**COURT BULLETIN: 25 April 2013**

Dear Colleagues

This is the sixth in a series of bulletins on University Court meetings, which will be available on the University website after each meeting. The summaries are not a formal record of the Court meeting.

The University Court held its fifth meeting of session 2012/2013 on 25th April 2013. The main issues discussed were as follows:

**Draft Scottish Code of Good HE Governance**

Court considered the draft Scottish Code of Good HE Governance issued for consultation by the Steering Group established by the Committee of Scottish Chairs. The draft Code had been prepared following a period of extensive consultation. Court supported the draft Code and raised a few points of clarification which will be fed back to the Steering Group. It is expected that the new Code will come into force on a “comply or explain” basis on 1st August 2013. The University will be examining its own policies and procedures to ensure adherence to the Code.

**Hamish Wood Building Refurbishment Business Case**

Court approved in principle a proposal to refurbish the whole Hamish Wood Building internally and externally and to commit now to the expenditure of £5.5m for phase 1 of the refurbishment, a multipurpose atrium and the first floor. This complements and extends work on the ground floor of the Hamish Wood Building which is already incorporated in the Heart of the Campus project.

The Hamish Wood Building is the oldest and most intensively used of the major teaching buildings on campus and has lacked recent investment. The intention was flagged within the context of Phase 2 of the 2010 University Masterplan for the campus and was brought forward to Phase 1 of the Masterplan because of a reappraisal of the needs of the Glasgow School *for* Business and Society to offer modern attractive and effective teaching, learning and research spaces necessary for the School to maintain its competitive position, and the decision taken not to proceed as proposed in the Masterplan, with a new build of Executive Education within Phase 1.

 **GCU New York Progress Report**

The VP and PVC International and External Relations updated Court on the progress made in relation to establishing GCU NY. Suitable premises have been identified and negotiations on the lease are underway. The University has also applied to the State Education Department for the Education Licence and this progressing well, although the whole process will take around 18 months to complete. The launch date will now be in late September to coincide with the Chancellor, Professor Muhammad Yunus’, visit to New York with the Clinton Foundation.

**GCU New York: Facility Letter and Resolution**

Court approved the signing of a Resolution to amend the University’s existing Facility Letter with the Bank of Scotland. The revised Facility Letter now includes provision for a Letter of Credit (LOC) to support the establishment of GCU NY and the LOC provides additional financial assurances to the landlord.

**Research Excellence Framework**

Court received a report by the VP and PVC Research summarising the University’s plans and progress towards the UK Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercise in November 2013. The University performed well in the last research assessment exercise and seeks at least to maintain that position, albeit against a background of fierce competition and investment across the sector. The University has however, made considerable progress in the quality of its research over the last 6 years, and it is hoped that this will be reflected in the University’s position following the REF. The outcome, however, cannot be predicted with any certainty.

**Equality Outcomes Framework**

Court approved the Equality Outcomes Framework which outlined the University’s commitment to mainstreaming equality and diversity into core business functions. This also provides the framework for the annual reporting on progress as well as ensuring the University meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 for an Equality Outcomes Framework.

**Recruitment and Selection Revised Policy**

Court approved the revised Recruitment and Selection Policy which will be accompanied by guidance for managers on implementation.

**Regular Updates**

The following summary reports are submitted to each Court meeting to keep governors informed of significant matters arising between Court meetings.

* **Chair of Court’s Report**

Court received with regret Mrs Mary Craig’s decision to step down from Court for personal reasons.

* **Principal & Vice Chancellor & Executive Board Report**

The Principal informed Court that the University had not improved performance as well as had been hoped for in the Time Higher Student Experience. There had been an increase of only two places on last year’s survey. The University had scored low in relation to the student union/association with the lack of a bar or shop apparently being a factor, and student accommodation had not scored well on this occasion. Steps would be taken to tackle these issues. In other areas of the survey, however, the University performed well. It was noted that the results were based on only 100 respondents from the university and the survey showed major falls in ranking for several universities including others in the University Alliance and in the Russell Group.

The Chancellor, Professor Muhammad Yunus, had been presented with the USA Congressional Gold Medal on Capitol Hill, Washington and the Principal had attended as one of the Chancellor’s personal guests.

Court noted the successful conclusion of the negotiation of the contract with the Caledonian College of Engineering, Oman for a further 5 years.

Court was informed Senate had recently approved changes to the academic year that included moving semester 1 exams from before Christmas to January. Some students were unhappy with this change, but it was noted that the decision had been made following extensive work and consultation undertaken by a working group chaired by the PVC Learning and Teaching, and including the Student President.

* **University Secretary’s Report**

Court was informed that the University had received confirmation from the Home Office, of the re-approval of the University’s Tier 4 licence for the period up to the end of March 2017, assuming regulatory observance.

* **Reports from Court Standing Committees**

Court noted reports from the Court Membership Committee, the Staff Policy Committee, the Finance and General Purposes Committee, and the Audit Committee on issues discussed since the last Court meeting.

Tony Brian

Chair of Court