

University Court

Minutes of the meeting of the University Court held on 14th March 2019

Present: Rob Woodward (Chair)
 Dr Douglas Chalmers, Dr Morag Ferguson, Sylvie Freund-Pickavance, Daniel Gallacher, Professor Pamela Gillies, Laura Gordon, Dr Bill Gunnyeon, Asif Haseeb, Gordon Jack, Ian Kerr, Sharon Lowrie, Meg Lustman, Neena Mahal, Professor Ann Priest, Dr Davena Rankin, Paul Reynolds, Rachel Simpson, Lesley Thomson, Alistair Webster, Professor Stephanie Young (Vice-Chair)

Apologies: -

In attendance: Professor Cam Donaldson, Pro Vice Chancellor Research
 Jan Hulme, University Secretary & Vice Principal Governance
 Claire Hulsen, Director of Strategy and Planning
 Seonag MacKinnon, Director of Communications and Public Affairs
 Professor James Miller, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Strategy)
 Susan Mitchell, Chief Operating Officer
 Yetunde Ogedengbe, Vice-President (SHLS), GCU Students' Association
 Paul Queen, Director of Finance
 Professor Valerie Webster, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)
 Sagoon Paudel, Intern, Committee of University Chairs (by invitation)
 Riley Power, Head of Governance (Secretary)

Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, in particular welcoming three new lay governors, Sylvie Freund-Pickavance, Sharon Lowrie and Meg Lustman, to their first meeting of Court. The Chair advised members that following the meeting there would be a presentation and discussion on the work of the Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit (SPIRU) led by Professor John McKendrick and Professor Stephen Sinclair, with contributions from Peter Kelly, Director of the Poverty Alliance, and Jill Marchbank, a GCU alumna and a researcher in SPIRU. The Chair also reflected on the networking event on the evening prior at which Craig Jamieson, Regional Director for Scotland & Northern Ireland for Barclays Wealth Management discussed the £450M Barclays' investment in Glasgow which was considered a positive development for Glasgow and a timely topic as part of the Court discussions around the development of the new University strategy.

1. Minutes of the meeting of the University Court held on 22nd November 2018

1.1 The minutes of the previous Court meeting were **approved** by circulation prior to the Court meeting.

2. Matters Arising

2.1 Court noted a report on the matters arising from the Court meeting on 22nd November 2018 and the actions taken since that meeting to address them.

2.2 The Court discussed in particular the draft ethical framework for international partnerships. Court welcomed the draft framework and requested that the DVC Strategy provide Court, for information, the guidance that would support staff to address the due diligence questions outlined in the draft framework. The Principal and DVC Strategy advised that the due diligence checks currently in place were robust and were supported by appropriate risk assessments carried out in relation to all partnerships.

ACTION: Guidance to staff on completing due diligence questionnaire to be provided to Court at its meeting in June 2019 (DVC Strategy)

3. Declaration of Interests

- 3.1 Court noted the register of interests of members and those in attendance. Court members were invited to advise the secretariat of any change to their registered interests as they arose and clarify where it was not already explicit whether a role was remunerated or not. No changes or additional interests were notified.

4. Items Brought by Chair of Court

- 4.1 The Chair advised Court that the Vice-Chair of Court had deputised for the Chair at the meeting of the Committee of Scottish Chairs (CSC), held at the same time as the Court networking event on 13th March 2019, and invited the Vice-Chair to provide a debrief from that meeting.
- 4.2 The Vice-Chair updated members on the CSC meeting and noted the following in particular:
- 4.2.1 The meeting had provided an opportunity for Chairs to meet both the new Chair and CEO of the Scottish Funding Council.
- 4.2.2 Two Universities had recently undertaken election processes for the election of new Chairs of Court. Court noted that the University would be reviewing the experience of these institutions around the conduct of this process in order to inform the University's approach to elections.
- 4.2.3 The CSC meeting had discussed the findings of the lessons learned review conducted following the removal of the former RGU Principal and Vice-Chancellor in 2018.
- 4.2.4 The CSC meeting also discussed how CUC could work more effectively with institutions within the devolved nations.
- 4.3 The Chair of Court advised Court that the meeting would be the final meeting for Riley Power, Head of Governance, thanked the Head of Governance for his work in supporting the Court and conveyed the Court's best wishes for his future plans.

5. Principal & Vice Chancellor and Executive Board Report

- 5.1 Court received a report from the Principal & Vice-Chancellor on substantive items considered by the Executive Board since the previous Court meeting. The Court noted in particular:
- 5.1.1 The University's success in achieving the authority from the US Department of Homeland Security to allow GCNYC to recruit internationally (including in the UK). The Court noted that the University was now waiting only to obtain Title IV accreditation to enable it to recruit students supported by federal education loan funding.
- 5.1.2 The University, and the sector more widely, had been disappointed at the level of the 2019/20 funding settlement announced by the SFC and that the University would need to consider how to reflect the current funding landscape within the current strategy development discussions.
- 5.1.3 The Principal updated Court on the work she had undertaken as the Universities Scotland lead member for mental health, noting in particular that US had commissioned a report into student need, gaps in provision and identifying best practice. The Principal noted that in this area universities were committed to best practice and collaborative working across the sector and other organisations.
- 5.2 Court welcomed the University's commitment to sign the statement of intent to develop a Civic University Agreement to demonstrate and promote the University's commitment to the local community, following the

publication of the report from the Civic University Commission. The Principal noted that additional details would be provided to the Court around this agreement in due course.

