**DocUC14/84**

**(Confirmed)**

**University Court**

**Minutes of the meeting of the University Court held on 7th May 2015**

**(Minutes 14.156– 14.189)**

**Present:** Mrs Hazel Brooke (Chair)

Mrs Rhona Baillie, Dr Douglas Chalmers, Mr John Chapman, Professor Pamela Gillies, Ms Laura Gordon, Mr Ian Gracie, Mr Michael Stephenson, Mr Iain Stewart, Mr Alistair Webster, Professor Stephanie Young (Vice-Chair)

**Apologies:** Mr Tom Halpin, Mr Gordon Jack, Miss Davena Rankin, Mr David Wallace, Dr Bob Winter

**In attendance:** Ms Gerda Bartsch, Director of Strategic Projects, Strategy & Planning

Ms Jan Hulme, University Secretary & Vice Principal (Governance)

Mr Alex Killick, Director of People

Professor Mike Mannion, Vice Principal & Pro Vice Chancellor Research& Academic Provost GCU New York

Mr Gerry Milne, Chief Financial Officer & Vice-Principal Infrastructure

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

& Innovation

Professor Karen Stanton, Deputy Vice Chancellor

Professor Valerie Webster Vice Principal & Pro Vice-Chancellor Communications & External Relations

Ms Janice Bruce, Secretary

**Chair’s Opening Remarks**

1. The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting.

2. The Director of Strategic Projects, Strategy & Planning was attending the meeting to present the papers on Student Recruitment 2014-2015 and the HESA Performance Indicators 2015.

3. The Chair warmly congratulated Professor Stanton on her appointment as the Vice-Chancellor at York St John University.

**Minutes of the meeting of the University Court held on 19th March 2015**

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| 14.156 | Agreed |  | Document UC14/67, the unconfirmed draft minutes of the Court meeting held on 19th March 2015 were an accurate record subject to the correction of two minor typographical errors. |

**Matters Arising Briefing Note**

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| 14.157 | Noted |  | Document UC14/68, an update on the matters arising from the meeting held on 19th March 2015. |

**Chair’s Report**

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| 14.158 | Noted |  | Document UC14/69, a report from the Chair of Court on the activities she had undertaken and meetings she had attended, on behalf of Court. |
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| 14.159 | Reported |  | The Chair referred to the Court Open Event which had been held on 6th May 2015. The event had been well-received with positive feedback from staff who had attended. The Chair thanked all who had been involved in making the event a success. |

**Principal’s and Executive Board Report**

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| 14.160 | Received |  | Document UC14/70, the Principal’s and Executive Board Report to Court. |
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| 14.161 | Reported | i. | The Principal referred to the proposed changes to Tier 4 sponsor guidance which the UK Visas and Immigration Department (UKVI) had announced towards the end of 2014 and the impact on INTO and comparable providers. The main impact of these changes was likely to be a reduction in international student numbers. The University would work with the INTO Joint Venture Board to monitor the situation. Court recognised the challenge this presented for INTO in terms of international student recruitment and noted that it would receive further updates on discussions about the University’s options. Meanwhile, the University would deliver the requirements of the first phase of the undergraduate programmes it was introducing in London. |
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|  |  | ii. | The Principal advised that during her visit to Boston’s Babson College the College indicated its interest in entering into a Memorandum of Agreement to include joint MScs in selected areas, joint townhalls and joint research. Court noted the developments with interest. |
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|  |  | iii. | The Principal advised that she was considering options for addressing changes in the Executive Board in light of Professor Stanton’s appointment as Vice-Chancellor at York St John University and Professor Wilson’s recent appointment as Principal and Chief Executive Officer of The Sino-British College in Shanghai to make sure that the Executive was at full strength to deliver the 2020 Strategy. The Principal would discuss the matter with the Chair of Court and come back to Court with recommendations. |

