**DocUC15/13**

**(Confirmed)**

**University Court**

**Minutes of the meeting of the University Court held on 24th September 2015**

**(Minutes 15.01 – 15.24)**

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

Dr Douglas Chalmers, Mr John Chapman, Dr Morag Ferguson, Professor Pamela Gillies, Ms Laura Gordon, Mr Ian Gracie, Mr Gordon Jack, Mr Ian Kerr, Mr Austin Lafferty, Ms Neena Mahal, Dr Neil Partlett, Professor Ann Priest, Miss Davena Rankin, Mr Paul Reynolds, Mr Michael Stephenson, Ms Caroline Stuart, Mr David Wallace, Mr Alistair Webster, Dr Bob Winter, Professor Stephanie Young (Vice-Chair)

**Apologies:** Mr Tom Halpin, Professor Valerie Webster, Pro Vice-Chancellor Learning and Student Experience and Vice Principal

**In attendance:** Ms Greta Bartsch, Director of Strategic Projects

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

Ms Bernadette Kelly, Chief Information Officer

Mr Alex Killick, Director of People

Professor Mike Mannion, Vice Principal & Pro Vice Chancellor Research

Professor James Miller, Deputy Vice Chancellor

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

Ms Jodie Waite, Student Vice President SHLS

Ms Janice Bruce, Secretary

**Chair’s Opening Remarks**

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the 2015/16 academic session.
2. On behalf of Court, the Chair congratulated Professor James Miller on his appointment to his new role as Deputy Vice Chancellor.
3. Gerda Bartsch, Director of Strategic Projects would be in attendance for items 10.1 National Student Survey Summary of Outcomes, 10.2 SFC Outcome Agreement Self-Evaluation Report 2014/2015 and 10.3 SFC Outcome Agreement 2016/2017: Guidance and Approach.

**Presentation from Professor Iain Cameron, Dean of School of Engineering and Built Environment**

Court heard with interest a presentation from Professor Cameron on the work of the School of Engineering and Built Environment. Areas addressed included:

* The School’s key metrics and strategic indicators for:
* Widening access
* Student satisfaction
* Progression, retention, employment and graduate employment
* Commercialand knowledge exchange
* Diversity of student population
* Staff engagement and qualifications
* Financial sustainability
* The development of the School’s priorities to align with the University’s 2020 Strategy
* The School’s immediate priorities to meet the 2020 Strategy
* Key SEBE student competition successes

*[Secretary’s note: A copy of the presentation was emailed to Court members following the meeting.]*

**Minutes of the meeting of the University Court held on 25th June 2015**

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| 15.01 | Agreed |  | Document UC15/01, the unconfirmed draft minutes of the Court meeting held on 25th June 2015 were an accurate record. |
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| 15.02 | Noted |  | With reference to minute 14.198 about staff and student representation on the Steering Group which the Committee of Scottish Chairs had established to review the Scottish of Code of Good HE Governance in 2016, Court was advised that the review was currently in abeyance because of potential legislative changes which would emerge from the HE Governance (Scotland) Bill 2015. If proposals became legislation the matter of representation on the CSC Steering Group would be kept on the CSC agenda. |

**Matters Arising Briefing Note**

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| 15.03 | Noted |  | Document UC15/02, an update on the matters arising from the meeting held on 25th June 2015. |

**National Student Survey Summary of Outcomes**

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| 15.04 | Noted | i. | Document UC15/10, an overview of the results of the National Student Survey 2015. |
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|  |  | ii. | The key performance indicator 2015 for overall satisfaction had been met. |
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|  |  | iii. | The results would be discussed in more depth at the Court strategic planning event on 7th and 8th October 2015 as part of the session on league tables at which time more detailed background information would be provided. |
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| 15.05 | Discussion | i. | In response to a query, Court was advised that the Schools had short, medium and long-term action plans to address issues arising from the NSS. The Principal advised that it was important to recognise that in relation to some measures in the NSS a small number of programmes which had performed less well could have a disproportionate effect on league table positions. However, these programmes could be identified and action plans developed. The Principal reminded Court that the Quality Assurance Agency had expressed full confidence in the University’s quality of teaching in the recent Enhancement Led Institutional Review. Whilst the importance of League Table results was acknowledged it was prudent to take a measured approach. |
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|  |  | ii. | One governor suggested that it would be helpful to include a comparison with the previous year’s scores especially in some measures where improvements could be made. |

**Scottish Funding Council Outcome Agreement Self-Evaluation Report 2014/2015**

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| 15.06 | Considered |  | Document UC15/11a, the draft of the self-evaluation report required by the Scottish Funding Council which set out the University’s achievements against the 2014-2015 Outcome Agreement. |
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| 15.07 | Agreed |  | To endorse the report for submission to the Scottish Funding Council subject to a minor amendment to the wording in the penultimate paragraph on page 8 of the report. |

**Outcome Agreement 2016-2017- Guidance and Approach**

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| 15.08 | Noted | i. | Document UC15/11b, the Scottish Funding Council guidance for the next round of Outcome Agreements. |
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|  |  | ii. | The Director of Strategic Projects advised that the first draft of the Outcome Agreement would be submitted to the Court meeting on 26th November 2015. |

