

University Court

Minutes of the meeting of the University Court held on 10th May 2018

Present: Rob Woodward (Chair)
Kevin Campbell, Dr Morag Ferguson, Daniel Gallacher, Professor Pamela Gillies, Laura Gordon, Dr Bill Gunnyeon, Tom Halpin, Asif Haseeb, Gordon Jack, Ian Kerr, Austin Lafferty, Neena Mahal, Dr Neil Partlett, Miss Davena Rankin, Caroline Stuart, Lesley Thomson, Alistair Webster, Professor Stephanie Young (Vice-Chair)

Apologies: Dr Douglas Chalmers, Professor Ann Priest, Paul Reynolds, Cara Smyth, Dr Jeanine Gregersen-Hermans

In attendance: Chris Daisley, GCU Students' Association
Professor Cam Donaldson, Pro Vice Chancellor Research
Jan Hulme, University Secretary & Vice Principal Governance
Alex Killick, Director of People
Seonag MacKinnon, Director of Communications and Public Affairs
Professor James Miller, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Strategy)
Rachel Simpson, GCU Students' Association, Student President-Elect
Professor Valerie Webster, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)
Fiona Stewart-Knight, Director of the School for Work-Based Education (for Item 8 only)
Riley Power, Head of Governance (Secretary)

Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, noted apologies and extended the thanks of the Court to Jillian Watt, Director of Development and Global Engagement, for her excellent presentation to Court on the work of the GCU Foundation. He advised that Fiona Stewart-Knight would join the meeting for the discussion on item 8 of the agenda (Tanzanian Nursing Education Business Proposal). The Chair also introduced the Student President Elect, Rachel Simpson, who would commence her term on 1 June 2018, and invited her to give Court a brief overview of her career to date at the University.

1. Minutes of the meeting of the University Court held on 15th March 2018

1.1 **Approved** prior to the meeting following circulation.

2. Matters Arising

2.1 Court noted a report on the matters arising from the Court meeting on 15th March 2018 and the actions taken since that meeting to address these matters.

2.2 The Chair of Court advised that the next Matters Arising report would be provided in a tabulated format to allow easier tracking of completion of any actions.

ACTION: Matters arising report to be revised for future meetings (Head of Governance).

3. Declaration of Interests

- 3.1 Court members were invited by the Chair to advise if any agenda items gave rise to a conflict of interest. Trustees of GCNYC declared this relationship in relation to the update on GCNYC. The register of interests would appear in tabulated form for future meetings once the new form had been completed by members.

4. Items Brought by Chair of Court

- 4.1 The Chair noted the following matters:

- 4.1.1 A number of Court members had attended a briefing session on the University's risk management processes earlier in the day which had been very productive. The Chair noted that a summary of the discussion at the briefing session would be made available to all Court members.

ACTION: Summary of outcomes from risk management session to be circulated to Court members (Head of Governance)

- 4.1.2 The Chair had attended a meeting of the Committee of Scottish Chairs which included a meeting with the senior civil servant in the Scottish Government responsible for higher education. The discussion at the meeting focussed on higher education governance and challenges in the implementation of the HE Governance (Scotland) Act 2016 and the Scottish Government's thinking on the future of higher education. The University Secretaries were addressing issues to which had arisen through the implementation of the 2016 Act. Members noted that a draft amended statutory instrument and standing orders would be provided to Court at its meeting on 21st June 2018.

ACTION: Draft amended Statutory Instrument and Court Standing Orders to be provided to Court at meeting in June for consideration and approval (University Secretary).

- 4.1.3 The Chair extended the Court's congratulations to Tom Halpin on receiving the SCVO Third Sector Director of the Year Award from the Institute of Directors Scotland. The Chair also noted with regret that, following his appointment to the Scottish Police Authority Board, Mr Halpin had advised that, as a result of this appointment, he would step down as a lay governor of the Court. As this was Mr Halpin's last meeting, the Chair extended the Court's warm thanks to him for his important contribution over nearly three terms as a governor and for the experience and insight he had brought to the role. The Court offered its good wishes to Mr Halpin in his new role.
- 4.1.4 Caroline Stuart had advised the Chair that due to the growth of other commitments she was unable to seek reappointment for a further term on the Court. However, she had generously agreed to continue to be available to provide strategic advice to the University on IS matters including information governance at least until a new lay governor could be appointed with similar expertise. As this was also Ms Stuart's last meeting, the Chair thanked her on behalf of the Court for her contribution and the expertise she had brought to the work of Court during her term of office. He expressed his appreciation of her willingness to continue to work with the University on the important IS and governance agenda.
- 4.1.5 The Chair noted that it was the final meeting of Kevin Campbell and Chris Daisley as their terms of office with the Students' Association came to an end on 1st June. The Chair thanked them for their contribution during their time on the Court.
- 4.1.6 The Chair noted that Neil Partlett would be stepping down as a lay governor in June, as previously advised to Court at its meeting on 15th March 2018.
- 4.1.7 The Chair advised Members that a link scheme was being initiated whereby each lay governor would be paired with a broadly defined area of the University's activity. The purpose of the scheme was to enable the Court to refer to a lay governor with specific knowledge of an area under discussion at Court meetings. The way areas or functions were defined might well change not least once new Court governor appointments

