

Glasgow Caledonian University Court

Minutes of the University Court held on Thursday 20 April 2023 at 9am in person in the Lantern, Annie Lennox Building.

Present: Rob Woodward (Chair), Prof Stephen Decent, Chukwuma Egbujor, Daniel Gallacher, Ellen Gibson, David Halliday, Asif Haseeb, Ian Kerr, Meg Lustman, Neena Mahal, Dr Nick McKerrell, Professor Catriona Miller, Bill McDonald, Sylvie Freund Pickavance, Austin Sweeney, Laiba Tareen and Jane Wilson.

Apologies Peter Baguley, Amit Bhargava, Sharon Lowrie and Dr Lyle Gray.

In attendance Jan Hulme, University Secretary and Vice Principal (Governance).
Susan Mitchell, Chief Operating Officer & DVC(Operations)
Professor Mike Mannion, (Interim) VP Global Engagement
Professor Andrea Nelson, (Interim) Provost and DVC.
Professor Alastair Robertson, Pro Vice Chancellor (Learning and Teaching).
Claire Hulsen, VP Strategy and Planning,
Prof Rachel Baker and Prof Anita Simmers Joint (Interim) PVC Research,
Paul Queen, Chief Finance Officer.
Paul Brown, Director of Governance & Legal Services.
Adrian Lui, EDI Adviser for item 13.3

Chair's opening remarks

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all of those present including Chidozie Nwaigwe, the incoming Student President, who was attending Court as an observer. The Chair also reminded Court that this would be Laiba Tareen and Chukwuma Egbujor's last meeting of Court and thanked them for their time on Court.

The Chair noted that Court had approved electronically, the appointment of Paul Brown to serve as a Trustee and Board Secretary of GCNYC.

The Chair confirmed that the process for the appointment of the new Chancellor had also been approved electronically and thanked governors for their assistance with that.

The Chair reminded governors of the graduations that will take place on 30th June and 1st July and encouraged as many governors as possible to attend.

1. Minutes

- 1.1 Court noted that the minutes of the Court meeting held on 16th February 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 16th February 2023 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. There was no update but 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 gave rise to a conflict of interest.

4. Items brought by the Chair of Court

- 4.1 The Chair referred to a governor who for due cause had been unable to attend Court or any of the Committees over the past months. The Chair outlined his proposal to CGNC that the governor be put on sabbatical which could be reviewed in 12 months' time
- 4.2 The Chair thanked governors and others for their suggestions for the role of Chancellor of the University and confirmed that these would be discussed at the upcoming CGNC meeting.
- 4.3 The Chair referred to the recent staff governor meeting and the helpful discussion that took place regarding the current situation with the industrial action. The Chair invited Dr Nick McKerrell to provide Court with a brief update on the industrial action and the unions' positions.
- 4.4 Dr McKerrell, provided Court with an update on the current situation and that the industrial action was in transition to a different phase and that the members of the various unions involved had taken different decisions on continuing industrial action and that UCU had decided to take action short of strike (ASOS) this being a marking and assessment boycott. He explained that these disputes were in relation to the year 2022/23 but that the unions were also in dispute in relation to the year 2023/24 but that what exactly that will mean is not clear at this stage.
- 4.5 In response, the Principal explained that the University was bound by national negotiations rather than being able to deal with these directly but that he would continue to strive to get a solution for the benefit of the staff and students at the University. He explained that he had been asked to join the Scottish Committee of UCEA and that he would do so and strongly represent the voice of Scottish institutions. In response to questions, the Principal explained that the University has kept students informed of the implications of the industrial action and will continue to do so as the situation evolves.

5. Principal and Executive Board report

- 5.1 The Principal presented his report which included updates on key areas of the University's business including the latest SFC funding allocation and that the University would see a drop of around £0.5M (0.9%) but that this was in line with the sector average and that the University had done better than many other universities in Scotland.