**Chair’s Report**

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| 15.09 | Noted |  | Document UC15/03, a report from the Chair of Court on the activities she had undertaken and meetings she had attended, on behalf of Court. |

**Principal’s and Executive Board’s Report to Court**

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| 15.10 | Noted |  | Document UC15/04, the Principal’s and Executive Board Report to Court highlighting recent news and developments that involved or impacted upon the University. |
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| 15.11 | Received |  | Matters highlighted by the Principal included the following: |
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|  |  | i. | The Principal referred to the recent Universities Scotland Away Day which she had attended and highlighted two issues which had been raised with Aileen McKechnie, Director of Advanced Learning and Science at the Scottish Government. Firstly, it appeared possible that slight amendments might be made to some clauses in the HE Governance (Scotland) Bill 2015. Secondly, she intimated that there would be cuts to the core teaching grant and possible scale and period of implementation. The Principal advised that the impact of a range of potential cuts, and measures which could be taken to mitigate these, would be presented for discussion at the Court Away Day in October 2015. |
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|  |  | ii. | With reference to international student numbers, the Principal advised that numbers for the current academic year were not yet finalised. However, in common with other universities, the University had experienced a downturn with a contributory factor believed to be the proposed changes to Tier 4 sponsor guidance which the UK Visas and Immigration Department (UKVI) had announced towards the end of 2014. Nevertheless, the University’s overall position with regard to international and transnational education remained buoyant. Court would have the opportunity at the Away Day to discuss actions which could be taken to increase international student numbers. |
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|  |  | iii. | The Principal reminded Court that at its meeting on 7 May 2015 the impact of the proposed changes to Tier 4 sponsor guidance on INTO and comparable providers had been highlighted. Whilst the position had remained buoyant in terms of student numbers coming onto the INTO foundation programme joint ventures, such as INTO, would be subject to revision in future if the joint venture partner did not have independent visa sponsorship powers. At present INTO relied on 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. The University was continuing in discussions with INTO about moving from a full joint venture partnership to associate status. |
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|  |  | iv. | The International Summer School had been successful and was a way of increasing the number of international students coming to the University. Further data would be provided at the Court Away Day. |
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|  |  | v. | The Principal provided an update on the Caledonian College of Engineering in Oman. The succession to the Chair of the College’s Board of Directors would be discussed at the next CCE Board meeting. The establishment of the new University in Oman, of which the CCE was to be a partner, was progressing well which was a measure of the regard in which the CCEO was held. |
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|  |  | vi. | GCU and African Leadership Unleashed had been successful in their application to the State Education Department of Mauritius for accreditation for the African Leadership College for Higher Education. GCU was the first organisation in partnership with ALU to be granted a licence. Court congratulated all involved for this significant achievement. |
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|  |  | vii. | The Principal advised Court that Professor Lesley Sawyers, Vice-Principal & Pro Vice Chancellor Business Development, Enterprise & Innovation would be leaving the University at the end of September 2015. The Principal wished to record thanks to Professor Sawyers for her leadership in business development activities and for her comprehensive survey and analysis of activity and scope which had led 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. |

