**DocUC13/71**

**(Confirmed)**

**University Court**

**Minutes of the meeting of the University Court held on 20th March 2014**

**(Minutes 13.122 – 13.145)**

**Present:** Mr Antony Brian, Chair

Ms Rhona Baillie, Dr Douglas Chalmers, Mr John Chapman, Professor Pamela Gillies, Mr Ian Gracie, Mr Tom Halpin, Mr Gordon Jack, Mr Matthew Lamb, Dr Rajan Madhok, Mr Iain Stewart, Mr Alistair Webster, Dr Bob Winter and Professor Stephanie Young

**Apologies:** Mrs Hazel Brooke (Vice-Chair), Ms Laura Gordon, Mr Austin Lafferty, Dr James Miller, Miss Davena Rankin and Mr David Wallace

**In attendance:** Professor Douglas Greenhalgh, Executive Dean, School of Engineering and the Built Environment and PVC

Ms Jan Hulme, University Secretary and Vice-Principal (Governance)

Mr Alex Killick, Director of People

Ms Jackie Main, Director of Student Experience, Governance and Quality Enhancement

Professor Mike Mannion, Vice-Principal and Pro Vice Chancellor ResearchMr Gerry Milne, Chief Financial Officer and Vice-Principal Finance & Planning

Professor Lesley Sawers, Vice-Principal and Pro Vice Chancellor Business Development, Enterprise

and Innovation

Ms Cara Smyth, Vice President GCU NYC

Professor Karen Stanton, Vice-Principal & Pro Vice-Chancellor Global Engagement

Professor Valerie Webster, Executive Dean and Pro Vice-Chancellor External Relations Professor John Wilson, Executive Dean of the Glasgow School for Business & Society and Pro Vice

Chancellor Learning and Teaching

Ms Janice Bruce, Minute Secretary

**Chair’s Opening Remarks**

The Chair informed Court that the paper on the introduction of undergraduate provision at GCU London (document UC13/62) had been withdrawn. The Vice-Principal and Pro Vice-Chancellor Global Engagement advised Court that, given the hope that the business case would have been approved by Court, and in light of the inherent volatility of the international markets, she had very recently tested the market again in respect of entry in September 2014.  The advice was that the University would find it exceptionally challenging this year to achieve the numbers for September reflected in the business case with such a late entry into the admissions cycle.  A decision had, therefore, been taken to withdraw the paper and to put forward a revised business case for the Court’s meeting on 29th May.   This was likely to be based on first intakes in either January or September 2015. It was noted that the University would be limited in the type of programme it could offer from January 2015.

*[Secretary’s note: the date for the submission of the business case to Court was changed as reported in the matters arising briefing paper].*

The Vice-Principal and Pro Vice-Chancellor Global Engagement advised Court that discussions about the proposal to introduce undergraduate programmes at GCU London had taken place with the Scottish Government, the Scottish Funding Council and HEFCE. All three bodies had indicated that they supported the proposal.

**Minutes of the meeting of the University Court held on 30th January 2014**

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| 13.122 | Agreed |  | Document UC13/57, the unconfirmed draft minutes of the Court meeting held on 30th January 2014 were an accurate record. |

**Chair’s Report**

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| 13.123 | Noted | i. | Document UC13/58, a report from the Chair of Court on the activities he had undertaken and meetings he had attended on behalf of Court. |
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|  |  | ii. | Reference was made to the event which GCU co-hosted in London where the Prime Minister gave an address. One member believed that, whilst staff appreciated that the University was politically neutral, there was a general perception that the content of the Prime Minister’s speech was not focussed solely on business and academia but was an intervention in the debate on the Scottish referendum. The Principal stated that the University had a strong record in providing a platform to promote informed debate on a wide range of economic, social, environmental and constitutional issues. Although the University itself remained neutral on political issues, including the Scottish referendum, it was an important part of its role, in common with all universities, to facilitate open discussion and debate on the major issues of the day. In recent months GCU had hosted, on and off campus, a number of senior politicians from across the political spectrum who had spoken about the Scottish Referendum. The First Minister would deliver the foundation Caledonian Lecture at GCU’s New York campus on 7th April 2014.  Court was unanimous in supporting the University’s role in promoting freedom of thought and expression. |

