**DocUC15/46**

 **(Confirmed)**

**University Court**

**Minutes of the meeting of the University Court held on 3rd March 2016**

**(Minutes 15.65– 15.99)**

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

 Dr Douglas Chalmers, Mr John Chapman, Dr Morag Ferguson, Professor Pamela Gillies, Ms Laura Gordon, Mr Ian Gracie, Mr Tom Halpin, Mr Ian Kerr, Ms Neena Mahal, Dr Neil Partlett, Professor Ann Priest, Miss Davena Rankin (by video-link), Mr Paul Reynolds, Mr Michael Stephenson, Mr Alistair Webster, Dr Bob Winter, Professor Stephanie Young (Vice-Chair)

**Apologies:** Mr Gordon Jack, Ms Caroline Stuart, Mr David Wallace

**In attendance:** Ms Jeanine Gregersen-Hermans, Vice Principal & Pro Vice Chancellor International

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

Mr Alex Killick**,** Director of People, People Services

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 Cara Smyth, Vice-President of GCU NY

Ms Jodie Waite, Student Vice President School Health & Life Sciences

Professor Valerie Webster, Vice-Principal and Pro Vice-Chancellor Learning and Student Experience

 Mr Riley Power, Acting Secretary

**Apologies for Absence**

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| 15.65 | Noted |  | The Chair noted the apologies for the meeting and welcomed Jeanine Gregersen-Hermans, Vice Principal and Pro Vice Chancellor International, to the meeting.  |

**Minutes of the meeting of the University Court held on 26th November 2015**

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| 15.66 | Agreed |  | Document UC15/34, the unconfirmed draft minutes of the Court meeting held on 26th November 2015 were an accurate record.  |
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| 15.67 | Noted | i. | The report on the student numbers referred to in Minute 15.33(i) had been addressed in the F&GP Committee report, document UC15/45, and the F&GP Committee had received a detailed verbal update from the VP and Pro Vice Chancellor International at its meeting on 16th February 2016 and agreed that a further report would be submitted to its April or June meeting at which time a report would also be made to Court. |
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|  |  | ii. | The statement referred to in Minute 15.28(iii) concerning the distinctive nature of the student experience and value added through initiatives such as the Common Good curriculum would be brought to the April meeting of Court. |

**Chair’s Report**

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| 15.68 | Received |  | Document UC15/35, 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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| 15.69 | Noted |  | The draft Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Bill would progress to Stage 3 proceedings in the parliamentary process and it was hoped that at least some of the outstanding issues with respect to the election of Chairs, as highlighted by the sector, would be addressed at this stage. |
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|  |  |  | *Secretary’s note: The Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Bill was passed by the Scottish Parliament on 8 March 2016.The Bill as passed made the following changes to the provisions concerning the election/appointment of the Chairs from the 2nd Stage amended Bill:** *A provision was included (section A3 (2A) of the Bill as passed) which requires the CMC to make publically available a report indicating by way of overview (i.e. no identifying information provided), the number of applicants for the position of senior lay member /Chair and the equality and diversity characteristics of the applicants, the interviewed applicants and the applicants entitled to stand as candidates (to the extent that consent for disclosure of these details has been granted);*
* *The requirements around advertising (section A4 (1) of the Bill as passed) in are less prescriptive than the 2nd stage amended Bill and leaves it open to institutions to advertise in a way that reaches a broad range of persons;*
* *The provisions for the resignation/retirement of the senior lay member in the 2nd stage amended Bill has been combined with the similar section for ordinary members (section 6A of the Bill as passed).*
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**Principal & Vice-Chancellor and Executive Board Report**

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| 15.70 | Received |  | Document UC15/36, the Principal & Vice Chancellor and Executive Board Report to Court highlighting recent news and developments that involved or impacted upon the University.  |
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| 15.71 | Noted |  | The SFC indicative funding letter had been received by the University. It was noted that the overall headline reduction to GCU’s grant as advised by the SFC was 2.8% but that this figure masked a significant reduction in core teaching funding of 4.5%. Court noted that the indicative letter was subject to change and did not contain the final impact on some strategic funding, in relation to which further information would be required in advance of the final submission of GCU’s Outcome Agreement. It was noted that there was already a responsible and sustainable plan to manage the impact of funding changes. It was not known what the SFC funding position would be after 2016/17.  |
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| 15.72 | Discussed | i. | Court discussed the potential impact of the SFC indicative funding letter on the University’s widening access agenda. While it was noted that the funding changes gave rise to challenges associated with the University’s widening access initiatives, it was hoped that the Scottish Government would be receptive to recommendations thought likely to be included in the Widening Access Commission’s imminent final report. There was an opportunity for the University to highlight, in an evidence-based manner, its range of widening access initiatives and to secure additional support for this work. |
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|  |  | ii. | Court discussed the key metrics used to assess the effectiveness of the initiatives undertaken and the availability of benchmarking data to track the University’s performance in this regard. |
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| 15.73 | Agreed |  | To provide a report to the April meeting of Court from the Vice Principal and Pro Vice Chancellor Learning and Student Experience, which included benchmarking data with respect to widening access. |
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| 15.74 | Discussed |  | Court considered a draft positioning statement concerning the referendum on whether the UK should remain part of the European Union. It was noted that at the November meeting of Court it had been advised that the University should adopt a politically neutral position. It was agreed that the University could properly have a role in facilitating debate among those for and against remaining in the EU. It was also reasonable that the University should give a factual statement about the range of resources and funding it accessed through the European Union. Members raised concerns that the latter part of the draft statement could be interpreted as being in favour of one side of the argument over the other and asked that it be redrafted to ensure a consistent stance of political neutrality as to the outcome of the referendum.  |
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| 15.75 | Agreed |  | That the draft positioning statement would be re-drafted in light of the discussion at Court and circulated to members electronically for comment and agreement. |

