

Glasgow Caledonian University Court

Minutes of the meeting of the University Court held on 20th February at 9am in the Lantern

Present: Rob Woodward (Chair)
Professor Pamela Gillies, Gordon Jack, Professor Ann Priest, Sylvie Freund Pickavance, Campbell Fitch, Peter Baguley, Eilidh Fulton, Daniel Gallacher, Dr Bill Gunnyeon, David Halliday, Asif Haseeb, Sharon Lowrie, Meg Lustman, Neena Mahal, Alistair Webster, Professor Stephanie Young (Vice-Chair), Ian Kerr, Lesley Thomson.

Apologies: Dr Morag Ferguson, Dr Douglas Chalmers

In attendance: Jan Hulme, University Secretary & Vice Principal Governance
Professor James Miller, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Strategy)
Susan Mitchell, Chief Operating Officer
Susan Docherty Vice-President (SCEBE), GCU Students' Association
Paul Queen, Director of Finance
Professor Valerie Webster, Deputy Vice Chancellor (LTSE)
Professor Cam Donaldson, Pro Vice Chancellor (Research)
Lucy Strachan, Head of Governance (Secretary)
Fiona Campbell, Director of People Services

Chairs Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed Court Members and thanked everyone for attending the Inaugural Annual Stakeholder Event which had taken place the previous afternoon. The Chair thanked everyone who was involved in delivering the event, which had been very well attended by stakeholders, and extended a special thanks to Dr Andrew McAuley who gave a captivating presentation on his research into HIV and drug use.

1. Minutes

1.1 Court noted that the minutes of the Court meeting held on 22nd November 2019 had been approved by prior circulation.

2. Matters Arising

2.1 Court noted that a paper on GCNYC was being developed and would be brought to the next Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting before being put before Court at the meeting in April.

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. No changes or additional interests were notified.

4. Items Brought by the Chair of Court

4.1 The Chair confirmed to the Court the following matters:

4.1.1 That all Governors had now been consulted regarding their new roles within the Governor Link Scheme and that the final updated list would be circulated after the meeting. Court noted that the scheme had been updated with a number of thematic link responsibilities combined with departmental links.

ACTION: Updated Governor Link Scheme to be circulated to all Court Members. (Chair)

- 4.1.2 The final ELIR document was now available for Court Members on Convene.
- 4.1.3 That the industrial action being taken by the members of the University and College Union commences today which will involve 14 days of strike action across four weeks in February and March.
- 4.1.4 That Bill Gunnyeon and Lesley Thomson had confirmed that they would not be putting themselves forward for re-appointment when their term of office comes to an end in July 2020 and thanked them for their contribution to the University as Governors.
- 4.1.5 The Court Meeting on 9th November 2020 coincides with COP26 taking place in Glasgow and there was therefore no accommodation available in Glasgow for this date. Court noted that alternative options for accommodation were being investigated to allow the November Court meeting to take place in Glasgow as planned.

5. Principal's and Executive Board Report

- 5.1 The Principal presented her report on substantive matters considered by the Executive Board since the last meeting of Court. The Principal drew particular attention to the following:
 - 5.1.1 Dr Jacqueline LeBlanc has been appointed as Vice-President and Provost of GCNYC. Dr LeBlanc is an experienced leader with more than two decades of experience of higher education. Court noted that a Member of the Board of Trustees, participated in the interview process along with DVC Strategy, the Principal and the Director of People Services. Students, Faculty and staff were also involved in meeting all the candidates for the role. Dr LeBlanc visited the Glasgow campus prior to her appointment and spoke to staff and the Chair of the Board of Trustees who all expressed their support of the appointment.
 - 5.1.2 Detailed contingency plans have been put in place by the University to address the risk posed by the Coronavirus. The small number of Chinese students at the University are being worked with closely and all of those who have visited China recently have passed the 14-day incubation period. All travel by staff to the virus hot spots has been stopped and contingency plans are in place to deliver courses remotely rather than require travel to China later on in the year if necessary. The University is closely monitoring any issues with bullying or harassment of Chinese students with no incidents having been reported.
 - 5.1.3 The University confirms its respect for the right of colleagues to strike and is investigating options to lessen the impact of payroll reductions on striking staff. Contingency plans have been put in place to ensure that teaching requirements of the staff on strike are covered and that the support and supervision needs of students continue to be provided for.
 - 5.1.4 The Scottish Funding Council's (SFC) report and letter to Aberdeen University sets out the findings of their review into the sum paid to a former Principal and Vice-Chancellor on his departure. The University will undertake a review and mapping of its own policies and procedures to ensure that they are comprehensive and clearly aligned to the expectations set out in the SFC report.