5.2 The Principal provided an update to Court on the most recent National Student Survey (NSS), in which the University was miscoded as an English institution by Ipsos, the company that administers the NSS, leading to the English NSS questionnaire being administered to our students instead of the Scottish questionnaire. Whilst the first 26 questions are exactly the same, and will therefore generate valid and valuable data, the question relating to Overall Satisfaction was not asked of our students as this was not part of the NSS in England this year. The University worked closely with the SFC, and met with the Office for Students and Ipsos, to seek to mitigate any potential negative impact. It had been agreed with the SFC that the Scottish sector average for overall satisfaction will be applied to Glasgow Caledonian at institutional level given that we were at the Scottish sector average in the 2022 NSS. At course and discipline level, a number of options were being considered. An update would be provided to Senate and a staff communication about the issue would be circulated in due course.

- 5.2 The Principal provided an update on the University delivery principles and that $\frac{3}{4}$ of teaching was now back on campus and that it is intended to increase that figure yet further for the next academic year. He provided an update on student accommodation and the work that is being done to assist students. Court discussed and endorsed the Principal's vision, analysis and areas for focus.

6. COO/DVC (Operations) Report

- 6.1 The Court noted a report from the Chief Operating Officer/ Deputy Vice Chancellor (Operations) (COO/DVC(O)) that gave an overview of key issues since the last Court meeting in February 2023.
- 6.2 The COO/ DVC(O) explained that in relation to the infrastructure spend, this is always backloaded as most of the work that is done requires to be carried out during the summer months when fewer students are about. This timing does mean that it coincides with the University's financial year end which tends to occur part way through the works. She explained that this does not mean that work is not completed but in recording the costs, this may straddle two years.
- 6.3 The COO/ DVC(O) provided an update on student debt and explained that whilst the amount had increased, it was proportionate to the increased level of fees from international students. She highlighted that student debt tends to reduce significantly before graduations.
- 6.4 The COO/DVC(O) explained that the budget that was being produced would require to take account of various factors which have not as yet been finalised such as final figures on SFC funding and the figures on CAS allocation and that this would be discussed in more detail by the Finance & General Purpose Committee before being brought to Court.
- 6.5 In response to questions about reports of an increase in numbers of children on campus, the COO/DVC(O) explained that the University was aware of the issue and was doing all that it could to address the issue.. She explained that the issue is not unique to Glasgow Caledonian University.
- 6.6 The COO/DVC(O) brought the Court's attention to the revised Media Report and thanked Jane Wilson for her assistance with this. She explained that the new report is in a more easily understood format and provides better detail on relevant issues affecting the University, its students and the wider GCU Community.

7. Student President's report

- 7.1 The Court noted a report from the Student President highlighting recent activities and initiatives undertaken by the Student's Association. She introduced Chidozie Nwaigwe who had been elected as the new Student President.
- 7.2 Chukwuma Egbujor provided an update on the new App that is being scoped for students and that this will soon be going through a more detailed phase of development.
- 7.3 In response to questions about the demographics in student elections and overall student engagement, the Student President explained that the Student's Association were working on involving more home students in order to ensure better engagement in student activities across the whole University population.

8. University Secretary's Report

- 8.1 The Court noted the report from the University Secretary including a number of matters brought forward for the attention of the Court.

- 8.2 The University Secretary provided details of the calendar of future Court and Standing Committee meetings and asked Court to approve this.
- 8.3 Court **approved** the Calendar of Meetings.

9. Student Recruitment Report

- 9.1 The Court noted a report from the Vice Principal Strategy and Planning that provided an update on student recruitment for academic year 2022-23 and an early view of Trimester A 2023-24, as at 31 March 2023.
- 9.2 She explained that undergraduate recruitment remains challenging but that this is not unique to Glasgow Caledonian. She explained that the University is looking at new markets and opportunities such as growth in Graduate Apprenticeships, RUK Students and Home Post Graduate Taught students.
- 9.3 The Principal explained that additional resource has been provided to expand the Home undergraduate team in order to help address this issue.
- 9.4 In response to questions about student engagement, the Principal explained that the University will be working closely with students to support a full return to campus and to enhance progression by offering online and in person support.