**University Secretary’s Report**

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| 14.162 | Received |  | Document UC14/71, the University Secretary’s Report. |
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| 14.163 | Reported | i. | By the University Secretary that there had been an excellence response to the recruitment activity, which had included advertisement in the press, to encourage expressions of interest in the role of governor. The Court Membership Committee had drawn up a shortlist of candidates from a strong and diverse field. Interviews would be held in early June. The Court Membership Committee had recently participated in externally facilitated unconscious bias training in preparation for this task. Recommendations for appointment would be presented to Court at its meeting on 25th June 2015. It was agreed that, although three vacancies, actual or foreseeable, had originally been identified, there could be some latitude in the number of recommendations brought forward in circumstances of an exceptionally strong field. |
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|  |  | ii. | With reference to the key dates paper, one Court member had noted that scheduling the May Court meeting in the first week of the month would be a recurring problem for some as it would coincide with local and general election dates. Court’s views were invited as to whether the May Court meeting should be put back by a week. The Court concluded that it wished to maintain the current pattern of dates for Court meetings. It was also noted that the date of the October Health & Safety Committee meeting should read 1st October 2015 and not 2016. |
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|  |  | iii. | In response to a query the University Secretary described the tightening of UKVI immigration rules which required institutions to sponsor overseas students’ applications for a student visa. This involved the University issuing an international applicant with a ‘confirmation of acceptance for studies’ (CAS),) having undertaken a range of checks to ensure that the applicant was likely to meet the stringent and diverse Home Office requirements for a Tier 4 student visa. If the Home Office refused visas of, now, 10%, but until recently 20%, of applicants who had been issued with a CAS, an institution would jeopardise its Highly Trusted Sponsor status and its ability to recruit international students. |

**Senate Report: 20th March 2015**

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| 14.164 | Noted | i. | Document UC14/72, a report on substantive items which Senate had considered at its meeting on 20th March 2015. |
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|  |  | ii. | The Caledonian Club had secured a donation from the Morgan Stanley International Foundation to deliver a new Caledonian Club initiative for a unique summer school which involved bringing together parents and children from five disadvantaged Glasgow communities. Court congratulated all involved in achieving funding for this initiative. |

**Students’ Association Trimester 2 Report 2014-2015**

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| 14.165 | Noted | i. | Document UC14/73, a report on the activities in which the Students’ Association had been engaged during Trimester 2 in the academic year 2014/15. |
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|  |  | ii. | The President of the Students’ Association introduced the report and drew Court’s attention to the main highlights of a productive year. |
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|  |  | iii. | The Chair thanked the President of the Students’ Association and the student executive team for a comprehensive and informative report. |

**GCU New York Update**

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| 14.166 | Noted |  | Document UC14/74 a progress report on recent activity at GCUNY including areas of revenue and income generation, sponsorship and philanthropy. |
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| 14.167 | Reported | i. | The Principal stated that she was meeting with representatives from the New York State Education Department later in May to discuss the application for the educational licence. This was an encouraging step forward in the application process. The Principal would advise Court of the outcome of the meeting. |
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|  |  | ii. | GCUNY had hosted an exhibition of portraits by renowned Scottish artist Gerard Burns as part of Scotland Week. Following the success of this event, a file of media comments was being compiled to demonstrate the positive impact which GCUNY made at that type of event. |
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|  |  | iii. | In response to a query about whether the composition of the GCUNY Inc Board of Directors should include the President of the Students’ Association and a GCU staff member, Court was advised that this would be revisited once the educational licence had been granted. |

**Public Sector Equality Duty Report**

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| 14.168 | Considered |  | Document UC14/75, the Public Sector Equality Duty Report. |
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| 14.169 | Noted |  | This was the first report on mainstreaming equality across university functions which the University had a duty to publish under the 2010 Equality Act. It represented a review of progress at the midway point in the execution of a four year equalities planning framework. The Equality and Diversity Committee had helped to shape the report, which would be published on the University’s website. It would also be presented to the Senate at its meeting on 5 June. |
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| 14.170 | Discussion |  | Court noted that, while there was still important work to be done, good progress was being made within the University’s core teaching and research activity and in the context of the University as a community. |
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| 14.171 | Agreed |  | To approve the report subject to minor presentational and editorial amendments. |

**Staff Policy Committee Report: 15th April 2015**

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| 14.172 | Noted |  | Document UC14/76, a report on the substantive issues of business discussed at the Staff Policy Committee meeting on 15th April 2015. |

**Supporting Families Policy – Shared Parental Leave**

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| 14.173 | Considered |  | Document UC14.77, the draft Supporting Families Policy – Shared Parental Leave. |
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| 14.174 | Reported |  | By the Director of People Services that the existing Supporting Families Policy (SPL) had been updated to reflect the new legislative right of Shared Parental Leave and the Executive Board’s decision to offer enhanced pay for SPL to mirror maternity and adoption pay entitlements. The policy would be kept under review to ascertain how effectively it was working and whether any revisions were needed. |
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| 14.175 | Agreed |  | To approve the revised Supporting Families Policy. |