had been made. The Principal agreed to launch the programme and that the relevant contacts within the Schools and other areas identified would be notified in advance of Court members contacting these individuals. The University Secretary provided additional detail in relation to this scheme as part of the University Secretary's Report.

ACTION: Governor Link Scheme to be launched and School and other contacts to be informed of relevant Court contacts in advance of launch (Principal; University Secretary).

- 4.1.8 The Chair advised that he would be setting up a series of one-to-one discussions with each Court member. This would be preceded by members being asked to complete a short Court effectiveness questionnaire to inform the discussions.
- 4.1.9 The Court invited members to consider and recommend guest speakers for Court dinners or similar presentations.
- 4.1.10 The Chair advised that the Court and Executive Strategy Day would be held on Wednesday, 10th October 2018. The event would be held on campus during the day and would be followed by a Court dinner. The Chair advised that an updated calendar of meeting dates would be circulated to members.

ACTION: Updated calendar of meetings to be circulated to Court Members (Head of Governance).

5. Principal & Vice Chancellor and Executive Board Report

- 5.1 Court received a report from the Principal and Vice-Chancellor on substantive matters considered by the Executive Board since the last meeting of Court. In addition to the matters raised in the report, the Principal noted the following matters:
 - 5.1.1 The Principal advised that earlier in the day, a student had been struck by a vehicle outside the University campus and had been taken to hospital and was in a stable condition. The Principal noted that the University would cite the incident in making further representations to the Glasgow City Council on the safety and siting of the crossing where the incident had occurred.
 - 5.1.2 The Principal gave Court in strict confidence an early indication of the University's expected strong performance in terms of graduate employment when the full destination of leavers from higher education survey results were published in July. The results, which were embargoed until publication in July, were expected to show strong performance in terms of both graduate and overall employment for the University.
 - 5.1.3 The Principal reminded Court members of the discussion at the Court and Executive Away Day at which a proposal for partnering with the University of Pretoria and Transnet Engineering to deliver a Bachelor of Engineering degree in South Africa was discussed. The Principal noted that the University had been invited to submit a bid within three days from the date of the Court meeting for this proposal. The Principal agreed to re-circulate the proposal to Court members.

ACTION: Proposal previously provided to Court on partnering with Transnet and the University of Pretoria for delivery of Bachelor of Engineering degree courses to be circulated to Court members (Principal).

- 5.2 Members queried whether the amounts received through research grant funding had met the University's expectations. The Principal and PVC Research advised that the University had targeted larger awards with more prestigious partners and that the results of this strategy had exceeded expectations.
- 5.3 The Student President noted the GCU Local Community Engagement Strategy and advised that this strategy aligned with the Students' Association's focus on community engagement. The Students' Association would be eager to do what it could to support the strategy.
- 5.4 Members congratulated the University for its rise of 32 places in the Times Higher Student Experience Survey.

6. Student President's Report

- 6.1 Court considered a report from the Student President highlighting the recent activities and initiatives undertaken by the Students' Association. The Student President noted the following matters in particular:
- 6.1.1 The Students' Association had been shortlisted for both the Diversity Award and the Students' Association of the Year Award at the NUS Scotland Awards. As a runner up for each category the Association had been entered into the UK-wide awards.
- 6.1.2 The uptake and effectiveness of the Safe Taxis Scheme entered into with Glasgow Taxis and the Strathclyde Union would be reviewed to ensure the scheme met the needs of students.
- 6.1.3 The Student President and the Student President-Elect provided an update on the Students' Association Mental Health Agreement (MHA) with the University. Court noted that the MHA had been signed off by the NUS and was in the process of being agreed with the University. An update on the progress of the Mental Health Agreement would be provided at the next Court meeting. Members commended the development of this agreement.

ACTION: Update on Students' Association Mental Health Agreement to be provided to Court at its meeting on 21st June 2018 (Student President)

- 6.1.4 Court noted that the Students' Association had worked with the University in delivering a dedicated Postgraduate Space on campus for PG taught and research students.
- 6.1.5 The Student President noted the annual Teaching Awards would be held on 18th May 2018. Governors were invited to attend the ceremony to celebrate the excellent work undertaken by staff to support students.