- 5.3 Court members welcomed the investment from Skills Development Scotland in graduate apprenticeships in the University, making it one of Scotland's largest providers of graduate apprenticeships. Court members requested that information be provided to Court members to enable them to promote the role of the University as a graduate apprenticeship provider, within their networks.

ACTION: Court governors to be provided with information on graduate apprenticeships that can be used to promote University's offer throughout their networks. (DVC Strategy)

6. Student President's Report (including Student's Association Trimester A 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 highlighted the following in particular:
- 6.1.1 The Student President updated Court on the outcome of the elections for the Students' Association Full-Time Officers. Court was advised that Eilidh Fulton with the highest number of votes would become Student President and that Moses Apiliga, Susan Docherty and Bethany Stevenson had also been elected as Full-Time Officers.
- 6.1.2 As part of a commitment to delivering a smoke-free campus, the University and the Students' Association, on National No Smoking Day, had signed up to Scotland's Charter for a Tobacco-free Generation being promoted by Ash Scotland.
- 6.1.3 The Student President set out highlights from the Students Association Trimester A report to Court. Court members complimented the Students' Association on its achievements in trimester A.
- 6.2 Court members requested that the dates for the termly meetings with the Students' Association be circulated to Court members.

ACTION: Dates for the termly meetings with the Students' Association be circulated to Court members (Head of Governance)

7. University Secretary's Report

- 7.1 The Court received a report from the University Secretary which addressed the following matters:
- 7.1.1 Court **approved** the appointment of Campbell Fitch and Peter Baguley to the University Court as lay governors.
- 7.1.2 Court received a progress update on the proposed changes to the Statutory Instrument and noted that a further update would be provided in May 2019.
- 7.1.3 Court considered draft election rules for staff governor vacancies, and which would be adapted for other elections to Senate, Senate Committees and School Boards. A Court member queried whether an alternative to first past the post could be used instead which would also remove the need for drawing lots in the event of a tie and the duration of the polling. Court members also queried the length of time allowed for complaints following an election. The University Secretary agreed to review the feedback from Court and consult further with colleagues before providing Court with a revised set of rules for approval.

ACTION: Election rules to be revised and further consultation undertaken before revised rules provided to Court for approval. (University Secretary)

- 7.1.4 Court noted the Complaint Handling Report for 2017-18.

8. 2018-19 Student Recruitment and Admissions Report

- 8.1 Court noted the report on recruitment and admissions including the position following the Trimester B intake. The Court commended the DVC Strategy on an improving performance, discussed further growth and requested a more in-depth briefing on recruitment and admissions at a future meeting.
- 8.2 Court queried in particular how the University measured the impact of its interventions in relation to student recruitment and admissions. The DVC Strategy advised that the Schools and Professional Service Departments work together to closely review the data on a weekly basis which guided the actions taken in order to drive recruitment. The DVC Strategy agreed to provide a briefing to Court on the processes behind the numbers provided which detailed the ways in which the University measured the impact of its interventions.

ACTION: Briefing to be provided to Court on how University measures impact of interventions relating to enhancing student recruitment and admissions. (DVC Strategy)

- 8.3 Court noted the results of the International Student Barometer and was pleased to learn that the University had an overall satisfaction rating of 91% from international students reporting on their experience at the University. The Court noted that the University had performed strongly across all themes within the ISB.

9. SFC Strategic Dialogue Meeting

- 9.1 The Court noted that there would be a meeting with representatives of the Scottish Funding Council on 12th April 2019 as part of the Council's programme of strategic dialogue meetings with institutions. The event would involve sessions to include lay governors, members of the executive and staff and students.

10. Draft Outcome Agreement 2019-20

- 10.1 Court considered the draft Outcome Agreement 2019-20 for endorsement in principle prior to finalisation. Court noted the following in particular:
 - 10.1.1 The reference to the GCNYC recruitment plans required to be reviewed to reflect the most up to date position with respect to NY recruitment;
 - 10.1.2 Court members queried whether it was possible to do more within the document to indicate how the University's goals were met by achieving the priorities set out in the document;
 - 10.1.3 Court members considered that it would be useful to receive a report at a future Court meeting which provided an impact analysis on the initiatives set out in the document. The DVC Strategy indicated that the self-evaluation document could be provided to Court along with the outcome agreement itself, which would provide the required analysis. The Chair of Court requested that key strategy documents along with key reference documents be uploaded onto Convene document libraries for Court members to access and review at their convenience.

