

## Glasgow Caledonian University Court

### Minutes of the meeting of the University Court held on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2019 at 9am in the Lantern

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

**Apologies:** Laura Gordon, Dr Davena Rankin, and Professor Cam Donaldson

**In attendance:** Jan Hulme, University Secretary & Vice Principal Governance  
Claire Hulsen, Director of Strategy & Planning  
Seonag MacKinnon, Director of Communications & Public Affairs  
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 (Academic)  
Deborah Donnet, Assistant Head of Governance (Secretary)

#### Chairs Opening Remarks

The Chair extended a welcome to new lay governor, Peter Baguley, to Eilidh Fulton who was attending for the first time as Student President, and to Susan Docherty, also an elected office-bearer from the Students Association. This was the last meeting for governors who would step down at the end of July, namely Paul Reynolds, a lay governor since 2015, and Dr Davina Rankin who had served the maximum three terms as professional and support services elected governor. On behalf of Court, the Chair warmly thanked them for their contribution to Court. It was announced that on 19<sup>th</sup> June, Dr Douglas Chalmers had been re-elected for a third term of office as academic staff governor, and David Halliday, Security Manager, had been elected professional and support service staff governor and would take up office on 1 August 2019. The Court extended its congratulations to both.

The Court meeting would be followed by a presentation from Professor James Miller, Deputy Vice Chancellor, and Stephanie Pitticas, International Director, on student recruitment and admissions.

#### 1. Minutes of the meeting of the University Court held on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2019

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

#### 2. Matters Arising

In relation to action relating to the Corporate Risk Register, the Chair reported that the forthcoming Chairs' Committee he would be discussing the need for each committee to have clear oversight of relevant risk with a focus on mitigating actions and accountability and ownership. The Committees would engage as necessary with the detail while the Risk Register itself would reference only key mitigating actions. There had been a valuable Risk Forum the previous day which had been well attended by governors.

### **3. Declaration of Interests**

Court members noted the Register of Court Members' Interests.

### **4. Items Brought by the Chair of Court**

4.1 The Chair congratulated Professor Tahseen Jafry, who had demonstrated the University's convening power by using its academic base to attract the Elsevier First World Forum on Climate Justice to the University. Court members had enjoyed meeting Forum participants the previous evening at a civic reception in the City Chambers to mark the World Forum, and governors had continued discussion of climate justice over dinner where the Court's guests included keynote speakers from the Forum as well as staff and students from the University's Centre for Climate Justice.

4.2 The Scottish Funding Council was seeking applicants for ordinary members of the SFC board and had made particular mention of applications from individuals with either a financial management or general commercial and business background. Lay governors were encouraged to apply and information would be circulated to them.

4.3 The Chair expressed great appreciation of Mr Reynolds' contribution as a lay governor and his readiness to make available to the University his commercial and entrepreneurial experience.

### **5. Principal's and Executive Board Report**

The Principal presented her report and drew attention to recent high profile public and professional recognition of the University's research strengths, the University's success in the Times Higher Education Social Impact rankings, the appointment of, and early tasks assigned to, the interim Provost in GCNYC, the place of the Augar review of Post-18 of education and funding commissioned by the Prime Minister, and the Principal's opportunity to address the British Council's influential Going Global Conference in Berlin. As agreed at the previous Court meeting her report included a section designed to provide updates on the University's risk profile. The Court discussed the Principal's detailed update on developments at GCNYC, the recent appointment of an interim Provost and the priorities he would be addressing.

### **6 Student President's Report**

6.1 The Student President reported that the Students Association had received Healthy Body Healthy Mind accreditation from NUS Scotland the previous week, and that the Safe Taxi Scheme had been relaunched whereby students without money to get home safely at the end of a night out could use their student card as an emergency deposit with Glasgow Taxis.

6.2 The Student President had attended the inaugural graduations at ALC in Mauritius recently and was looking forward to developing a relationship with their Student Council.

### **7. Students Association Trimester 2 Report**

The Student President presented the six monthly report of the Students' Association activities for Trimester 2 in the academic year 2018-19. Court **noted** the report and commended the Students' Association on the diverse range of clubs and activities available to students. The Chair encouraged governors to attend his regular informal meetings with the student officers and the Vice-Chair of Court.

