chair also thanked Professor Andrea Nelson for her contribution to Court and its work during her time as PVC (Research). The Chair recorded her thanks to Professor Cara Aitchison accompanied by Stef Black from SFC for the engagement and insightful discussion at Court dinner the previous evening.

1. Minutes

1.1 Court had already approved the minutes of the Court meeting held on 17th April 2025.

2. Matters arising

2.1 The Court noted a report on the matters arising from the Court meeting on 17th April 2025 and the actions taken to address them.

3. Declaration of interest

3.1 A summary of the register of interests was included with the court papers. Court members were reminded to advise the University Secretary or the Director of Governance & Legal Services of any changes to their position or if any agenda items ever gave rise to a conflict of interest.

4. Items brought by the Chair of Court

4.1 The Chair commented on the Government white paper on immigration and the profound impact that the changes flagged in this document would have across the sector. Most of the high impact White Paper changes could be implemented at any time and without legislation. The Chair thanked the University Executive Team for their hard work in addressing the implications swiftly and in detail and assessing the impact on the recruitment of international students and how this could affect the University financially and in terms of its size and shape.

The Chair referred to the papers appearing later on the agenda on Jinan and the new AI Framework that is being proposed and the importance of these to the University's future.

She updated Court on the good progress made in preparation for going live with the recruitment of the Principal's successor in July.

Referring to the further challenges facing the University and the wider sector, she noted with appreciation the fact that the Principal was keeping the Court well-informed and that transparency builds upon established trust which is essential to managing the challenges.

5. Items brought forward by the Principal

5.1 Principal's Report

The Principal explained in detail the complexities of the Westminster Government's white paper on immigration published in May and the impact on the sector and the University of the proposed changes. He also referred to the Government's 25% cut in funding for the Turing scheme which enabled students to engage in exchanges with other overseas universities. He explained that the University had already applied for funding but that it was likely that the level of funding would be reduced.

In response to questions, the Principal explained that the Executive are looking at measures and options in light of the white paper's more stringent UKVI metrics as well as considering the effect on the University's budget. None of these more stringent metrics were dependent on legislation, and they could be introduced at any time. With regard to the international student levy being proposed by the Westminster Government, he explained that the decision whether to apply the levy in Scotland would be a decision for the Scottish government and it is not anticipated to be introduced in Scotland. He described how the current cohort of international students would be relevant to meeting one of the more stringent UKVI compliance metrics and referred to the management of withdrawals which was reported in detail to Court. The Executive continue to take measures to target the University's UKVI compliance requirements under these more stringent metrics both now and in future UKVI reporting periods. He confirmed that the Executive will continue to monitor compliance performance closely as well as the potential impact on student numbers. As Court was already aware, these considerations were being addressed in the budget scenarios for 2025-26 which would be discussed at the budget briefing for Court later that day. The Principal was clear that this was an issue affecting the whole of the UK HE Sector and that the Sector continued to make representations to the Government and he would continue to keep Court informed of developments.

5.2 Corporate Risk Register (CRR)

The CFO provided a report to Court on the updated CRR following a review and discussion of this at Finance & General Purposes Committee and the Audit Committee in view of the changing risk landscape for the HE Sector. He explained that it had been agreed that the CRR would be added to the June Court agenda. The CFO explained that these committees had suggested additions to the CRR. The additions are "HE Sector Uncertainty and Stability" to account for various financial and political factors having an impact on the sector and "Artificial Intelligence" for the impact that this will have on the University. Court as a whole formally considers the CRR twice a year, first in the autumn when the CRR is approved and in June when there is a specific CRR seminar for governors. The Court last considered the CRR at the November 2024 meeting and would in addition be due to consider it at the scheduled briefing on this in June (*subject to rescheduling due to other business of Court*).

In response to questions, the CFO explained that mitigatory factors are also included in the CRR and that it is kept under review. The Chair proposed that in view of its importance, the CRR should become a standing item on the Court agenda.

Governors agreed that the top risks should be kept under regular discussion and that the interrelationship between these risks and their mitigations should be carefully monitored to ensure that mitigating action for one risk did not undermine those for another.