**Draft People Strategy 2020**

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| 14.176 | Considered |  | Document UC14/78, the draft People Strategy 2020. |
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| 14.177 | Reported | i. | In his introduction the Director of People advised that the 2020 strategy was a refresh of the current People Strategy and would build on work already undertaken in the 2015 People Strategy. The People Strategy 2020 would be supportive of the University’s Strategy 2020 and had been informed by Schools’ and departments’ 5 year plans as well as consultation with a range of stakeholders. The emerging themes were “Working Well” and “Enhancing Capability”. |
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|  |  | ii. | The draft had been endorsed by the Staff Policy Committee at its meeting on 15th April 2015. |
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| 14.178 | Discussion |  | For clarity it was suggested that the penultimate bullet point under the section on Health and Wellbeing be reworded from “developing an externally validated health and safety management system” to “adopting an externally validated health and safety management system”. |
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| 14.179 | Agreed |  | To approve the direction of travel for the development of the draft People Strategy 2020. |

**Finance & General Purposes Committee Report: 21st April 2015**

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| 14.180 | Noted |  | Document UC14/79, a report on the substantive issues of business discussed at the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting on 21st April 2015. |
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| 14.181 | Reported |  | By the Principal that following the presentation on the draft Business Development Strategy which the Pro Vice-Chancellor Business Innovation & Enterprise and Vice-Principal had given at the Court meeting on 19th March 2015, the Executive Board had reflected further on the best way of delivering the Strategy. An excellent survey and analysis of activity and scope by the PVC Business Innovation & Enterprise had led the Executive Board to the conclusion that business development in the University was most effectively delivered through existing, embedded functions within Schools, the International Office and the University’s dedicated programme of work-based education. There was no case, therefore, at the present time for the University to have a separate business development function because the costs of maintaining a separate unit could not be met through the additional commercial income that could be generated.  An overarching Business Development Strategy for the University which captured the range of University activities in business development that were delivered through existing operational plans and mechanisms including the Deans’ Group and the 2020 Strategy Programme Implementation Group would be submitted to the Court on the 25th June 2015. |
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| 14.182 | Discussion | i. | In response to a query about the development of the new Digital Strategy and the importance of focusing on business change across the University, the Chief Information Officer advised that the Strategy would be developed in consultation with Schools and Support Departments. There was a commitment to buy-in throughout the University which would be facilitated by Digital Champions. |
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|  |  | ii. | One member asked if the Scottish Sector Financial Analysis 2013/2014 which had been presented to the F&GPC on 21st April 2015 meeting could be shared with Court. The CFO & VP Infrastructure advised that this would be appended to the draft Financial Strategy which would be submitted to Court for approval at its meeting on 25th June 2015. |

**Facilities Management Annual Report**

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| 14.183 | Noted |  | Document UC14/80, the Facilities Management Annual Report. |
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| 14.184 | Agreed |  | A report on the benefits obtained from the Combined Heat and Power System following the first full year of operation would be submitted to Court. |

**Audit Committee Report: 28th April 2015**

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| 14.185 | Noted | i. | Document UC14/81, which had been distributed at the meeting, a report on the substantive issues of business discussed at the Audit Committee meeting on 28th April 2015. |
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|  |  | ii. | Project sponsors were requested to attend Audit Committee meetings where there were high or medium/high risk findings or where the medium risk findings were of strategic importance. Court supported this practice and emphasised the importance of attendance by the relevant senior individuals who were sponsoring an audit. |

**Student Numbers**

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| 14.186 | Noted |  | Document UC14/82 an overview of student recruitment in 2014-2015. Numbers used were the University’s own. External benchmarks would not be available until March 2016. |
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| 14.187 | Reported |  | Points raised by the Director of Strategic Projects, Strategy and Planning in her introduction to the paper included:   * The University had met all SFC targets for 2014-2015. * Recruitment from lower socio/economic backgrounds was ahead of the sector and the University had been recognised by the SFC for this. * The external environment for international student recruitment continued to be challenging. Despite this the University expected to achieve 93% against target following trimester A and B registrations. |

**Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Performance Indicators 2015**

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| 14.188 | Noted | i. | Document UC14/83, an overview of the performance of the University and the sector in the HESA indicators published in March 2015. |
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|  |  | ii. | The University’s performance in the 2015 HESA PIs was the strongest it had ever been. Court congratulated all staff who had been involved in achieving these results and noted that this would have a positive impact on the University’s positioning in the following year’s league tables. |

**Date of next meeting**

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| 14.189 | Noted |  | The next meeting of Court would be held on Thursday 25th June 2015 at 4.30pm. |

The Chair, noting that this was Mr Stewart’s last Court meeting, thanked him warmly for his contribution to the work of Court and the standing committees on which he had served during his three year term of office as the Senate member on Court.