7. University Secretary's Report

- 7.1 In relation to the Lay Governor Link Scheme introduced by the Chair of Court (see Minute 4.1.7), the University Secretary requested that Court Members provide any comments or feedback on the proposed allocations by 15th May 2018, following which time the allocations would be finalised and members would be informed of the School or Departmental contact.
- 7.2 The University Secretary advised that a clearer Declaration of Interests form would be circulated to Court members for completion. These forms would be pre-populated as far as possible. However members were asked to supply the additional information required in the new format.
- 7.3 The University advised that a roster would be circulated to Court members containing the dates on which they were due to attend a meeting of the University Senate. The University Secretary thanked Court members for their assistance in making themselves available to attend meetings of Senate.
- 7.4 Members were provided with an updated list of meeting dates for the remainder of the 2017-18 session and for the 2018-19 session. Members were advised that the list of dates would be circulated to members electronically following the meeting.

ACTION: The following details would be circulated to members following the meeting (University Secretary/Head of Governance):

- (a) Details of School or other contact for Lay Governor Link Scheme**
- (b) Revised Declaration of Interests Form**
- (c) Roster for Lay Governor attendance at Senate**
- (d) Updated list of key dates for 2017-18 and 2018-19**

8. Nursing Education Business Proposal

- 8.1 Court considered a report from the DVC Academic on a proposal for the University to work with strategic partners to provide nursing education (both degree level and CPD). The DVC Academic summarised the proposal and its strategic consistency with and value to GCU. The proposal had been recommended for approval by the Finance and General Purposes Committee.
- 8.2 The Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee reported that the Committee considered that the proposal aligned well with the University's ethos and Common Good mission but had tested the robustness of the business rationale and the extent to which the project would have a continuing positive legacy. The Committee had been reassured that the model developed through this proposal would be scalable in other contexts and jurisdictions. The Director of the School for Work-Based Education explained that there would be a multiplier effect in the nurse training which the project would deliver. Moreover, while there was confirmed funding available for a five year project, the University was working with a range of potential partners to secure additional funding which could support an extension of the project.
- 8.3 Court members queried what steps had been taken to address a risk which had been identified at an earlier stage and received due assurance that the risk did not lie with the University alone, that other partners were managing the same risk and that there was no reason to think that the risk outweighed the value and impact of the project such as to justify rejection of the project. The University would keep the risk on the risk register and continue to monitor it carefully.
- 8.4 Court members asked what the milestones and KPIs for the project were. The Director of the School for Work-Based Education set out the baseline indicators against which the project would be measured. Court members queried the impact on other areas of the University required to support the project. The DVC Academic advised that the project had identified where existing resource could be utilised and where additional resource would be required to support the project. Court also noted that resourcing issues had been included in the project risk register with appropriate mitigations in place.
- 8.5 Court members queried the possible impact of potential taxation arrangements. The DVC Academic undertook to capture the background and rationale in the communications strategy to be developed for the project.
- 8.6 The Court **approved** the business case for the project, including specific funding arrangements.

ACTION: Communications Plan to be developed for project (DVC Academic).

9. Student Recruitment Report

- 9.1 The Court noted a report from the DVC Strategy which provided a high level overview of student recruitment for the 2017-18 Academic Year to date, and which summarised the student recruitment reports previously submitted to Court at key points in Trimester A and Trimester B. The report also provided an early view of applications for Trimester A of 2018-19. The DVC Strategy noted in particular:
 - 9.1.1 The University had recruited within the overall threshold for non-controlled subjects set by the SFC and the new intake of undergraduate students had met the target for 2017-18.
 - 9.1.2 The headcount for full-time international students in 2017-18 was broadly in line with 2016-17 although below target for both UG and PG international students.
 - 9.1.3 While it was very early in the recruitment and admissions cycle to project the likely student intake for 2018-19, there was still some work to be done to achieve targets although the work that was undertaken in

response to 2017-18 Trimester B performance had resulted in more applications moving to offers and an increase in the conversion rate from the same time in the previous year. The DVC Strategy advised Court members that future student number reports would contain a 'pipeline' view to provide a clear picture of recruitment activity and how this translated into actual student numbers.

ACTION: Future student recruitment reports to contain a pipeline view of student numbers (DVC Strategy).