**University Secretary’s Report**

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| 15.76 | Received |   | Document UC15/37, the University Secretary’s Report.  |
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| 15.77 | Noted |  | There was a vacancy for the GCU representative on the University of Stirling Conference, a body with a remit to engage with the University of Stirling’s broader communities.  |
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| 15.78 | Agreed |  | To approve the appointment of Gerda Bartsch, the Director of Strategic Projects, as the new representative for GCU. |
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| 15.79 | Noted |  | The Court Membership Committee had reviewed its own membership and recommended to Court that a further lay member of Court, being Mr Ian Kerr, should be appointed to the Committee.  |
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| 15.80 | Agreed |  | To appoint Mr Ian Kerr to the Court Membership Committee with immediate effect. |
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| 15.81 | Noted |  | Following the highly successful visit to the School of Engineering and the Built Environment on 15th February 2016, the Chair encouraged members to attend a further visit to be arranged in the late spring around the student experience, with a focus on international students.  |

**Draft GCU Digital Strategy**

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| 15.82 | Received |  | Document UC15/38, Draft Digital Strategy and feedback summary paper. |
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| 15.83 | Considered |  | The Vice Principal & Pro Vice Chancellor Learning and Student Experience outlined the contents of a paper containing the draft Digital Strategy, provided details of the work already undertaken in relation to the strategy and provided a summary of feedback received to date. It was noted that the detailed business cases and operational plans associated with the draft strategy would be submitted to the F&GP Committee in due course. |
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| 15.84 | Discussed | i. | Court provided feedback in relation to the draft Digital Strategy and noted in the particular, the following: |
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|  |  |  | 1. IT was simply an enabler and the draft strategy should be reviewed to ensure that the actions identified in the strategy were suitably mapped against the key corporate strategic outcomes they were designed to support. Moreover, these outcomes should reflect a clear understanding of the user requirements that delivery was to be measured against. It was proposed that it would greatly assist the Court in its work if it were to receive an integrated list of large scale projects, prioritised against business needs, for which funding was going to be sought. This would be preferable to separate project lists, such as ones for IT and estates, where relative priority between projects was then unclear.
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|  |  |  | 1. The University should ensure strong project governance, including the appointment of a project manager, was put in place. The Vice-Principal for Learning and Student Experience envisaged the early appointment of a project manager and an overarching Programme Board to oversee implementation. This would report to Court through the Executive Board and could include Court members within the membership. Realistic estimates both for time and budget and a timeline should be provided to ensure that the commitments in the strategy were delivered effectively.
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|  |  |  | 1. There was a large body of evidence across higher education and other sectors about what had and had not worked when progressing to delivery of implementation plan(s). This wisdom should inform the development of the final strategy.
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|  |  |  | 1. The work being undertaken within the University around cyber-security and the prominence of the topic should be reflected with due rigour and profile in the final strategy, business cases and operational plans.
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|  |  | ii. | It was noted that a microsite had been established for the purposes of engaging, and maintaining continuous dialogue with staff and students about the progress of the strategy development and delivery. |
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|  |  | iii. | The Chair encouraged members to provide any additional feedback as soon as possible to the Vice Principal & Pro Vice Chancellor Learning and Student Experience following the meeting. |

**GCU New York Report**

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| 15.85 | Received |  | Document UC15/39, a progress report on recent activity at GCUNY including updates on revenue and income generation, the licence application process, grant funding and esteem building. |
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| 15.86 | Discussed | i. | The progress of the development of GCU NY against the original objectives for the campus was discussed. The range of activities and purposes envisaged for GCUNY had been captured in the initial business case although it was recognised that the emphases should be revisited. It was noted that the University should continue to ensure that progress of the development of GCU NY was effectively measured, that opportunities for close collaboration between Glasgow, New York and London were explored and that there was clarity about how good work undertaken at GCUNY was feeding back into Glasgow including its research activity. |
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|  |  | ii. | It was noted that there had been significant positive work undertaken by GCU NY which the University should consider how best to promote to demonstrate the value of GCU NY more widely. |
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| 15.87 | Agreed |  | A report would be provided to the next meeting of the F&GP Committee and Court. The report would provide an assessment of the current stage of GCU NY development against the original expectations for the campus. The paper would present a revised business plan focussed on obtaining the optimal balance of educational, recruitment and commercial priorities for GCU NY. The Chair asked that the plan should contain rigorous budget estimates based on well-found targets and assumptions as well as comprehensive scenario planning. |