ACTION: Key strategy documents along with key reference documents to be uploaded onto Convene document libraries for Court member reference. (Head of Governance)

- 10.1.4 Court members queried whether the University could also use this Outcome Agreement as a means of communicating to the SFC the challenges associated with achieving the priorities set out in the Agreement.
- 10.2 Court **agreed** to endorse the draft outcome agreement subject to any necessary adjustments being made following review of the feedback provided by Court.

11. 2019 HESA Performance Indicators

11.1 Court considered the 2019 HESA Performance Indicators and was pleased to note the University's continued strong showing in the indicators relating to participation of under-represented groups, projected outcomes and non-continuation. Court members queried what inferences could be drawn from the findings, including whether any competitor analysis was possible from the report. The Director of Strategy and Planning advised Court that the information in the indicators was linked to the University's KPIs and the University considered what the indicators might mean in terms of impact of interventions and what further action might be necessary. Court members also queried whether the Scottish Government was moving away from measures based on SIMD20. The Director of Strategy and Planning noted that while there were discussions around the possible use of a wider 'basket of measures' any move away from SIMD20 based indicators was not imminent.

12. Development of Strategy 2030

12.1 Court considered a report from the DVC Strategy which proposed a framework for the emerging strategy for the first phase of consultation with staff, students and external stakeholders in April 2019. Court members endorsed the proposed framework subject to minor amendments and clarifications. The Chair of Court requested that Court members be reminded of the gating points for Court as part of the strategy and that any strategy development documents be uploaded onto Convene for Court members' reference.

ACTION:

- (a) Court members be provided with reminder of gating points for Court within Strategy Framework (Director of Strategy and Planning)**
- (b) Key strategy documents to be uploaded onto Convene document library for Court member reference (Head of Governance)**

13. GCU Corporate Risk Register

13.1 Court considered and **approved** the Corporate Risk Register which captured changes since last presented to Court. The Chief Operating Officer explained the key changes since the risk register was last presented and Court discussed a number of the risks in some detail and noted that the Audit Committee had closely examined the risk register and had recommended Court approval.

13.2 Court members also approved a protocol for addressing its responsibility for risk and monitoring the management of risk. This protocol provided for an annual detailed review to be conducted by Court with exception reports provided throughout the year noting any significant changes to the risk register since the last review. The most up to date version of the risk register would also be made available in Convene for Court members to review at any time. Court agreed that the next Committee Chairs meeting should also consider how Committees would ensure that all risks were mapped to the work of Committees.

ACTION:

- (a) Corporate Risk Register to be uploaded onto Convene document library for Court member reference (Head of Governance)**
- (b) Committee Chairs to discuss at their next meeting how best to map the risks on the register to the work of Committees (University Secretary)**

14. Research Update and REF 2021 – Code of Practice for determining GCU Submission

14.1 The Court noted a report from the PVC Research on the University's recent research performance during Trimester A of 2018-19.

14.2 Court also considered and **approved** for submission to the SFC the Code of Practice that would be used by the University in determining GCU's submission to REF 2021.

15. Report from University Senate

- 15.1 Court noted the report from the meeting of the University Senate held on 12th December 2018 and 1st March 2019. Court members requested that a copy of the report of a review undertaken by the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment into UK degree classifications, be made available to Court members for reference.

ACTION: Copy of report by the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment into UK degree classifications to be made available to Court members (DVC Academic, Head of Governance)

- 15.2 Court also noted the annual report on the activities of the Senate Disciplinary Committee for 2017-18.

16. Standing Committee Business

- 16.1 Court noted a report from the Finance and General Purposes Committee which updated Court on the issues discussed and decisions taken by the Committee at its meeting on 4th February 2019. The Chair of FGPC noted in particular that the report on the comparison of sector financial metrics provided to the Committee had provided useful analysis of the results. Court members also considered the summary of the Period 5 Management Accounts.

- 16.2 Court noted a report from the Audit Committee which updated Court on the issues discussed and decisions taken by the Committee at its meeting on 18th February 2019. The Chair of the Audit Committee also noted that the internal audit contract was due for renewal and that a tender process had determined a successful candidate firm which would be commended for approval to the Audit Committee at its meeting on 15th April 2019.

17. GCNYC Board of Trustees Report from Meeting on 7th March 2019

- 17.1 Court considered an oral report from the Chair of the GCNYC Board of Trustees on the business discussed at the GCNYC Board meeting held on 7th March 2019. The Chair of the Board noted in particular that the Board had considered an in-depth plan that had been developed by the new Director of Marketing in NY on how GCNYC would now use its recent SEVP accreditation to recruit international students and also what action was being taken to recruit domestically, in advance of receiving Title IV accreditation, which latter would unlock scope to recruit students supported by US federal loan funding.

18. Date of Next Meeting

- 18.1 The date of the next meeting of Court was Thursday 2nd May 2019 at 9.00AM, which would be preceded by a Court dinner held on the evening of Wednesday, 1st May 2019 at 6.00PM. Arrangements would be made for a short visit to part of the University after the Court meeting.

ACTION: Arrangements to be made for a short visit to a part of the University following the May Court Meeting (Head of Governance)