**Principal’s and Executive Board Report**

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| 13.124 | Noted | i. | Document UC13/59, the Principal’s and Executive Board Report to Court. |
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|  |  | ii. | The Principal updated the Court in detail about the agenda for her forthcoming visit to Oman including the Caledonian College of Engineering Oman (CCEO) and a private meeting with the Chairman of the CCEO Board. During the visit, on which she would be accompanied by the Vice-Principal & PVC Global Engagement and the Chief Financial Officer & Vice-Principal Finance & Planning, she would meet the Minister of Health. The Minister of Education intimated that she too would have wished to join the meeting but would be out of the country at the time. The Principal reminded the Court that the contract between the University and the College was under re-negotiation. The Vice-Principal and Executive Dean of the School of Engineering and the Built Environment stated that at the last College Board meeting six months previously, which he had attended, it had been noted that planned Omani regulation meant that any Chair of the Board of Governors would be unable to hold a financial interest in the College.  The Principal stated that she would provide a further update at the Court meeting on 29th May 2014. |

**University Secretary’s Report**

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| 13.125 | Noted | i. | Document UC13/60, the University Secretary’s Report. |
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|  |  | ii. | The Register of Interests would be published on the Court website in accordance with the Scottish Code of Good Higher education Governance. The University Secretary reminded governors that they were asked to update their entry in the Register at the beginning of each academic session and should also notify the Court secretariat of any material changes in circumstances which arose during the session.  In response to a query about the definition of a significant shareholding, it was agreed to use the business definition of more than 3%. |
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| 13.126 | Agreed |  | To approve the nomination of Professor Sawers, Vice-Principal and Pro Vice-Chancellor Business Development, enterprise and Innovation as the University’s nominee on the University of Stirling Conference for a four year period commencing 1st July 2014. |

**Senate Report: 11th October 2013**

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| 13.127 | Noted |  | Document UC13/61, a report on substantive items which Senate had considered at its meeting on 21st February 2014. |

**International Student Recruitment 2013/2014: Update**

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| 13.128 | Noted |  | Document UC13/63, an update on international student recruitment 2013/2014. |

**Audit Committee Report: 11th February 2014**

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| 13.129 | Noted |  | Document UC13/64, a report on the substantive issues of business discussed at the Audit Committee meeting on 11th February 2014. |

**Corporate Risk Register**

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| 13.130 | Considered |  | Document UC13/65, the GCU Corporate Risk Register together with a summary of risk management activities undertaken during 2013 and developments planned for 2014. |
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| 13.131 | Noted | i. | The CFO and VP Finance & Planning stated that the Corporate Risk Register was a live document which the Audit Committee had agreed at its last meeting would be submitted to the Committee for review and comment on a regular basis. The risk register would also be reviewed annually by Court. It was noted that the risk register was viewed across the University as a useful tool; risk was a standing agenda item on School and Directorate senior management team meetings. The Risk Management Forum met quarterly and provided a platform for ongoing development. |
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|  |  | ii. | The Audit Committee had considered the corporate risk register at its meeting on 11th February 2014 and had commended it to Court for approval. The Committee had commented on the number of gross risks which had been categorised as high risk and expressed the view, which had been shared by the external auditors, that in some cases this appeared to be an overly harsh assessment. |
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| 13.132 | Discussion | i. | Responding to a query about whether any benchmarking had been undertaken with other institutions, the CFO and VP Finance & Planning advised that he had consulted professional advisers and risk consultants. No specific benchmarking had been carried out as it was unlikely that this information would be publicly available. However, the internal and external auditors had suggested that the risk register was an advanced document in comparison with the University’s peer group. Furthermore, it was expected that the internal and external auditors would advise the University if the document did not reflect best practice. |
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|  |  | ii. | With reference to the residual risk score of two for research, one member asked if this should be higher. Noting that no action could be taken until the University received the results of its REF return until December 2014, it was suggested that the risk of a less favourable outcome remained. |
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| 13.133 | Agreed |  | To approve the Corporate Risk Register. The residual risk score for research would be reconsidered at the next refresh. |

**Staff Policy Committee Report: 19th February 2014**

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| 13.134 | Noted |  | Document UC13/66, a report on the substantive issues of business discussed at the Staff Policy Committee meeting on 19th February 2014. |