10. Student Partnership Agreement

- 10.1 The Court received a report from the Pro-Vice- Chancellor Learning and Teaching, that presented the work undertaken by the University and Students Association in order to refresh the Student Partnership Agreement (SPA). The working group was co-chaired by the PVC L&T and the Students' Association President and following a series of consultations with the students and staff the draft SPA had been met with overwhelmingly positive and supportive feedback. He explained that the intention is to formally launch this in September with a variety of publicity tools.
- 10.2 Court **approved** the Student Partnership Agreement.

11. Update on GCNYC

- 11.1 The Principal provided an oral update on the current situation with GCNYC. He explained that a Task Group has been established to examine each aspect of possible partnership proposals and that the University has been in discussion with the appropriate regulatory bodies in the USA in order to ensure that the process is managed in accordance with their requirements.
- 11.2 The Principal also explained that as part of the management of the options for GCNYC going forward, it is proposed to pause student recruitment. and to defer any new admissions until Trimester A in 2024.
- 11.3 Following discussion, Court endorsed the recommendation to the Board of GCNYC to pause student recruitment until a consolidated point Trimester A in September 2024.

12. University Senate: Report from meeting of the Senate held on 22 February 2023

- 12.1 The Principal presented a report from the last Senate meeting held on 22 February 2023, including a Research Integrity Annual Statement and Report 2021/2, which was appended to the report for Court's approval following its endorsement by Senate.

12.2 Court **noted** the report and **approved** the Research Integrity Annual Statement and Report 2021/2

13. Standing Committee Business

13.1 Audit Committee – 27th March 2023

The Chair of the Audit Committee, Bill McDonald, presented the report on matters discussed at the Committee meeting held on 27th March.

13.1.1 Court **noted** the report.

13.2 Finance & General Purposes Committee – 6th March 2023

13.2.1 The Chair of the Committee, Ian Kerr, presented the report on matters discussed at the Committee meeting on 6th March 2023.

13.2.2 Court **noted** the report.

13.3 People Committee – 16th March 2023

13.3.1 The report was presented by Neena Mahal, Chair of the Committee. Court **noted** the report of the People Committee highlighting the issues discussed and decisions taken by the People Committee meeting held on 16th March 2023

13.3.2 Adrian Lui, the EDI adviser was invited to present the Public Sector Equality Duty Report, which was appended for the Court's approval.

13.3.3 Court **noted** the report and **approved** the Public Sector Equality Duty Report.

13.4 Court Governance & Nominations Committee – 20th February 2023

13.4.1 Rob Woodward, Chair of the Committee, presented the report of the Court Governance & Nominations Committee meeting that took place remotely on 20th February 2023. The report also addressed the matter of identifying a new Chancellor for the University, the appointment of a Board Secretary for the GCNYC Board of Trustees (which Court had approved electronically) and the reappointment of governors whose current term of office was due to come to an end. Those governors who were being considered for reappointment left the meeting at this point and were readmitted after Court had approved their reappointment.

13.4.2 Court **noted** the report and **approved** the reappointment of all of the governors whose current terms of office are due to come to an end.

14. GCNYC Board of Trustees Report from Meeting on 9th March 2023

14.1 The Court noted a report presented by the Chair of the GCNYC Board of Trustees, Sylvie Freund Pickavance, of the Board of Trustees meeting that took place on 9th March 2023.

14.2 Court **noted** the report.

15. Media Coverage Analysis

- 15.1 The Court noted the report that highlighted the media coverage received by GCU in January & February 2023.

16. Date of Next Meeting

- 16.1 The Court noted that the next scheduled meeting would take place in person on Thursday 15th June 2023 at 9.00am with dinner taking place the evening before on 14th June.

Closing remarks

The Chair of Court reminded Court that this was the last Court meeting for the two student governors, Laiba and Chukwuma, and wished to express his thanks for himself and on behalf of Court for their contribution to the work of Court and its committees and for their representation of the interests of students which is so important to the work of Court and the University community. He wished them well for the future.