

Glasgow Caledonian University Court

Minutes of the University Court held on 21 April 2022 at 9am via Online Conferencing Facilities

Present: Rob Woodward (Chair), Dr Douglas Chalmers, Dr Morag Ferguson, Campbell Fitch, Daniel Gallacher, Ellen Gibson, Professor Pamela Gillies, Asif Haseeb (left at 10am), Ian Kerr, Sharon Lowrie, Meg Lustman, Neena Mahal, Bill McDonald, Dr Nick McKerrell, Professor Ann Priest, Adil Rahoo, Austin Sweeney, Sylvie Freund Pickavance, David Halliday, and Jane Wilson (left at 10.30 am)

Apologies: Tabitha Nyariki and Peter Baguley.

In attendance: Jan Hulme, University Secretary and Vice Principal (Governance)
Professor James Miller, Deputy Vice Chancellor
Susan Mitchell, Chief Operating Officer
Professor Andrea Nelson, Pro Vice Chancellor (Research)
Professor Alastair Robertson, Pro Vice Chancellor (Learning and Teaching)
Fiona Campbell, VP People and Student Wellbeing
Paul Queen, Director of Finance
Claire Hulsén, Director of Strategy, Planning and Business Intelligence
Laiba Tareen, Student Association President (Elect), Observer
Paul Brown, Director of Governance and Legal Services

Chair's opening remarks

The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting and congratulated Laiba Tareen who was in attendance as an observer, on her election as President of the Students Association and that he looked forward to continuing the strong relationship between the Court and the Student body. The Chair also thanked Adil Rahoo and Tabitha Nyariki as the departing student governors for their services to the Court and the student body.

The Chair obtained confirmation from members of Court that they were satisfied with the classification of the various papers presented to Court for the meeting.

The Chair informed Court that the proposed paper from the People Committee regarding the identification of people who may be "in attendance" would be removed from consideration by the Court at this meeting and that no decision on this would require to be made at this meeting. This would be discussed later in the meeting when addressing the People Committee report.

1. Minutes

Court noted that the minutes of the Court meeting held on 17th February 2022 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 17th February 2022 and the actions arising were in hand.

3. Declaration of interest

A summary of the register of interests was included with the Court papers. Court members were invited to advise the University Secretary or the Director of Governance and Legal Services if any agenda items give rise to a conflict of interest.

4. Items brought by the Chair of Court

- 4.1 The Chair reminded Court that the November meeting of Court would be the last Court meeting the Principal would attend and that assuming that we are able, it is hoped that there will be a Court dinner at which the Court can record the Principal's achievements and express the Court's gratitude for all that she has done for the University. This will also give the Court an opportunity to invite those who have demitted office as Governors during Covid and those who will be standing down this year, to thank them for their hard work and support of the Court and the University.
- 4.2 Court was advised that the new Dean of SCEBE, Professor Carl Schaschke would be joining the University on 23rd May 2022.
- 4.3 The Chair provided Court with an update on the appointment of a Civic Governor and reminded Court that a new advertisement had been issued with a slight repositioning of the role. Unfortunately, even that step had not attracted the level and breadth of interest that the University is looking for and that a small group consisting of the Chair, Vice-Chair, the Principal and the University Secretary, would convene in order to consider how best to proceed. The Chair thanked those governors who had provided recommended candidates and advised that these recommendations had been addressed by Nurole.

5. Update from Search Committee for the new Principal and VC

- 5.1 The Principal and members of staff in attendance with the exception of the University Secretary, VP People and Student Wellbeing and the Director of Governance and Legal Services, who are all involved in the recruitment process, left the meeting whilst this item was being discussed.
- 5.2 The Chair provided an update on the work of the Search Committee and the continuing need for the highest level of confidentiality. The Chair explained that the recruitment process was on track and that the Search Committee had narrowed down the applications to a long list of 16 candidates whom SB would meet in order to provide an initial assessment of their suitability for the role. The Search Committee will meet again in order to narrow the list down to a projected short list of 4-6 candidates who would be invited to an interview with the Search Committee. The Chair explained that Saxton Bampfylde had confirmed that the list of candidates was very strong and that they were confident that the University would be able to appoint an excellent candidate for this key role. The Chair confirmed that the shortlisted candidates would be invited to meet with various stakeholder groups from within the University and that the feedback from those groups would be received by the Search Committee. The Chair confirmed that a primary consideration for the Search Committee is to maintain as diverse a pool of candidates as possible.
- 5.3 The Chair explained that it had always been the intention of the Search Committee to appoint a senior external academic to the Search Committee in order to assist the Search Committee with their assessment of candidates. Chair confirmed that with the assistance of SB, Dame Janet Beer had been identified as a suitable person to fulfil that role. Dame Janet is currently Vice Chancellor of Liverpool University but was demitting office at the end of the calendar year. She had previously been Vice-Chancellor at Oxford Brookes. Chair confirmed that he had met with Dame Janet and that she is willing to participate in the Search Committee. A concern was raised about Liverpool University's relationship with their trade unions. The Chair assured governors

that he would meet with Dame Janet to explain the role that the University were asking her to perform in relation to the recruitment exercise and the work of the Search Committee.