10. Trimester B Report

- 10.1 Court considered a report from the DVC Strategy prepared following the review of the student intake for 2017-18 Trimester B, which had been significantly below expectations with negative consequences for the University's financial outturn in 2017-18. The report noted that the root causes leading to the Trimester B outcome had been multi-factorial and set out the remedial action that had been taken and the forward action plan that had been put in place and which would be taken forward by the Task Group established for this purpose. The DVC Strategy also noted that this area would form part of the 2018-19 internal audit plan. The Principal emphasised to Court the seriousness with which the University had taken the issues surrounding the Trimester B performance.
- 10.2 Court members sought further clarification on elements of the root cause analysis, which was provided by the DVC Strategy. Court agreed that the report that had been prepared was a thorough analysis of the issues surrounding the 2017-18 Trimester B position and that the response indicated that the University understood the lessons to be learned from the issues that had arisen.

11. Strategic Overview of Achievements of GCNYC

- 11.1 At the request of the Chair of the GCNYC Board of Trustees and the Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, Court considered a report from the Principal which summarised the achievements of GCNYC in relation to the strategic goals set by the Court at the beginning of the initiative and provided reflections upon the strategic outcomes and import of the NY campus. In addition to the report, the Principal noted that the GCNYC Board of Trustees would commence work on the development of a strategic plan for GCNYC. Court agreed it was important that this plan was developed and owned by the Board and executive team in NY, as they would be primarily responsible for delivering the outcomes under the plan.
- 11.2 The Chair of the GCNYC Board of Trustees reported that he and the Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee had attended the Board of Trustees meeting on 4th April 2018 and had noted the significant progress made on delivering a number of income streams, while recognising that some income streams would not be fully realised.
- 11.3 The Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee noted that while there were a number of positive initiatives, it was important that a strategic narrative was developed to ensure these initiatives were appropriate and delivered against the mission and goals of GCNYC.
- 11.4 The Court Members agreed that the report was useful in setting out how GCNYC had delivered against its original objectives to date. Court also agreed that it required a greater level of assurance over the performance and direction of GCNYC and that the strategic plan to be developed would help to this. Court members noted that this plan should clearly articulate how GCNYC delivered against the Common Good mission and that key performance indicators which reflected GCNYC's vision of a successful and sustainable future should be developed to support the delivery of the plan.

12. Data Protection and Privacy Policy

- 12.1 Court considered the Data Protection and Privacy Policy which had been prepared as part of the major University project to secure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation and the imminent Data Protection Act. The University Secretary explained that the policy was an overarching document which was

the basis for detailed policy and practice to support the University's compliance. It had been developed in line with guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office, which guidance had itself been subject to change.

- 12.2 Court queried what further action was being undertaken to ensure that the University was able to comply with the new data privacy requirements. The University Secretary outlined for members the steps that were being taken as part of the GDPR implementation project, including the training plans which were being implemented and further developed as new official guidance emerged. She reminded Court that the Audit Committee had commissioned an internal audit of the University's readiness for GDPR. The auditors had concluded that the measures that had been taken or that were planned were robust and that the University's position was as good as, and in some respects better than that of any other institution with which they were involved. The University Secretary agreed to provide a further update to the Court at its meeting in September 2018 on the project implementation.
- 12.3 The Court **approved** the Data Protection and Privacy Policy, subject to changes to ensure that the scope of the policy included lay governors and made explicit the requirement that appropriate contractual arrangements should be in place between the University and any third parties with which the University shared data.

ACTION: Report to be provided to Court at its meeting in September 2018 summarising the action taken by the University to implement the GDPR (University Secretary).

13. Minutes for Noting

- 13.1 Court noted the minutes of the meeting of the GCNYC Board of Trustees and the meeting of the GCU-NYC, Inc. Board of Directors both held on 4th April 2018. The Chair of the Audit Committee noted that the request by the GCNYC Board of Trustees to have sight of the GCU Corporate Risk Register, which was a confidential business document, ought to be subject to a protocol agreed between the Court and the Board for the sharing of confidential Board papers. The DVC Strategy agreed to take this action forward.

ACTION: Protocol to be established between GCU Court and GCNYC Board of Trustees for the sharing of confidential Court and Board papers (DVC Strategy).

14. Report from Senate Meeting held on 16th March 2018

- 14.1 Court noted the report from the meeting of the University Senate held on 16th March 2018.

15. Standing Committee Business

- 15.1 Court noted the summary of the business discussed at the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 16th April 2018 and the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 19th April 2018.

16. People Committee – Composition and Membership

- 16.1 Court considered and **approved** the proposed composition and membership of the People Committee (formerly the Equality, People and Health Committee, as formed by Court at its meeting on 15th March 2018). The Chair of Court thanked Neena Mahal for agreeing to Chair the People Committee. The Chair of Court also thanked Stephanie Young who had agreed to succeed Tom Halpin as Chair the Remuneration Committee.

17. Date of Next Meeting

- 17.1 The date of the next meeting of Court was 21st June 2018 at 2.00PM.