ACTION: Review of policies and procedures to be carried out in light of the findings of the SFC review into Aberdeen University. (University Secretary)

- 5.1.5 With the confirmation that the UK is leaving the European Union, the University is keen to protect the relationships with our colleagues and partners across Europe whilst continuing to investigate new initiatives to further the position of the University globally.

6. Chief Operating Officer's Report

- 6.1 The Chief Operating Officer presented her report and highlighted the following points:
- 6.1.1 A revised London operating model has been agreed by the Executive Board for GCUL with the intention of taking the best of operational delivery and student experience in Glasgow and London and then extending this across both locations. Court **agreed** that a briefing note would be prepared for Court Members who are attending the Court event in London on Thursday 12th March 2020. Court further agreed that the Executive Board was to consider the appropriate success measures for the revised model to enable Court to have strategic oversight of the programme of change.
- ACTION: Briefing note to be provided to Court Members attending the Court event in London on 12th March 2020. (DVC Strategy)**
- ACTION: Success measures for revised operating model to be considered by Executive Board. (DVC Strategy)**
- 6.1.2 The equal pay settlement is a very real concern because of the delay caused by Action4Equality suspending all activity in Scotland due to non-compliance with relevant legislation. The commitment of the University to settle the claims has not changed and alternative options to reach a resolution have been explored without success. It has been confirmed that the University is unable to contact the affected staff directly as all contact must be done via Action4Equality.
- 6.1.3 The results of the staff survey taken last Autumn have been made available to colleagues and the general trend is positive. All schools and departments are developing actions plans to address issues identified.
- 6.1.4 At the end of last year the University experienced a series of fraud incidents involving a member of staff which the Police are currently investigating.
- 6.1.5 A new lease for Fashion Street, London has been secured which was approved by the Finance and General Purposes Committee by electronic circulation and will be fully reported to the next meeting of the Committee on 2nd March 2020. Court commended the work of the Director of Estates in achieving a satisfactory outcome for the University following a difficult negotiation process.

7. Student President's Report

- 7.1 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:
- 7.1.1 The Student President confirmed to Court that the candidate list for the Full Time Officer Elections 2020 had been released and there were 22 candidates this year.
- 7.1.2 The Student President confirmed to Court that the Students' Association had recently submitted input for the GCU Outcome Agreement submission and that the Student President would be providing an introduction to the Outcome Agreement to accompany the introduction by the Principal.
- 7.1.2 The Student President confirmed that a list of Students' Association events was included as an appendix to the report and that all Court Members were welcome to attend the events.

8. Students' Association Trimester 1 Report

- 8.1 Court considered a report from the Student President on the Students' Association activities for Trimester 1 in the academic year 2019-20 and commended the amount of activity undertaken by the Students' Association in Trimester 1. Court noted that the Trustee Board has taken the decision to extend the strategic plan of the Students' Association by one year so that it is aligned with Strategy

2030 of the University. Court also noted the impressive work being undertaken by the Care Experienced Officer who is setting an example for the rest of the sector with a policy being taken to the NUS on how the Care Experienced Officer role should be performed in order to best support students.

- 8.2 Court noted that there had been a fall in the number of Class Representatives and the Student President confirmed that this would be a focus of the Students' Association going forward. Court noted the recent newspaper articles regarding universities who have failed to adequately support students who had been a victim of gender based violence. The University Secretary confirmed that training is provided to all members of staff who are going to undertake an investigation and be First Responders to incidents.

9 University Secretary's Report

- 9.1 Court considered a report from the University Secretary which provided a summary of work relating to areas of governance pertinent to the work of Court. The University Secretary highlighted to Court that the Senate composition review was included as an appendix to the report with a proposal being taken to Senate on 16th March 2020. Court Members were invited to submit any comments on the Senate composition review to the University Secretary or the Head of Governance. The Student President confirmed that the Students' Association have asked to have 25% representation on Senate. The University Secretary confirmed that the perspective of the Students' Association is important and the proposal would be carefully considered whilst bearing in mind the need to keep the membership size of Senate manageable.

- 9.2 Court noted the proposal for the move to an institutional subscription for the Times Higher Education and the benefits that this would bring from a cost savings perspective and enlarging the number of people across the University who can access the service. Court Members **approved** the proposal to move to an institutional subscription of the Times Higher Education.