5.4 Court **Approved** the appointment of Dame Janet Beer to assist the Search Committee.

5.5 The Principal and those in attendance re-joined the meeting.

6. Principal and Executive Board Report

6.1 The Principal presented her report which provided a summary of items arising since the previous Court meeting. The Principal confirmed the appointment of Professor Carl Schaschke as Dean of SCEBE and his excellent academic credentials and affinity with GCU's values.

6.2 The Principal confirmed that at the end of March 2022, GCNYC had gained full Middle States Accreditation which allows it to use the "edu.com" address in its title which will reinforce GCNYC's standing in the recruitment market. The Principal also reminded Court that the College has held a provisional charter to award degrees. NYSED have rolled forward this provisional charter for another 5 years while committing to the process to review converting this to a permanent charter as soon as they are able to address staffing levels, which, affected by Covid and concomitant issues, have prevented them from carrying out the assessments that they are required to do and there is a backlog. This does not alter the current operation of the College and it will continue to be able to award degrees as normal. The Principal confirmed that in addition, she and the DVC would be meeting with an agency which promotes online learning and who have worked very successfully with Arizona State University to enhance their online presence and business.

6.3 The Principal then handed over to the PVC Research to discuss the University's Communication Strategy for the results of the REF.

6.4 The PVC Research explained the Research Excellence Framework (REF) which is an internationally recognised process of evaluating research undertaken by universities. The results of this process will be published in May and those will be brought to Court in the future. The PVC Research expressed her hope and confidence that the University would perform well in the REF results.

6.5 Having been asked about the SFC and Graduate Apprentice(GA) funding, the Principal confirmed that she and others had been working with the SFC and the SG to attempt to ensure that sufficient funding was made available for the GA's. She confirmed that the SFC funding of GA's will only amount to 50% of the actual cost and that the University is likely to have a shortfall in funding GA's. The Principal confirmed that this is a matter which the Court will keep under review as the SFC have only guaranteed funding for 1 year as opposed to the 3 year period actually required. The Court expressed its disappointment at the underfunding of the GA's. The Chair suggested that he would write to the Chairs of Napier and Heriot Watt universities to establish how they might collectively address the issue of underfunding of GA's.

6.6 On being asked about funding for the Advanced Higher Hub, the Principal explained that given the advent of new online learning methods and the cut in SFC funding overall, it may be difficult to continue supporting this in the way that the University has to date. On being asked about her prospective travel to GCNYC, the Principal confirmed that she only undertook such travel for clear business purposes and that such travel was approved by the Chair of Court in advance.

6.7 Court **noted** the Principal's report.

7. Chief Operating Officer report

- 7.1 Court noted the Chief Operating Officer's report which included an update on the Covid situation and that the Scottish Government had reduced their reporting and engagement strategy and that update meetings were now taking place monthly not weekly as before. SG were continuing to encourage the use of face masks. The Chief Operating Officer advised that there had been a change to the University's testing licence and that this ceased on 18th April. The SG advice is that anyone displaying symptoms should stay at home.
- 7.2 The Chief Operating Officer briefly explained the wide range of infrastructure projects that have been ongoing. These include improvements to Caledonian Court. The audio visual facilities are being upgraded and that there have been significant improvements in the general environment in both Glasgow and London. The COO advised that there was a final forecast operating surplus of £9.2M which is above budget, enabling infrastructure improvements in Glasgow & London to proceed.
- 7.3 The COO provided an update on the SIMS programme and that progress had continued despite challenges with contract staff departing and that Release 4 was due to go live on 23rd April.
- 7.4 A discussion followed about staff and student engagement and the return to campus. The general belief was that most students are eager to return to campus but that the way that students engage with the University has changed and that the University needs to recognise this. The Chair of Court suggested that these are operational issues which will require to be dealt with by management but may be discussed in more detail at a future Court meeting.

ACTION: Court Secretary to agree suitable date to bring forward a report on student engagement and operational issues regarding the return to campus

8. Student President's Report

- 8.1 The Student President reported on the activities of the Student's Association since the previous Court meeting and a number of activities that had been undertaken including attendance by a delegation from the Student's Association at the NUS UK Conference in Liverpool, the NUS Scotland Conference in Dundee and the NUS Scotland Awards, as well as continuing support for student mental health awareness.
- 8.2 The Student President reported on the recent Full Time Officer Elections and that Laiba Tareen had been elected as the new Student President. The other elected full time officers are: Chukwuma Egbujor, Jennifer Abali and Olivia Hall. The new officers will start their term in office on 30th May 2022. The Student President informed Court that disappointingly the level of participation amongst students had dropped but that he was pleased that there was a diverse range of fulltime officers who were excellent candidates and would perform well in the role.
- 8.3 The Chair and Court thanked the Student President and Tabitha Nyariki, the other Full Time Officer on Court for their support and hard work during their time on Court and wished them well for their futures.
- 8.4 Court **noted** the Student President's update.