**Court Membership Committee Report: 4th March 2014**

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| 13.135 | Considered |  | Document UC13/67, a report on the substantive issues of business discussed at the Court Membership Committee meeting on 4th March 2014. |
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| 13.136 | Noted | i. | 1. Mrs Brooke, Vice-Chair of Court, and the Chair had agreed, in light of her other numerous University committee commitments, that she would stand down as Chair of the Staff Policy Committee but would remain a member of SPC; this resulted in the need to appoint a new chair of the SPC with effect from1 August 2014; 2. Dr James Miller would stand down from SPC with effect from 31st July 2014. Dr Miller had demitted the Chair of the Staff Policy Committee with effect from 1 October 2011 when he took over as Chair of Audit. He had, however, remained a member of SPC for the purposes of succession planning with the intention of standing down from the Committee at a future date. 3. Dr Rajan Madhok’s final term of office on Court expired on 31st July 2014 resulting in a need to appoint a new chair of the Remuneration Committee; 4. the Nominations Committee for the new Chair of Court, which would be appointed from among the membership of the Court Membership Committee, required the identification of a Chair given that the Chair of the CMC was the current Chair of Court. |
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|  |  | ii. | The annual review of the Committees’ Terms of Reference earlier in the session had resulted in some committees defining the required number of lay members in terms of the then current number of lay members. The Committee agreed to recommend that the Terms of Reference of Court Committees should with immediate effect be amended to use the formulation of ‘no fewer than x lay governors’. This left open the opportunity for a greater number of lay members in circumstances where appointments were being made in advance of planned retirements from the Court but removed the inevitability of a Committee then being in breach of the membership requirements when the planned retirement took place unless the number of lay members was permanently expanded. |
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| 13.137 | Agreed |  | 1. Professor Stephanie Young be appointed as Chair of the Staff Policy Committee with effect from 1 August 2014; 2. Tom Halpin be appointed as Chair of the Remuneration Committee with effect from 1st August 2014. 3. Dr James Miller be appointed as Chair of the Nomination Committee during the active recruitment process for the Chair of Court 4. the terms of reference of Court Committees should with immediate effect be amended to use the formulation of ‘no fewer than x lay governors’. |

**Job Description for Chair of Court**

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| 13.138 | Considered |  | Document UC13/68, the draft job description for the Chair of Court. |
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| 13.139 | Noted |  | Following Court’s initial consideration of the job description at its meeting on 30th January 2014, as agreed by Court, the draft had been circulated to all University staff and students for comment. |
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| 13.140 | Agreed |  | To approve the draft job description. |

**Student Experience Framework Progress Report**

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| 13.141 | Noted | i. | Document UC13/69, an interim update on the progress made in implementing the Student Experience Framework during the period June 2013 to March 2014. The first annual report was due in December 2014 and would be submitted to a future Court meeting. |
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|  |  | ii. | In response to a query about the GCU London student experience, Court was advised that the framework was generic and encompassed all GCU campuses. The specific actions applicable to GCUL were set out in the implementation plan. Whilst the priorities set out in Student Experience Framework were applicable to all GCU students, there would be differences in the way these were implemented by the London Campus Board. Progress in implementing the Student Experience Framework would be included in the annual report. |

**North Glasgow Regeneration: Introductory Proposition**

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| 13.142 | Noted | i. | Document UC13/70 which gave an overview of the Glasgow City Council’s vision for a North Glasgow Regeneration project and an opportunity for GCU to be a partner in this project. |
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|  |  | ii. | The Principal advised that the opportunity for GCU could potentially include new student accommodation, access to sports facilities, a health and wellbeing centre, a permanent home for the Caledonian Club and a nursery with dedicated GCU spaces. With regard to the University’s current student accommodation, Caledonian Court would in due course require significant investment to upgrade the facilities. The project would also be an opportunity to enhance the student experience and place GCU at the heart of Glasgow’s transformation of the North of the City. |
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|  |  | iii. | Were Court to agree that the Executive should proceed to the next stage, detailed discussions would take place with Glasgow City Council about funding methods. A business case and options would be submitted to the Finance & General Purposes Committee at an appropriate time. The University would not require to make any capital investment; its financial investment could be restricted to revenue funding. |
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|  |  | iv. | The project fitted well with the University’s social mission. |
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| 13.143 | Discussion | i. | Court welcomed the proposal which offered the University a unique opportunity to engage with the City of Glasgow and contribute to an innovative project. |
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|  |  | ii. | In response to a query about whether the proposal to provide 500 student beds would impact on the strategic development of the University campus, it was noted that the University was not committed to giving up the premises at Caledonian Court. However, it would be important to approach the planning of student accommodation in a strategic way and also in the context of the 2020 strategy. The University Secretary advised that Savills had been commissioned to undertake a strategic review and an options appraisal which would include upgrading Caledonian Court and providing a mixture of locations for students. The report would help the University to make informed decisions about strategic priorities. |
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|  |  | iii. | Noting that the University promoted itself as a city centre campus, it was felt that it would be important not to dilute this message. Court was advised that in student satisfaction surveys, access to good sporting facilities and retail outlets scored highly. The Student President stated that the project would create a strong sense of community and asked that student input be sought when considering the development of student facilities. |
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| 13.144 | Agreed | i. | The Executive should proceed to the next stage and engage in preliminary discussions with Glasgow City Council. |
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|  |  | ii. | Future reports on progress should highlight any implications which the proposals might have for the current plans for the Heart of the Campus and Caledonian Court. |

**Date of next meeting**

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| 13.145 | Noted |  | The next meeting of Court would be held on Thursday 29th May 2014 at 4.30pm. |