Action: Court approved the amendments to the CRR and the CRR will be included on each Court agenda.

5.3 2024-25 International Student Recruitment Summary

Court **noted** a report from PVC Strategy and Planning which provided a current view of our 2024-25 intake position for Trimester A and B, and confirmation of the Trimester C intake. She confirmed that the total intake of international PGT students for this year was an increase over the 23-24 number.

5.4 Review of Systems and Management of Student Withdrawal

Court **noted** a report from the Principal which set out the arrangements, including the establishment of a short-term Withdrawal Review Working Group (WRWG), which had been established in response to the UK Government white paper on immigration. In response to a governance point, the Principal clarified that his own role on behalf of Senate had been temporary, in response only to an immediate need and had already been superseded.

5.5 Mutual Severance Scheme

The VP People and Student Wellbeing introduced a paper inviting consideration of whether a Mutual Severance Scheme should be opened over the summer.

Following full discussion, and while noting the uncertainties engendered by the White Paper, Court decided that it was not appropriate for an MSS to be opened at this time.

6. Schools' Organisational Change Proposal

6.1 SHLS Organisational Change Project: Department of Allied Health Professionals

The Dean of SHLS, Professor Anita Simmers, presented a report on the proposed organisational change within the school which proposed the integration of the departments of Occupational Therapy and Human Nutrition and Dietetics, Physiotherapy and Paramedicine and Podiatry and Radiography into a single Department of Allied Health Professionals. The merger will reduce the number of departments within SHLS from eight to six. She explained that this new department will promote the University's status as the largest and most successful provider of AHP Education in Scotland with the aim of increasing external visibility as the pre-eminent HEI for the delivery of high-quality innovative and impactful education, CPD and research in allied health sciences.

Action: Court approved the SHLS organisational change project, following Senate endorsement. The new Department is scheduled to be implemented on August 1st 2025.

6.2 SCEBE Change Project Proposal: Strategic Renaming and Reshaping

The Dean of SCEBE, Professor Joanna Lumsden presented a report on the proposed organisational change within the school with a move from an 8-department structure to 3 departments. This proposed change offers clarity alongside delivering efficiencies and cross disciplinary working that will bring agility with the School better placed to deliver University priorities. The School will also be renamed as the School of Science and Engineering. She outlined the effect of the changes on the school both internally and externally.

Action: Court approved the School's change of name and the organisational change project, following Senate endorsement. The changes will become effective before the beginning of the new academic year.

7. COO/DVC Report

7.1 The Court noted a report from the Chief Operating Officer (COO) and DVC that gave an overview of key issues arising in her portfolio since the last Court meeting in April 2025.

Action: Court **noted** the terms of the report.

8. Student President's Report

8.1 The Court noted a report from the Student President highlighting recent activities and initiatives undertaken by the Student's Association. The Student President provided a brief summary of some of the highlights within her report and the excellent progress that is being made by the Students' Association.

8.2 The Court noted the report from the Student President that provided an update on the Students' Association activities for Trimester 2 in the academic year 2024/25 and the increasing engagement of students in an increasing variety of activities and sporting and other clubs being run by students.

9. University Secretary's Report

9.1 The Court noted a report from the University Secretary presented which covered items including the Chair of Court's delegated authority during summer vacation, Governor Elections, Court annual programme of works and Information Governance 2024 report including report of the use of Freedom of Information legislation.

Action: Court approved the Annual Programme of Works for Court and agreed the election results should be published in Staff News.

10. Joint Education Institute Proposal with the University of Jinan (UJN)

10.1 The Principal introduced a report that provided an update on the progress so far in development of the Joint Education Institute (JEI) proposal with the University of Jinan. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International) explained the process that was being followed and that further legal, accounting and other advice was being obtained as each step of the process moves forward. She explained that the Chinese Ministry of Education have approved the proposal and that allows the University to proceed with the next steps in preparing a detailed business case, taking account of the advice received.