**African Leadership College Update**

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| 15.88 | Received |  | Document UC15/40 containing an update on progress with the African Leadership College. |
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| 15.89 | Noted | i. | Court noted in particular minor changes to the detail of the financial model previously approved. It was noted that this was due to the following: |
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|  |  |  | 1. The University had requested ALC maintain a slower trajectory of student numbers to ensure quality of provision and that a sustainable model could be established. An additional programme for delivery in January 2017 was also under discussion with ALC.
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|  |  |  | 1. Programme delivery models had been adapted and the University’s three Glasgow based Schools were working collaboratively to transfer programmes into a blended mode. This was also yielding benefits for Glasgow based students. A resourcing model to cover the development requirements had been agreed with the Deans.
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|  |  |  | 1. A staffing plan had now been developed with ALC to recruit academics in Mauritius to support delivery of the programmes.
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|  |  | ii. | The Chair of FGPC outlined key elements of the contract with ALC which was designed to manage risk and which was made under Scots law. |
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|  |  | iii. | Academic teams from all three Glasgow schools were working together and being supported in the development of the programmes for ALC. It was noted that the Tertiary Education Commission in Mauritius had recently conducted an unscheduled compliance visit and had indicated that it was satisfied with the current progress of the ALC and that a formal quality assurance visit would be undertaken in August 2016. |
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|  |  | iv. | ALC had also secured land for its new campus, the completion date for which was currently expected to be July 2017. |

**Students’ Association Trimester 1 Report**

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| 15.90 | Received |  | Document UC15/41, the Students’ Association Trimester 1 Report which provided an update on the activities of the Students’ Association for Trimester 1 of the 2015/16 academic year. |
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| 15.91 | Discussed | i. | The President of the Students’ Association outlined the contents of the report and noted the following matters in particular: |
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|  |  |  | 1. The Students’ Association was in the process of developing a new strategic plan which took cognisance of the University’s 2020 strategy and which was due to be completed in September 2016. A further update would be provided at that time.
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|  |  |  | 1. The Vice-President SHLS had been part of the GCU Student Carers working group which had been developing a Student Carers Policy. The aim of the group was to ensure that there was correct support for students with caring responsibilities. The group had been working with Carers Trust Scotland to achieve those aims.
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|  |  |  | 1. The Students’ Association had been successful in securing a €430,000 ERASMUS+ grant which partnered GCU with four institutions and their respective Student Representation Groups across Europe to focus on a creating open source materials for volunteer development.
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| 15.92 | Noted |  | The report was noted and commended by Court.  |

**Report from Senate Meeting of 11th December 2015**

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| 15.93 | Noted |   | Document UC15/42, a report on substantive items which Senate had considered at its meeting on 11th December 2015. The Principal highlighted in particular that the UK Government Green Paper continued to be an important consideration for the Scottish HE sector because of indirect impacts which the Scottish sector could not ignore. It was noted in particular that, while the Scottish HE sector expected to retain an enhanced review approach to quality, it seemed likely that the University would need to engage with the proposed Teaching Excellence Framework given its expected impact on league table calculations. |

**Report from Audit Committee Meeting of 9th February 2016**

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| 15.94 | Noted |  | Document UC15/43, a report on the substantive issues of business discussed at the Audit Committee meeting on 9th February 2016. |

**GCU Corporate Risk Register**

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| 15.95 | Considered |   | Document UC15/44, the GCU Corporate Risk Register. |
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| 15.96 | Noted |  i. | The F&GP Committee had provided feedback on the Corporate Risk Register and the points raised had been fed back into the risk management process.  |
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|  |  | ii. | The key change to the register had been an increase in the residual risk rating associated with the risks around the national and global economic positions. On the basis of the current economic environment, it had been decided to increase the residual risk rating. |
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|  |  | iii. | In relation to the risk associated with international student recruitment and income, a review was to be led by the Vice Principal & Pro Vice Chancellor International to embed a ‘joined-up’ approach to the international student experience. In addition the review would identify opportunities to create greater coherence in international activities and promote an international mind-set within students in order to create a distinctive offering within the Scottish HE landscape, building on the vision of being a University for the Common Good. |
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| 15.97 | Agreed |  | To approve the GCU Corporate Risk Register.  |

**Report from Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting of 16th February 2016**

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| 15.98 | Noted |  | Document UC15/45, a report on the substantive issues of business discussed at the F&GP Committee meeting on 16th February 2016. |

**Date of next meeting**

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| 15.99 | Noted |  | The next meeting of Court would be held on Thursday 28th April 2016 at 2.00pm. |