Secretary's Note: Subsequent to this meeting, Olivia Hall demitted office and the next successful candidate, John Mavileth, was confirmed as a Full Time Officer.

9. University Secretary's Report

- 9.1 The University Secretary presented the calendar of dates for 2022/23 and 2023/24 for approval. The University Secretary apologised for the delay in finalising these. To ensure that such a delay was not repeated, the full schedule, which routinely covers a 2 year period, will be entered into governors' diaries now. This replaces the current approach, which has led to the difficulties occasioning the delay, whereby only the first year's dates were entered into diaries.
- 9.2 The University Secretary also provided an update on lay governor recruitment and noted the fact that three of the existing staff appointed governors were concluding their current term of office, of whom one, Mr Halliday, was eligible for reappointment.
- 9.3 Court **approved** the calendar of Dates.

ACTION: Court Secretary to arrange Convene invitations to be sent

10. Student Recruitment Report 2021-22 Trimester B

- 10.1 The Court **noted** a report from the Deputy Vice Chancellor providing an overview of student recruitment for academic year 2021-22 and an early view of Trimester A in 2022-23 as well as an overview of 5 year trends in applications and intake for entrants to full time programmes. The DVC confirmed that the University had met the SFC commitments for 2021-22 but that the numbers for 2022-23 would continue to be monitored and that he would report further on that in due course.
- 10.2 Discussion took place around the continuing success of international student recruitment. In response to questions, the Deputy Vice Chancellor explained why some segments of the recruitment market were, however, less buoyant and described how this was being addressed. The DVC confirmed that a significant amount of work was being undertaken in London in order to manage space and teaching capacity in order to meet the high demand for places. The DVC reported that recruitment at GCNYC was improving although was not yet at the desired level but that social media and other campaigns were having an impact that was expected to grow.
- 10.3 The DVC provided a presentation to Court on the new GCU Common Good Recruitment Campaign. This would be available in a number of media formats and particularly on social media. The campaign was positively received by Court.

11. 2021 HESA Performance Indicators

- 11.1 The Court **noted** the report from the Deputy Vice Chancellor on the 2022 HESA Performance Indicators (PI's) relating to widening participation. The DVC reported that the GCU outcomes demonstrate an exceptional performance by the University which reflects the hard work of all of the University's staff.
- 11.2 The Chair noted that this was a strong set of indicators for the University and reflected well on all the hard work being undertaken.

12. ELIR Follow Up report

The Pro Vice Chancellor Learning & Teaching presented the prescribed year-on follow-up report which provided detail on the actions that the University has taken in response to each of the Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR recommendations and listed the progress in the areas of commendation as identified in November 2021. The Pro Vice Chancellor Learning & Teaching confirmed that he would be meeting with the QAA that day to discuss the report.

The Court **endorsed** the report.

13. University Senate: Report from meeting of Senate held on 23rd February 2022.

13.1 The Court **noted** the report presented by the Principal.

13.2 The Chair reminded lay governors that Senate has an open invitation to governors to attend Senate as observers should they wish to do so.

13.3 The University Secretary presented a proposal to Court from Senate, recommending an amendment to the Senate Standing Orders in relation to the eligibility for nomination as the Senate Governor on Court.

13.4 Court **approved** the proposed changes.

ACTION: Clerk to Senate to update Senate Standing Orders

14. Standing Committee Business

14.1 Audit Committee – 28th March 2022

The Chair of the Audit Committee confirmed that the Committee had endorsed a change to the Borrowing Authority to enable the University to access loans funded or part funded by the government. Court **noted** the report.

14.2 Finance & General Purposes Committee – 7th March 2022.

Court **noted** the report and **approved** the proposal to amend the Financial Regulations and the Treasury and Ethical Investment Policy to enable the University to access loans funded or part funded by the government.

14.3 People Committee - 17th March 2022.

Court **noted** the report.

The Chair confirmed that the step proposed by the People Committee to increase the number of individual office holders routinely in attendance at the Committee would not be considered by Court at this meeting as it required further input and advice from the Governance department and that it would require to be considered by the Court Governance and Nominations Committee(GCNC) before being presented to Court.

ACTION: Director of Governance and Legal Services to review and prepare paper for CGNC.

15. GCNYC Board of Trustees Report from Meeting on 14th March 2022.

The Chair of the Board of Trustees of GCNYC, Sylvie Freund Pickavance, presented a report to the Court on the business discussed at the GCNYC Board of Trustees meeting held on 14th march 2022. The Chair reported that Middle States accreditation had now been achieved and that this was very positive for GCNYC. In addition, she alluded to the status of the NYSED licence as previously covered by the Principal.

Court **noted** the report.

18. Media Report

The Court noted the Media Coverage Analysis Update Report for February and March 2022.

19. Date of next meeting

The next Court meeting will take place on Thursday 16th June 2022. The Chair indicated that it is intended that the meeting would take place in person and that there would also be a Court Dinner on the 15th June but this would be confirmed nearer the time.

The Chair wished to express his thanks and on behalf of the Court to Adil Rahoo and Tabitha Nyariki for their excellent work in representing the student voice on Court and its various Committees.