In response to questions, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International) explained that the position of any employees in China as well as arrangements on the University exiting the arrangement will be carefully considered as part of the business case. She explained that this was an opportunity to derive income from another source and that this and other Transnational Education (TNE) programmes will be a useful source of income in the future. She explained that the University already has a good working relationship with Jinan and that this will enhance that position and increase the income. She explained that it takes some time to develop TNE projects and that it is a competitive market and Jinan presents the University with an exceptional opportunity to build on the existing relationship for the benefit of the University. Following discussion and with certain issues being aired by members which would need to be addressed carefully, Court supported the development of a full business case for its further consideration.

Action: **Court members supported the development of a full business case for consideration at a later meeting of Court.**

11. Research Update Quarter 3 2024/25

11.1 The Pro Vice Chancellor (Research) presented the Research update report which summarised research policy changes, announcements, research submissions and awards. She highlighted the increase in research income for this year and that the University was already ahead of the previous years research income, with a quarter of the year still to go.

11.2 Court **noted** the report and welcomed the increase in income from Research.

12. University Senate: Report from meeting of Senate held on 4th June 2025

12.1 The Principal provided a summary of the business discussed by Senate at its meeting on the 4th June 2025. Court **noted** the report.

12.2 The Principal introduced the report on the Framework for Generative AI (GenAI) use at GCU. He emphasised that this was the first essential step in setting the conditions for responsible, creative use of AI. This was already catalysing more detailed work and guidance to support the University community in the appropriate use of AI. This framework would be followed as soon as possible by further guidance for staff and students, a sense of urgency was acknowledged and regular updates to Court were requested.

12.3 Court **noted** the Framework for Generative AI (GenAI) use at GCU and sought periodic updates.

13. Standing Committee Business

13.1 **People Committee** – 15th May 2025

13.1.1 The Chair of the Committee, Austin Sweeney, explained that this was a report from the meeting which took place on the 15 May 2025. The report included the Trans Student Policy update, updated Resourcing and Recruitment Policy and Grading Review Policy for approval. In response to a question about the efficacy of some training, the VP (People & Student Wellbeing) explained that unconscious bias training was only one element of the training provided to staff dealing with EDI issues and that the overall training programme provides a broad level of awareness and understanding for staff.

13.2 The Chair of the Committee advised that he would appreciate another lay governor on the Committee and asked if the CGNC would give this consideration.

13.2.1 Court **noted** the report and **approved** the Trans Student Policy, Resourcing and Recruitment Policy and the Grading Review Policy. Court agreed that the CGNC should consider appointing a further lay governor to the Committee.

13.3 **Audit Committee** – 27th May 2025

13.3.1 The Chair of the Committee, Bill McDonald, presented the report. Court **noted** the report of the issues discussed at the Committee meeting held on 27th May 2025.

13.4 **Finance & General Purposes Committee** – 22nd April and 19th May 2025

13.4.1 The Chair of the Committee, Arlene Cairns, presented the report. Court **noted** the report of the issues discussed at the Committee meetings held on 22nd April and 19th May 2025. There would be a budget briefing after the Court meeting with a view to Court convening later in the month to approve the budget for 2025-26.

13.5 **Remuneration Committee** – 20th May 2025

13.5.1 The Chair of the Committee, Meg Lustman, presented the report. Court **noted** the report of the issues discussed at the Committee meetings held on 20th May 2025 which included the University's Remuneration Philosophy and proposed enhanced severance terms which had been requested by the FGPC. The latter would be addressed at a subsequent meeting of Court.

Action: Court **approved** the University Remuneration Philosophy.

14. Communications Report

14.1 The Court **noted** the report that highlighted the media coverage received by GCU in March and April 2025. The Chair of Court highlighted the positive nature of the report and the recognition of the University externally.

15. Date of Next Meeting

15.1 The Chair of Court reminded governors that the next meeting on Court would be on 23rd June, at which the budget would be presented for discussion and approval.

15.2 Court noted that the next scheduled meeting would take place in person on Thursday 18th September 2025 at 9.00am. A dinner would take place the evening before, on 17th September at 6.00 for 6.30pm.