### **8. Full Time Officer Accountability Schedule**

Court **approved** the revised Full Time Officer Accountability Schedule of the Students Association Constitution, which had been updated following external review

## 9 Chief Operating Officer Report

- 9.1 The Chief Operating Officer presented her report. Topics included
- an update on the equal pay claims for catering staff currently employed by Baxter Storey but previously employed by City of Glasgow Council;
  - information on a review, in conjunction with the internal auditors, of how the University managed and implemented change, with a view to developing a route map for change;
  - discussion around proposals for the internal upgrade of Caledonian Court. It was agreed that this would be picked up in the regular meeting with the Student Officers.
- 9.2 The narrative setting out the impact of the Imaging Centre for the University was requested and it was **agreed** that this would be provided at the next meeting. It was also suggested that there might be a future briefing on the academic promotions process and cost structure.

**ACTION: Information on impact of imaging centre to be provided at next meeting (Acting Head of Governance).  
Briefing on academic promotions process and cost structure to be added to Court work programme (Acting Head of Governance)**

## 10 University Secretary's Report

- 10.1 Court **agreed** to grant delegated authority to the Chair of Court during the summer holiday and approved the Court Forward Workplan for 2019/20. It was requested that Court receive early sight of the ELIR report.
- 10.2 Court **noted** the Freedom of Information Annual Report 2018, the extension of the Vice-Chair's term of office to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021, changes to committee membership and the updated calendar of meetings for 2019/20 and 2020/21.

**ACTION: ELIR to be included in Court Workplan (Acting Head of Governance)**

## 11. Final Draft University Budget 2019/20 (including GCU London and GCNCY)

- 11.1 Court received the draft budget for GCU and the supporting budgets for GCU London and GCNYC. The Chief Operating Officer advised that the University Budget had been developed following extensive planning and budgeting activities across the University and robust scrutiny by the relevant governance bodies including the Finance and General Purposes Committee.
- 11.2 In GCNCY's draft budget, still interim as it had yet to be approved by the Board of Trustees, it was projected that GCNYC would move to an operating surplus in 2022/23 as opposed to 2021/22 as has been previously projected. The projection had been revised following refreshed student figures as a result of GCNYC receiving SEVP approval only in March and Title IV still being outstanding. It was still intended to have three student intakes per year and it was anticipated that the SEVP approval would result in an increase in US home students. It was noted that the new Interim Provost would be taking up post in August and would undertake a review and that this would be reported back to Court. The Chair of the Board of Trustees advised that even once Title IV Court was achieved it would take time before its benefits and those of SEVP could be fully realised. The Court **noted** the Interim Draft Budget for GCNCY recognising that it would be subject to approval by the GCNCY Board of Trustees at its meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2019. GCNYC would be discussed further at the Court's Strategy Day in October.
- 11.3 The Chief Operating Officer reported that GCU London would cease to be a separate school but would revert to its original GCU campus status. Academic ownership of programmes would lie with Glasgow Schools with London responsible for the delivery of an agreed portfolio, which would be refined and expanded. Programme development would be led principally by Glasgow in partnership with London based colleagues. There had been consultation with London staff and a transition group would be established to oversee and drive implementation. The purpose of the proposal was to increase student

numbers and to enhance the student experience through closer partnership with Glasgow schools. Following discussion of key elements of the budget and the implications of the campus model, Court noted the proposals to revert to the campus operating model and **approved** the draft budget for 2019/20.

- 11.4 The Director of Finance presented the Final Draft Budget 2019/20 and reported that a small operating surplus was projected for 2019/20. The budget had been developed to ensure sustainable income growth supported by active management of the cost-base.
- 11.5 The Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee advised Court that the Committee had reviewed and where appropriate sought modifications to the draft budget at its meetings in April and June. It had subjected the GCNYC budget to close scrutiny and in particular its income assumptions.
- 11.6 In response to a query from a lay governor, the Chief Operating Officer confirmed that an amount had been included in the SIMS project budget for recruitment of new IT and project management skills. While this would mean additional staff costs, these would not necessarily reflect the full extent of the fresh expertise that was being applied to the project as there was scope for some of the new staffing requirements to be met by other means. The resources budget is closely monitored and managed on an ongoing basis.

Following discussion Court approved the university budget which incorporated the GCU London and GCNYC budgets.