**University Secretary’s Report**

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| 15.12 | Considered |  | Document UC15/05, the University Secretary’s Report. |
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| 15.13 | Noted | i. | Minor changes to Court’s Statement of Primary Responsibilities. |
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|  |  | ii. | With reference to the research report on equality and diversity on governing bodies published by the Equality Challenge Unit in June 2015, a copy of which governors had already received, the University Secretary suggested that Court should ask the Court Membership Committee to consider the report with a view to identifying any additional steps that would support the objectives of achieving an enhanced gender balance and greater diversity on Court. The University Secretary suggested that there might be scope for the findings of the ECU’s research on equality and diversity on governing bodies to be one of the topics for the lunchtime discussions before a future Court meeting.  The University Secretary advised that the ECU would be producing a handbook for governors in the next two months. |
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|  |  | iii. | The University Secretary advised that Westminster had published final guidance on the formal duty placed on Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) under the Counter-Terrorism & Security Act 2015 to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. The objective in setting up a Prevent Steering Group within the University was to ensure that a sensible measured approach was taken to fulfil the University’s statutory duties under the Act whilst also ensuring the University’s other duties, for example under the Equality Act 2010, were also respected.  With regard to the membership of the Steering Group, it was noted that since its endorsement by the Executive Board, it had been agreed that Dr Morag Ferguson would be the academic representative. |
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|  |  | iv. | The calendar of Court and committee meetings for 2016/2017 had been revised to change the sequencing of the F&GPC and Audit meetings such that F&GPC preceded Audit.  *[Secretary’s note: The revised calendar of Court and committee meetings for 2016-2017 was emailed to governors and Executive members after the meeting.]* |
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| 15.14 | Discussion |  | The University Secretary referred to Westminster’s intention to hold a referendum on the UK’s membership of the European Union (EU) no later than 2017. Both Universities UK (UUK) and Universities Scotland (US) had expressed their views on the issue. The former had launched its Universities for Europe campaign with the stated objective of playing a proactive role in promoting the value of EU membership to the British public. The latter generally supported a pro-European stance. The Executive Board had discussed the matter taking cognisance of the views expressed by Universities UK and Universities Scotland and advocated the adoption of a pro-European stance. In considering the University’s stance and the extent to which it would be a proactive one, the University Secretary advised Court that it was a very much in principle proposal at present as the extent of the University’s engagement in debate on the referendum would depend on various factors nearer the time.  Court considered the matter and concluded that it would be helpful if a positioning statement setting out the implications for Higher Education and the benefits the University could accrue through being part of the EU could be developed to facilitate further discussion. It was agreed that this would be submitted to a subsequent Court meeting for further consideration. |
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| 15.15 | Agreed | i. | To accept the minor changes and to reaffirm the Statement of Court’s Primary Responsibilities for 2015-2016. |
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|  |  | ii. | The Court Membership Committee be asked to consider the Equality Challenge Unit’s research report on Equality & Diversity on Governing Bodies with a view to identifying any additional steps that would support the objectives of achieving an enhanced gender balance and greater diversity on Court. |
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|  |  | iii | A positioning statement setting out the implications for Higher Education and the benefits the University could accrue through being part of the EU would be submitted to a subsequent Court meeting for further consideration. |
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|  |  | iv. | To ratify the following appointments to Court’s standing committees:  **Audit**  Morag Ferguson  Neena Mahal  **Court Membership Committee**  Morag Ferguson  **Finance & General Purposes**  Ian Kerr  Neil Partlett  Caroline Stuart  **Staff Policy**  Paul Reynolds |
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|  |  | v. | The revised draft calendar of Court /committee meetings 2016/2017 which was tabled at the meeting. |

**Annual Institutional Statement to the Scottish Funding Council on Institution Led Review of Quality for the Academic Session 2014-2015**

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| 15.16 | Considered |  | Document UC15/06, the annual statement to the SFC on enhancement led internal subject review and quality assurance arrangements for the academic session 2014-2015. |
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| 15.17 | Agreed |  | To endorse the annual statement on institution led review of quality for the academic session 2014-2015 for submission to the Scottish Funding Council subject to a minor editorial amendment. |

**Annual Statement of Assurance for the Scottish Funding Council**

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| 15.18 | Considered |  | Document UC15/07, the annual statement of assurance 2014-2015 for the Scottish Funding Council concerning the maintenance of academic standards and the quality of GCU’s learning provision. |
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| 15.19 | Agreed |  | To endorse the annual statement of assurance 2014-2015 for the Scottish Funding Council. |

**GCUNY Update**

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| 15.20 | Noted | i. | Document UC15/08 a progress report on recent activity at GCUNY including areas of revenue and income generation, sponsorship and philanthropy. |
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|  |  | ii. | Activities highlighted since the last report submitted to Court in June 2015 included:   * The first Executive Education seminars had been funded. * The application for the educational licence was progressing. A full casework review by the NY State Education department was underway. * A significant amount of work had been undertaken to continue to build GCUNY’s esteem and establish its position in relevant networks. * Three applications for grants had been submitted to various Foundations for operational activities and/or esteem building activities. |
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|  |  | iii. | In response to a query, the Principal advised Court that the issue of succession planning for GCUNY had been addressed. |
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|  |  | iv. | A presentation on the Cinteg CPD Online project would be made at a future Court meeting. |

**Amendment to Revolving Loan Agreement between GCU and GCU NYC Inc**

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| 15.21 | Approved |  | Document UC15/09 which set out the terms of the second amendment to the revolving loan agreement between GCU and GCU NYC Inc. |

**Annual Renewal of Bank of Scotland Facility Letter and Resolution**

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| 15.22 | Approved |  | Document UC15/12, the annual renewal of the Bank of Scotland facility letter and resolution. |
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| 15.23 | Noted |  | The annual renewal of the Bank of Scotland facility letter had also been approved by the Board of Directors of the Glasgow Caledonian University Company Ltd and GCU Academy Ltd at their meetings on 24th September 2015. |

**Any Other Competent Business**

**GCU Foundation**

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| 15.24 | Reported |  | The Principal reminded Court that the University was in the process of rebranding its philanthropic activities under the umbrella of Glasgow Caledonian University Foundation. In parallel, the University had secured a substantial donation from Sir Alex Ferguson CBE in response to an invitation from sir Alex to all Scottish universities to submit a proposal outlining the impact a gift for widening access could make to their institution. The Executive Board had agreed that this offered an excellent opportunity for the University to launch the Glasgow Caledonian University foundation with the news that Sir Alex Ferguson was making the “founding gift” to the Foundation to support widening access.  In response to a query about how Court members could use their networks and expertise to help with philanthropic activities, it was agreed that the Depute Vice Chancellor would consider ways in which the GCU foundation and Court members might work together.  Court warmly congratulated the Director of Development and Global Engagement and her team for this outstanding achievement. |