ACTION: Court Members to provide feedback on Senate composition review. (Governors)

10 Strategy 2030

- 10.1 Court considered the update on the development of Strategy 2030 and noted that a launch date of mid-May is being proposed. Court also noted that the development of the 2030 enabling strategies and plans is also being progressed through a consultative process with early engagement taking place with the appropriate Senate and Court committees.
- 10.2 Court discussed the updated version of Strategy 2030 and noted that the University Community high-level objective should include the goal of becoming the University of choice as an employer. Court also noted that Strategy 2030 should include greater reference to students and student experience to ensure the focus on creating a superior student experience.
- 10.3 Court agreed that it would be a benefit to engage with external supporters of the University in order to obtain a broader range of feedback on Strategy 2030. DVC Strategy confirmed to Court that this had been attempted previously but that alternative means of engagement would be considered. Court agreed that Strategy 2030 would be revisited by Court following the review of proposed 2030 KPIs.

ACTION: Strategy 2030 to be updated as set out above. (DVC Strategy)

ACTION: Feedback on Strategy 2030 to be obtained from external supporters of the University. (DVC Strategy)

11 KPI Presentation and Discussion

- 11.1 The Director of Strategy and Planning provided an overview of the strategies and KPIs that have been launched recently by other universities, including the University of Abertay, the University of Strathclyde and Heriot Watt University. It was confirmed to Court Members that the intention was to set ambitious KPIs for 2030 with milestones for 2025. A 2030 dashboard is to be created which includes THE impact rankings, National Student Survey results, research income, collaborative provision, International student recruitment and experiences, environment and finance. In relation to the environmental KPIs, Court encouraged the University to consider looking at all processes and ways of working across the University and redesigning them, as well as ways of working with third parties.
- 11.2 Court asked that the KPI Presentation be complemented with a summary of the proposed high level KPIs and an explanation of which KPIs are easy to measure and which will require further development. Court **agreed** that the updated KPI Presentation should be circulated to all Court Members and noted that the proposed high level 2030 KPIs would be discussed at the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 2nd March 2020 and then brought back to Court in April for further consideration.

ACTION: KPI Presentation to be addressed as set out above and circulated to Court Members. (DVC Strategy)

12 Student Recruitment Report 2019-20 Trimester B

- 12.1 Court considered a report from the DVC Strategy which provided the near final position in terms of applications and acceptances to the Trimester B intake of academic year 2019-20. The DVC Strategy highlighted to Court the increase in international student applications for full-time postgraduate taught programmes and noted that this was a very positive development. However, there had been a reduction in the number of home student applications for full-time postgraduate taught programmes, particularly within the School of Health and Life Sciences. The reasons for this reduction were being investigated but early indications were that this was due to Health Boards reducing the numbers of postgraduate students being supported.

13 Research Report

- 13.1 The PVC Research provided Court with an update on the research grants that had been secured at the University as well as highlighting the success of research students, impact and engagement. Court Members were encouraged to be vocal in challenging proposals in the Muscatelli Report on Driving Innovation in Scotland for concentrating research funding. The work of Professor Sharon Hutchinson and her team on the treatment of blood borne viruses is a good example of an area that would not necessarily receive funding under that proposed model, which would be to the detriment of society.

14. University Senate

- 14.1 Court noted the report from the meeting of the University Senate held on 6th December 2019.

15. Standing Committee Business

- 15.1 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 2nd December 2020.
- 15.2 Court noted a report from the People Committee which updated Court on the issues discussed and decisions taken by the People Committee at its meeting on 12th December 2019. Court **approved** the recommended approach to Health and Safety training for all court members set out as an appendix to the report.
- 15.3 Court noted a report from the Court Governance and Nominations Committee which updated Court on the issues discussed and decisions taken by the Committee at its meeting on 20th January 2020. Court **approved** the reappointment of Danny Gallacher and Asif Haseeb for a second term of office.

- 15.4 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 27th January 2020.
- 16. GCNYC Board of Trustees Report from Meeting on 13th December 2020**
- 16.1 Court considered a report from the GCNYC Board of Trustees which provided an update to the Court on the business discussed at the GCNYC Board of Trustees meeting held on 13th December 2020.
- 17. Media Coverage Analysis – January Update**
- 17.1 Court noted the Media Coverage Analysis Update Report for January.
- 18. Date of Next Meeting**
- 18.1 The date of the next meeting of Court is Thursday 23rd April 2020 at 9.00AM, with the Court dinner held on the evening of Wednesday, 22nd April 2020 at 6.00PM.