**ACTION: GCNYC for inclusion on agenda at Strategy Day (University Secretary and DVC Strategy)**

**12. League table update**

- 12.1 Court **noted** an update on the University's performance in key University league tables and rankings published in 2018/19.
- 12.2 Court welcomed the progress made by the University in the three key league tables and its excellent performance in the first THE Impact Rankings. The Court heard how the University would take steps to capitalise on and maintain this upward momentum as future progression must remain the key focus.

**13. 2019-2020 Trimester A Student Recruitment – Summary at June 2019**

- 13.1 Court received a summary of the recruitment position for 2019/20 Trimester A and an update on current activities being led by the Joint Recruitment Group to support recruitment and conversion.
- 13.2 Court noted the report and the work underway to support recruitment and conversion, while recognising that for some key recruitment categories, it remained early in the cycle.

**14. Student/Staff Ratios**

- 14.1 The DVC Strategy presented a report providing an overview of Student Staff Ratios (SSRs) within the Scottish university sector and Scottish modern university sector based on 2017/18 HESA data released in April 2019.
- 14.2 The Court noted the report recognising that, while it was not possible to make direct subject comparisons across the sector, the University was largely consistent with comparable institutions in most subject areas on the basis of available data.
- 14.3 In response to a question, it was clarified that the Mutual Severance Scheme had not had an impact on the currently reported SSRs as most staff had remained in post until the end of July 2018. An impact on data sets over time could, however, be expected.

14.4 In discussion it was clarified that there no discernible correlation between the NSS results and the SSR. While a high SSR could have a negative impact on a member of staff, it was not possible to generalise about what a 'good' SSR would be as different programmes and different disciplines had different teaching approaches and requirements. It was suggested that a more granular review of SSRs would be worthwhile.

14.5 Court **noted** the report.

## **15. Strategy 2030**

15.1 Court received a report providing an update on the development of Strategy 2030.

15.2 The Court **noted** the consultative work that had been undertaken as the strategy was developed and the excellent level of student and staff engagement. The Court would address the draft strategy again in October in light of this feedback and other work strands in progress. New governors would be encouraged to review material to date on the development of the strategy.

## **16. Widening Access Sector Data 2017/18**

16.1 The DVC (Academic) presented a report summarising the University's performance and its position in comparison with the sector in respect of students from SIMD 20 areas, retention rates and the recruitment of articulating students. The data demonstrated the University's continued strong performance on widening access and the maintenance of performance against the Strategy 2020 KPI of a top three position in Scotland for widening access.

16.2 Court **noted** the report and welcomed the University's continuing strength in this area.

## **17. Annual Statement on Research Integrity**

The Court **approved** the University's annual statement on research integrity as part of its pledge to meet the Commitments of the Universities UK Concordat to support Research Integrity.

## **18. Partnership Ethical Framework Monitoring Report**

18.1 The Court noted a report providing more information on the framework used to conduct a critical evaluation of the wider ethical implications of the University's international partnerships.

18.2 Court noted the report and suggested that more information on local customs and practices would be beneficial.

### **Action: Head of International Partnership Administration & Governance to update report.**

## **19. Report from Senate meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2019**

Court noted a summary of the business discussed by Senate at its meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2019, and the Chair encouraged lay governors to attend Senate meetings, reminding them that it was expected that a lay governor would attend at least one meeting of Senate each session.

## **20 Report from Court Standing Committees**

20.1 Court **noted** a summary of the business discussed at the following meetings:

20.1.1 Remuneration Committee meeting held on 13th May 2019;

20.1.2 Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2019;

20.1.3 People Committee meeting held on 5th June 2019;

20.1.4 Audit Committee meeting 10th June 2019.

20.2 Court **approved** the Remuneration Philosophy recommended by the Remuneration Committee subject to review of the wording in the “Internal Equity Section”

**Action: Clerk to Remuneration Committee to action review of Remuneration Philosophy wording**

20.3 Following a request from a lay governor, it was **agreed** that University insurance policies should routinely be seen by Finance and General Purposes Committee.

**Action: Clerk to F&GP to update agreed workplan in conjunction with Director of Finance to include insurance.**

## **21. Chair’s Closing Remarks**

The Chair reminded members that following a light lunch there would be a presentation by the DVC (Strategy) and International Director on “Attracting and Converting Prospective Students”.

## **22. Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting of Court will be **Friday** 20<sup>th</sup> September 2019 at 9.00am preceded by a dinner at 6pm on Thursday 19th September 2019.